

Figure 4. Mental Map of Shanghai. Drawing by a 16-year-old student at a Singaporean school.

PART III

Arriving

This mental map depicting high-rise buildings, a large, elevated highway, and masses of people, was drawn by a girl at an international Singaporean school and illustrates how impressive and overwhelming arriving and living in Shanghai can be. The sixteen-year-old student annotated her map with the following caption:

The city, Shanghai, is continuously developing. Every day when I'm on the bus, looking outside the window, I can always find new infrastructures. The buildings are HUGE and the road is crowded. The map is what I see every day on the bus. It's a busy Shanghai and is changing every day. People walk swiftly just like they are trying to catch up the beat of Shanghai.

In my view, her drawing and annotation illustrate not only the unfamiliar urban environment, but also the radical changes, losses, and new encounters that teenagers face when moving to their new city of residence. It is the students' ways of "catching up with the beat of Shanghai" and their new situation that this part of the book aims to examine. The following three chapters discuss how youths manage these difficulties and their new environment by outlining three important processes: exploring the city, establishing home-making practices, and building communities.

The ethnographic material I present supports Fechter's (2007b) observations of the importance of boundaries in expatriates' lives and underpins her argument that their "insistence on fortifying spatial and social divides challenges notions of a transnational capitalist class which is claimed to be geographically mobile and cosmopolitan in outlook (Sklair [2001] 2003; Hannerz [1996] 2001) [...] such conceptions appear to be insufficiently grounded in ethnographic realities" (ibid., 80–81).

Similar to Fechter's findings, these chapters illustrate how, in the context of their mobile lifestyles, expatriate youths draw boundaries upon their arrival in Shanghai. Chapter 1 argues that expatriate youths' practices of managing the city are based on dividing it into expat and non-expat places. Chapter 2 demonstrates that their home-making practices are centered on both the fortified housing complexes where they live (and which separate their inhabitants from the outside world) and on staying connected with their family, friends, and former places of residence. Chapter 3 shows that

the shared space of school is crucial for community-building processes and the friendships international students form. However, these community spaces also foster the performances of a collective expatriate identity in Shanghai with distinct values and practices that also enable the actor to distinguish him or herself from “locals” or those back “home.”

Focusing on the subjective experiences children and teenagers face when moving, the everyday spatial and social practices presented in this part are regarded as complex emotional work (Hochschild [1983] 2003). This emotional work means coping with the moving experience through creating meaningful everyday social spaces—places of pleasure and consumption in the city, a space where a notion of home can unfold, a feeling of belonging to a school and/or expatriate community. Friends and various media—German online newspapers, social media such as Facebook, and communication technology like Skype—as well as family, food, material culture, and explorations of the new environment help the students deal with the move and develop ways to adjust to their new situation.

CHAPTER 1

Making Sense of the City

BJORN: *The most difficult challenge was just this culture shock. To take a taxi somewhere. To use the subway, I'd never done that.*¹

A common way of gradually discovering Shanghai is experiencing the city on trips or through activities with family or friends. Learning to navigate Shanghai's urban environment, as sixteen-year-old, self-confessed "villager" Bjorn's comment suggests, is a crucial way of coming to terms with the stay abroad.

The metropolis Shanghai has evoked and still evokes diverse images and its recent high-speed development startles every visitor. Donald and Gammack (2007) describe Shanghai's growth in *Tourism and the Branded City: Film and Identity on the Pacific Rim*, capturing the amazement it often generates:

Infrastructure development in connection with Expo is unprecedented, and is positioning Shanghai for world competitiveness in several areas. A second airport, a new satellite city built on mud flats, a dock for cruise liners and Lupu Bridge, the world's longest arch bridge are some significant recent projects. The superfast Maglev train from the airport gives international arrivals an immediate sense of Shanghai's speed, while ongoing urban-rail development will see the six or seven lines that were in place in 2006 more than doubled by 2012 (Chen 2005), and the total length of rail-track laid at present increase almost fourfold. The metro systems of London and Tokyo are two world-city benchmarks which Shanghai is seeking to exceed (Donald and Gammack 2007, 151).

Donald and Gammack's account of infrastructure projects in Shanghai links the city to the idea of speed, which is reminiscent of the "beat of Shanghai" that the Singaporean student described when annotating her mental map (Figure 4). When I started researching foreign youth in Shanghai, the projects described by Donald and Gammack in 2007 had all been completed and the city was in the middle of hosting the 2010 Expo. This mega-event had given "both a deadline and a unifying purpose to the city's debut preparations [...] on a far grander scale than the construction of new stadia and exhibition halls typical of what other cities might produce. The entire city [was] being reconstructed—literally and metaphorically" (Donald and Gammack 2007, 154).

1 German original: *[D]as Schwerste [war] eigentlich dieser Kulturschock. Mit dem Taxi irgendwo hinfahren. Mit 'ner U-Bahn zu fahren, hab ich auch noch nie gemacht.*

Sometimes overwhelmed by the speed and contrasts of this rapidly developing mega-city, so fittingly exemplified by the 2010 Expo, I wondered how the teenagers made sense of Shanghai. By examining how the students explore their new urban environment, I show that both learning to navigate Shanghai and the city's inherent sensorial impressions help the students manage their environment, by giving spaces a social meaning, they divide the city into manageable categories of what is "familiar" and "unfamiliar."

1.1 Navigating the city

After the move to Shanghai, newcomers have to learn how to navigate the city. While buses hired by the schools provide transport to campus, students have to organize their transport to other destinations on their own. For my part, I depended largely on Shanghai's continuously expanding network of subway lines, referred to locally as the "metro." The subway provides a convenient mode of transportation, but closes at eleven p.m.—early for a city of its size. The teenage students, however, do not use the metro very often.

This avoidance of the subway system is mainly due to the readily available school buses and taxis. With fares starting at RMB 12 (€1.32), or RMB 14 (€1.54) after the summer of 2011, taxis are relatively inexpensive for an expatriate family income. Another preferred method of travel is the parents' private car and driver, which are sometimes provided as a job benefit for senior-level expatriate employees. Both means of transportation are comfortable, but not without challenges. The following discussion on navigating through the city, recorded between three fourteen-year-old students, Keith, a boy from Singapore, Freda, a girl from Norway, and Vijay, a boy from India, shows that taking the taxi or the private car requires students to find ways to interact with local drivers, who usually do not speak English.

KEITH: *[Speaking Chinese] makes life easier. Especially if you want to take a taxi and you want to tell the driver where to go, it'll be much [...] easier.*

FREDA: *I usually send a text to, like, you can send a text in English to, like, a phone number and then they send it back in Chinese. And I just show them. <L> [I: <L>] I can't talk to them.*

INTERVIEWER: *<L> Do you use that service a lot?*

FREDA: *Yeah. <L>*

INTERVIEWER: *Well, you have to find ways how to get through. So is that your major way to move through the city?*

FREDA: *I mostly take the cab, but we also take the metro. But we don't know, like, where it stops. We only take it if we are sure that we take the right one.*

INTERVIEWER: *Okay. Same for you?*

KEITH: *Actually I have a car; my dad's company provides a car. So sometimes I use the car.*

INTERVIEWER: *So you just use the driver because he is there anyway?*

KEITH: *It's just sometimes, when my dad needs the car businesswise, I just use the cab.*

INTERVIEWER: *How about you? How do you move through the city?*

VIJAY: *I use the car. I am not much exposed to public transport, like busses, trains. I find it strange.*

This discussion illustrates that students can either rely on transportation provided by the school or the parents or find their own ways of moving through the city, for example by using text messaging services to communicate with taxi drivers. Despite these language barriers, the students still consider taxis easier to use than the metro. Some students own motor scooters, but use them predominantly in the direct vicinity of their housing areas. German school student Peter, for instance, owns a motor scooter, but soon gave it up as a means of daily transportation from the downtown apartment to school. When I asked him about it, he told me he had driven it three times to school, twice having minor accidents, one of which could have seriously harmed him, had he not been wearing his helmet. Driving oneself is therefore usually considered too dangerous.

To further understand the expatriate youths movements through and relation to the city, I asked thirteen students at a local German school, three students at a British school, and seventeen students at a Singaporean school to record on paper their mental maps of everyday, important places in Shanghai. The results show that their visualizations follow a common pattern. The following table lists the places that were referred to most often (Table 1).

The mental maps are clustered around important places such as school, home, and friends' homes, and leisure spaces such as cafés, restaurants, or bars and clubs. Furthermore, iconic landmarks found their way onto the maps, probably to set the scene and mark the city on the map as Shanghai. Additionally, these city icons—such as the Oriental Pearl Tower or the Bottle Opener²—may also be included in many of the drawings because they offer a point of entry to explore the city, or to identify with living in Shanghai. Eleven-year-old Allen, for instance, developed a fascination for Shanghai's skyline. When asked if he has a favorite place in Shanghai, he replies with pride and enthusiasm:

ALLEN: *The bottle opener. I have been up on the 91st floor in it and I had dinner up there, once.*

2 The bottle opener is the common name for the Shanghai World Financial Center. At 492 meters, it is currently Shanghai's tallest building, and is located on the Pudong side of the Bund.

PLACE ON STUDENT MAP	GERMAN SCHOOL (13)	BRITISH SCHOOL (3)	SINGAPOREAN SCHOOL (17)	ALL STUDENTS (33)
Home	13	3	15	31
Own School	13	1	13	27
River or Bund	8	3	5	16
Oriental Pearl Tower	7	3	4	14
Cafés/Restaurants	9	–	5	14
Friends' places	6	1	4	11
Bars/Clubs	9	–	–	9
Bottle Opener	6	1	2	9
Nanjing Road	5	–	1	6
Church	–	1	3	4
Huaihai Road	3	–	1	4
People's Square	2	–	1	3
Fake Market	1	2	–	3
Other Schools	1	–	1	2

Table 1. List of Places on Students' Mental Maps of Shanghai.

These mental maps provide insights into teenagers' preferred spaces, forms of transport, and activities, as the following example, drawn by sixteen-year-old Olivia, a member of "the girls," demonstrates (Figure 5).

Olivia's map shows urban icons, such as the Oriental Pearl tower, and popular landmarks such as the Bund, the Yu-Garden, and the People's Square. Concerning movement through and out of Shanghai, the drawing refers to metro stations (marked with a circled M), a car (in reference to a friend who lives outside the city), and the two city airports. The map presents the city as a space for satisfying individual needs. It revolves around places of consumption such as the Superbrand Mall, Plaza 66, the Fake Market, the shopping street Qipulu, and Pearl City. Furthermore, the student even includes specific brand stores such as Zara, H&M, Mango, and Roxy on her map. While shopping here could be a family activity, the teenagers (and the girls in particular) enjoy going shopping with friends. Miller et al. (1998, 101) suggest that teenagers not only visit such commercial spaces for consumption, but to express their "growing independence from their parents." The school, friends' houses (anonymized by the author), and Olivia's own home are also seen as integral parts of the city. Restaurants, bars, and clubs form another large proportion. The student even names the clubs—Mural, M2 (Muse 2), Paramount, and Park 97—in



Figure 5. Mental Map of Shanghai. Drawing by sixteen-year-old Olivia.

an explanatory cloud. Her visual representation of the city, this fixing of her spatial practices, provides insights not only into her everyday life, but also into her image of the city, her aspirations about it, and what might be considered the stage for her own identity performances. Chapter 2 of Part IV will further elaborate on these reciprocal relations of age identity and spaces when examining students’ nightlife practices.

While the importance of visual impressions is immediately apparent in these student maps, considering the exact shapes of certain buildings such as the school, shopping malls, or urban landmarks, other sensorial impressions of the city are underrepresented. The next subchapter aims to explore the role other sensory experiences such as sounds, smells, and tastes play when exploring the new urban environment and making sense of Shanghai.

1.2 Sensing the city

When I tried to do what I had asked of so many students—to draw a map of all the places in Shanghai that I considered personally significant—I suddenly became aware of the skill with which some of the students were able to record their visual impressions on paper; I myself was unsure of how to draw certain details. Sensories are personal, not only in their interpretation but also in their use. When I started to write down city sounds, for example, much more came to mind: the metro beeping before closing its doors, the sound of the honking but otherwise silent electric scooters rushing by, the jingle playing when 7-11 doors glide open, the unpleas-

ant noises of Shanghai's innumerable construction sites, the shouting of the used electric appliance dealers ("kongtiao, diannao"),³ the spoken words on the streets that I tried to untangle and sort into Shanghainese (the local dialect, understandable only to Shanghai natives, it seems) and Mandarin (the official, common language of the country). When waking up in the dark, these sounds would tell me whether it was already morning or still the middle of the night. I constantly made sense of my environment through sounds. And when the city's voice became too exhausting, I put on my headphones, just like the students, to try to achieve some distance from it. Sometimes the common use of portable music players led to conversations about music. Bjorn, for instance, often introduced me to the bands he was listening to. The students and I talked about music but, unless it was about a concert in town (German DJ Paul Kalkbrenner, for example), or about choosing a certain nightlife space, we did not tie music and city sounds (or the blocking out of city sounds) together; the discussion rather served to stage certain subcultural preferences. Sounds are a vibrant part of the city experience and future inquiries into the Shanghai soundscapes are worthy of exploration.⁴ While sounds seemed central to my own navigation and understanding of the city, taste was the sense that featured predominantly in all of the students' mental maps of Shanghai.

Hongmei Road, for instance, the vertically-running street on the left of Olivia's map (Figure 5), is a small lane in the western part of Shanghai and popular among expatriates for its variety of foreign restaurants. The importance of places to eat in their expatriate life is visible on most of the students' maps. The prominence given to foreign food, restaurants, and leisure spaces in their city maps shows that, for these students, taste and navigation in the city are linked. Scholars like David Howes (2007) have pointed out the importance of all senses in making "sense" of both our environment and ourselves.

Sensation is not just a matter of physiological response and personal experience. It is the most fundamental domain of cultural expression, the medium through which all the values and practices of society are enacted. To a greater or lesser extent, every domain of sensory experience, from the sight of a work of art to the scent of perfume to the savor of dinner, is a field of cultural elaboration. Every domain of sensory experience is also an arena for structuring social roles and interactions. We learn social divisions, distinctions of gender, class and race, through our senses. [...] Sensual relations are also social relations (Howes 2007, xi).

3 Air-conditioner, computer.

4 See Gaye, Mazé, and Holmquist's "Sonic City" (2003), or the work of the Delhi Listening Group, for more projects concerned with the creative and interactive potential of urban sounds.

Howes's anthropological investigations explore how sensory experience can be structured and invested with meaning in many different ways across cultures. While this anthropological endeavor to study, compare, and theorize the cultural formation of the senses is fascinating, my own interest lies in how important senses are to exploring and experiencing urban spaces. There is obviously a difference between being in a place that we are able to experience at the same time with all our senses, and the virtual, imaginary places that are also present in our lives. Howes ([2005] 2006, 7) calls this "sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment" "emplacement." Walmsley (2005) applies Howes's concept of emplacement to different situations in Ecuador, for example to a market site:

An Ecuadorian market [...] draws attention to the role of intersensoriality in the production of meaning through everyday lived experiences. Smells, sights, tastes, textures and sounds signify each other according to the particular context and the particular sensory knowledge of the individual experiencing them. This points to a central theme in the study of culture and the senses, which is that of 'emplacement' (Walmsley 2005, 47).

Walmsley uses the concept of emplacement to analyze the associations between place, identity, and sensory experience and to find out how racial categories in Ecuador are produced with all senses. Her ethnographic case in point shows how intersensorial experiences evoke feelings of both strangeness and belonging. These feelings play a fundamental part in processes of cultural (and in her case racial) identity negotiation. Tastes and smells are mostly discussed in terms of their relationship to food. As Walmsley (2005, 55) notes: "Sensory knowledge is developed through the sociality of food practices, which are produced through the sharing of tastes, smells and embodied culinary techniques."

In today's Shanghai, the range of available tastes (as both sensory experience and culinary preference) is highly diverse. Shanghainese would constantly point this out to me by simply saying, "Shanghai dou you" ("Shanghai has everything"). With regard to cuisine, this may well be true. Shanghai contains German and French bakeries, Italian restaurants, American diners, numerous teppanyaki places, and all kinds of Chinese cuisine from spicy Sichuan dishes to northern Chinese noodles. International food stores carry almost everything the expatriate might miss (Figure 6).

The students from the German school included their favorite Italian or American restaurants on their mental maps, while students from the Singaporean school in particular listed Korean or Japanese restaurants. Names of international chains like Starbucks are also included. Additionally, students embrace new tastes from non-Chinese sources, as a visit to a Japanese all-you-can-eat-Sushi restaurant with a group of German students showed me. But as Walmsley (2005, 55) already pointed out: "an individual's sensory knowledge is never fixed or limited but always capa-



Figure 6. German Bakery on the Outskirts of Shanghai. Photo by M. Sander.

ble of adapting and expanding.” The senses, like these experiences in the foreign restaurants on the aforementioned Hongmei Road, connect the people in Shanghai with distant places. Walmsley also noted how this tendency applied to the stalls at the Ecuadorian market, which “also remind customers of other places, times, and people” (*ibid.*, 47). Olfactory experiences and memories of places go hand-in-hand. Food and dining practices therefore play a role in the process of home-making, as I will explore further in Chapter 2. Some of these dining places turned into spaces for regular gatherings that, over time, came to hold special meaning for those involved. “The girls,” for instance, frequently met at an Indian Restaurant on Hongmei Road. “The boys” or others were not allowed to accompany them, as it was a particular ritual for them to go there, to establish and deepen their friendships.

In May 2011, when I had the opportunity to join students from the German School in a photo-walk project that a Geography teacher had set up, I chose to accompany “the girls” on their fieldtrip, an event that I described in more detail in Chapter 3.1 of Part I, to highlight my methodology. The group’s chosen research area was Tianzifang, a café, gallery, and souvenir shop district that was developed from a few lanes of old Shanghai houses⁵. The students’ task was to photographically document globalization in the city. Although the project was designed around visual representations, other senses (and taste in particular), also played a role. The girls initially flocked to a café, which—according to them—sold the best milkshakes in town. When

5 Other areas chosen by the student groups included the Bund, Xintiandi, Nanjing Lu, and Lujiazui. All these places are particularly popular among tourists and are used to represent the city in travel guidebooks.

moving further through the labyrinth of lanes in Tianzifang, they pointed out restaurants at which they had eaten with their parents. They touched jewelry and clothes, and tried on hats in numerous shops. Tactile experiences thus influenced their navigation through the area (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Student in Tianzifang Documenting Elements of Globalization. Photo by M. Sander.

Although the visual engagement with the city that resulted from the Geography class's photo-walk was particularly intense due to being a photographic analysis, it becomes clear that our experiences of urban spaces are always intersensorial.

The method of mental maps, however, might be prone to overemphasizing visual forms of understanding and conceptualizing the city and might miss other sensory experiences possible within Shanghai. Occasionally, students tried to fit these non-visual perceptions on their maps, as the following example demonstrates (Figure 8).

This student from a Singaporean school also includes iconic landmarks but places a strong emphasis on how she senses the city. Her map is filled with people, to demonstrate the crowdedness of the city, and images of cars and cramped, tall buildings to indicate the traffic and noise. The fumes behind the drawing of a car even evoke the smell of polluted air. Interestingly, the girl clearly juxtaposes the city against the area where her home and school are located, as the two arrows and the dividing line show. She annotates her sketches with "peaceful" and "quiet" on the private side, and with "noisy," "crowded," and "busy" on the other side. This second side is also labeled as "the city," indicating that the school and home are not perceived as integrated parts of it. These maps produced by the expatriate youths support findings by scholars who have recently turned explicitly to

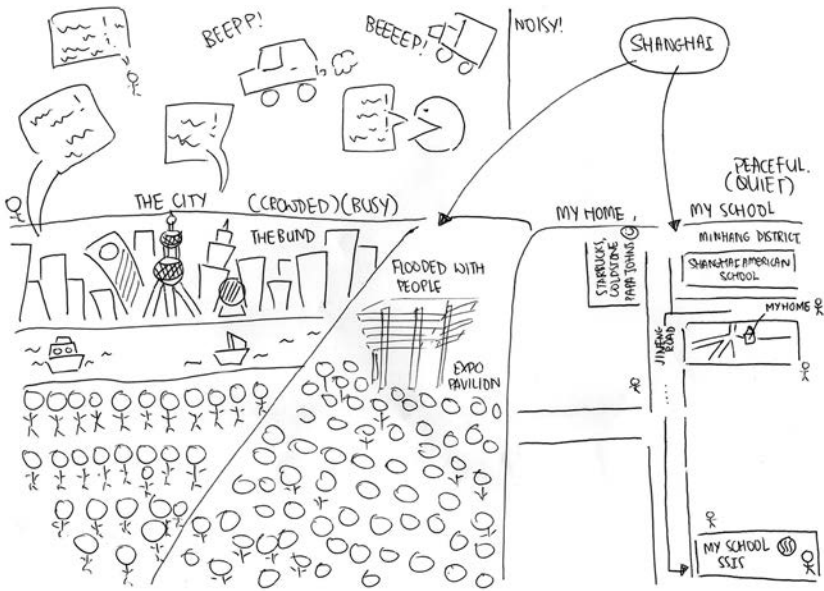


Figure 8. Mental Map of Shanghai. Drawing by a 16-year-old female Singaporean school student.

exploring the role of sensorial experiences in cities. Geographer Melissa Butcher (2012), for example, studied the intersensorial experiences of young people of different backgrounds in Delhi. Her qualitative study on the relationship between the city of Delhi and its inhabitants demonstrates that sensory involvement with public spaces is used to affectively dissect Delhi into spaces of inclusion and exclusion, pleasure and discomfort, similar to the division on the Singaporean student's map (Figure 8). Butcher's findings suggest that inhabitants link sensory experiences of the city on both an individual and cultural level to judgments about civil and uncivil behavior. The two maps shown in this chapter thus not only highlight the students' everyday places, but also their perspectives on the city and their own role and position within it. With their maps, the two girls deliver a message to themselves, their peers, and to me as a researcher. Olivia's map foregrounds the image of actively consuming the city through night-life and shopping. Her image is opposed to the Singaporean student's image of Shanghai, of retreating and being different from the noisy—and maybe even perceived as uncivilized—"rest of the city." By contextualizing the drawings within the students' ethnic backgrounds (Singapore and Belgium), one can see that the maps point to different positions toward and understandings of youth. However, their position towards me, a German researcher, also plays a role. The Belgian student demonstrates her urban "coolness," while the Singaporean student may feel it necessary to point out that, although she is Asian, she feels estranged by China and its "noisy," "crowded" cities.

1.3 Concluding thoughts on managing life in the city

The urban geographies students produced in their mental maps and explained in more detail in the interviews convey the continuous process of making sense of the city, not only in terms of navigation and sensory experience, but also in terms of positioning oneself within it—as consumers, inhabitants, or someone overwhelmed by the urban, sensorial landscape of Shanghai. Managing the city means managing everyday life and the migration experience, for instance by learning how to navigate between spaces of everyday practices and consumption, by giving spaces a social meaning, or by dividing Shanghai into a manageable, familiar area and “the rest of the city.” However, as cultural geographer David Crouch notes, “making sense’ does not equate making clear rationality but rather working our way through things, spaces, relations” (2005, 31).

The following chapter on housing spaces will further exemplify the divide between familiar areas and the rest of the city already introduced—there, the city and the gated communities are juxtaposed. Ways of home-making, including settling into the new house and various material practices, are discussed in detail. These behaviors are seen as a means of reconnecting with and linking former places of residence to Shanghai, thus creating a new network of “homes” through travel and social or broadcast media use.

CHAPTER 2

Making Home(s): Houses, Belongings, and Belonging

Being grounded is not necessarily about being fixed; being mobile is not necessarily about being detached (Ahmed et al. 2003, 1).

This chapter is concerned with the two meanings of the word “home” as it commonly describes both the domestic space we live in and “a space of imagined belonging” (Walsh 2006a, 125).⁶ Popular or common ideas of home often see these two spaces as coinciding. Home is frequently linked to one certain place, usually encompassing experiences of growing up or family life. It is therefore not surprising that the question of what home means for children growing up abroad has been a common topic in the literature that deals with expatriate youth from a TCK angle (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009; Richter 2011; Franke 2008), which I summarized and critiqued in the introduction. Parents and researchers alike seem extremely concerned with the implications of growing up without *one* such place.⁷ Thus the original definition of a “TCK,” as I have shown earlier, is tied to a specific notion of belonging: “The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background” (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009, 19).

An article by Amelie Franke (2008) investigates notions of home and belonging among the youths she defines as “TCKs” on the basis of a qualitative study including a survey, in-depth interviews, and group discussions.⁸ Franke understands home as the interplay between three major connections: the connection to a place, which Franke links to Tuan’s (1974) concept

6 During the interviews conducted in English, I asked students about their understanding of “home.” However, during fieldwork among German-speaking youths, we talked about the German word “Zuhause,” which is perhaps best translated with the English phrase “at home,” as well as the word “Heimat,” which can be translated both as “belonging” and “home” and has a slightly different connotation. The mind maps that I discuss in this chapter focus on the term “Heimat.”

7 The Shanghai center, for instance, offered talks on TCKs for parents. I attended one such event that was only visited by mothers. Many used the opportunity to voice their concerns about the adjustment difficulties they observed among their children.

8 Franke does not specify the exact parameters of the age group she labels “young transnational migrants” (Franke 2008, 128). From one ethnographic vignette she provides about a sixteen-year-old girl, however, it can be assumed that the age group in Franke’s study is similar to that of the actors in mine.

of “topophilia,”⁹ social connections, and material connections. Franke finds that additional variables also play a role in establishing notions of home for children growing up abroad. She therefore complexifies the interplay of place, social connections, and material connections by adding the following four aspects: a) “Emotive imaginations and time,” or, how long one stays connected with “emotive imaginations” such as feeling safe in a particular place, b) the family and its ties to both, c) the parental country, and d) the significance of language and culture (Franke 2008, 139–142). Franke reaches the following conclusion:

This melting-pot of cultures results in a confusion over feelings of home [...] Many TCKs have reported in the interviews that they find it hard to tell where home is. [...] Hence, it can be assumed that TCKs’ notions of home are spatially distributed over different countries. They feel belonging [sic] to their parental country and, at the same time, feel at home in their current host country and identify with former host countries. Thus, TCKs have “multiple homes” (ibid., 143).

Franke complements her idea of “multiple homes,” as seen in this quote, with the “imaginative idea” of home:

TCKs live in a permanent confusion about where they belong and where they should locate their home. One could say, they live in a compromise: They cannot adapt to every aspect of a certain place they momentarily live in, because they have experienced it differently somewhere else and thus have a greater ability to compare and weigh up [sic] the different aspects of home. The more mobile TCKs are, the more abstract their idea of home becomes. They generally concentrate their notions of home on the more continuous factors in their lives, such as the family, relatives or the parental country. Thus, a TCK’s home is rather an imaginative idea than an actual location (ibid., 148).

Franke’s findings and her conceptualization of home as an imaginative idea rather than an actual location for children growing up on the move reinforces the original TCK definition. However, instead of taking this definition and Franke’s related findings as a priori for the international children and teenagers in Shanghai, I prefer to take a closer look at their own ideas of home.

In order to understand the expatriate students’ perspectives and what “home” means for these privileged migrant youths who are so often on the move, this chapter tightly links the teenagers’ and their family’s housing and material practices concerned with home-making to broader concepts and imaginings of belonging.

9 Tuan understands “topophilia,” the love of place, broadly as “to include all of the human being’s affective ties with the material environment” (1974, 93).

The first part of this chapter discusses gated community living—the reality for most expatriate youths in Shanghai—based on data I collected during interviews, visits, and my own two-week-long stay in such a community. The second part addresses material practices within the site of the home and pays attention to objects, food, and the practices associated with them, based on further interviews, a student's photo, and my own visits to the youths' houses. After focusing on these housing and material practices in Shanghai, I then examine, in the third part of the chapter, the teenagers' (trans)local networks and their ties to places *beyond* the city—the “imaginative ways in which places are drawn together or kept apart” (Robinson 2010, 16)—through in-depth interviews. This part is concerned with places where the teenagers have lived before, regularly visit, or are emotionally attached to—their network of homes. The last section of the chapter further discusses the youths' conceptions of home and belonging and juxtaposes them with academic arguments.

2.1 Gated community living

Old and new, quaint and spacious, traditional and Mediterranean, Shanghai's villas come in all sizes and price ranges. The virtue of a villa is that most are located in safe compounds with spacious swaths of grass and even playgrounds for kids. They give families space to stretch out and are comparable to houses in the West. Additionally, compounds offer an instant community and make the transition to Shanghai easier (Sparling 2010, 14).

This quote from the August 2010 issue of the English-medium magazine *Shanghai Family* is part of the magazine's cover story entitled “Where to live in Shanghai: Neighborhoods and housing options.” The article showcases different housing alternatives for expatriates in Shanghai—lane houses, apartments, and villas. The citation highlights the particular advantages for expatriate families of living in a villa in a suburban gated community. I have used this quote and other materials in my earlier work (Sander 2014) to analyze and compare children's, teenagers', and adults' age-specific views on gated community living. In this chapter, however, I explore gated community living as one aspect of the larger process of expatriate youths' home-making.

Almost all of the youths I worked with lived in such villas in gated communities on the outskirts of Shanghai. To understand their specific housing situations better, however, the rise and general commonness of gated community living in China should be emphasized.¹⁰ This commonness—geographer Hassenpflug (2009, 58) writes that “from 1991 to 2000, about 83% of Shanghai's residential areas have been gated”—has been linked to

10 For a brief, general summary of current discussions on gated housing in China, its origins, and its “normality,” see Sander (2014).

the historical continuity of gating in Chinese urban traditions (see Webster, Wu, and Zhao 2006; Hassenpflug 2009; and Breitung 2012, among others), but also to the emerging demand for privacy, the strong meaning associated with home ownership, the desire for social distinction after the experience of socialism, and an insecurity arising from radical changes in Shanghai's social structure (Breitung 2012). The rise of gated community housing, particularly luxurious estates, has also been seen as caused by the 1978 reforms and their subsequent market-led urban developments—especially the late 1990s housing reform policies legitimizing the privatization of housing (see Pow 2009 for details on Shanghai)—and the global spread of gated communities and the Western influence on them (see, for instance, Giroir 2006).

The spread and rise of gated housing in metropolitan areas around the world (see Glasze, Webster, and Frantz 2006) has often been connected to fear. Urbanist Sharon Zukin, for instance, sees gated communities as part of contemporary urban culture, which has to deal with material inequalities in cities and consequently aestheticizes diversity on the one hand and fear on other (Zukin 2005, 283). However, as urban geographer Breitung (2012) argues, the fear of crime and violence that resulted in residential segregation and social exclusion in US cities (see, among others, Low 2003 and Frantz 2006) cannot be seen as playing the same role in China. Breitung (2012, 282) agrees that criticism of gated communities as causes for social segregation is reasonable, but also considers this view to be “quite normative.” By exploring three gated estates in Guangzhou, he shows that Chinese citizens' attitudes towards gated community living are prevalently accepting and positive.

These controversies in conceptualizing continuities and ruptures in urban traditions as well as notions of fear and security show that different cultural flows (Appadurai 1996) promote and contest contemporary forms of gated housing in contemporary China, and that gated communities can neither be regarded as a home-grown nor a global phenomenon (Breitung 2012, 291). Consequently, gated estates and their attributed meanings differ greatly within urban China.

Expatriates in Shanghai mostly live in upper-scale suburban neighborhoods with green lawns and luxurious facilities, which are separated from main roads by bushes and trees and are secured by walls and fences (Figures 9 and 10). Inside, one finds spacious houses with gardens, as well as playgrounds, clubhouses, swimming pools, convenience stores, kindergartens, and other service providers (see Sander 2014 for further, more detailed descriptions). Most of the inhabitants of these compounds hold foreign passports. Private guards, a common sight in today's Shanghai, watch the entrance gates; their practices vary from offering visitors a friendly nod, to questioning visitors at the entrance and notifying inhabitants of their arrival.

Expatriates retreating into such enclaves of familiarity construct and maintain concrete spatial, social, and cultural boundaries, as the works



Figure 9. Compounds in Shanghai. Photos by M. Sander.



Figure 10. References to European Architecture in a Shanghai Gated Community. Photo by M. Sander.

by Fechter (2007a) and Glasze (2006) on expatriates in Indonesia or Saudi Arabia have shown. The “bubble” metaphor used by my interview-partners (see Paul’s statements in the Introduction), as well as Fechter’s interviewees in Indonesia, clearly describes this demarcation. Expatriates’ practices and perceptions of demarcation related to gated community living, however, differ in regard to different age-groups, as a comparison between my interviews with expatriate adult women in 2007 and my discussions with teenagers has shown (Sander 2014). The desire to combine security—to protect the private sphere, be protected from the “other,” and maintain a retreat from traffic, noise, and air pollution—with a familiar standard of living is important to expat parents. Furthermore, the neighborhood, with

its many foreigners, offers a form of controlled heterogeneity that many of the adults I interviewed found appealing. The mothers I interviewed during my fieldwork in 2007 reported that, in the compounds, the neighbors were easier to meet because they were all in the same situation and had common interests. For the stay-at-home-mothers, the gated communities were particularly important, because, unlike their children who went to school, they did not have a zone for establishing friendships (ibid.). Willis and Yeoh (2002, 558), whose work examines expatriates in Hong Kong, understand the compound as the “key to the development of social networks,” despite also pointing out that it is a highly gendered space that brings mainly expatriate full-time housewives together. Parents also consider their children’s needs when choosing a housing option, for example, the availability of green spaces and the assurance of safe journeys to school. Many families therefore decide to settle in the vicinity of a school, at the outskirts of Shanghai. The schools make this choice easier by providing helpful information. For example, the German school provides an annotated map that lists, among other things, exact numbers of enrolled students that live nearby.

Although the decision to opt for a refuge from the city is often linked to the safety and wellbeing of children (Sander 2014), no research to my knowledge exists on young people’s perspectives and experiences related to that decision. My own fieldwork, however, shows that children usually benefit from the opportunity to roam around that is afforded by such spaces. Geographer Gill Valentine’s (2003, 38) suggestion that the spatial experiences of children in the contemporary North are “strongly circumscribed by adults” fittingly describes expatriate children’s reality. Used to this circumscription, they do not necessarily experience the compound walls as confining, but rather find that their confines provide them with a certain degree of freedom in everyday life. To the younger children, the compound is a zone where they can simply move around on their own (Sander 2014).

For teenagers, however, this positive aspect of “fenced freedom” becomes obsolete as they are gradually allowed to move through the city on their own. For them, the compound’s meaning turns from one which promotes this freedom, as experienced by younger children, to one of isolation and boredom (see Sander 2014). German teenager Bjorn explains:

BJORN: *And a compound like this, that is something different from a village. There you are still a little bit <L> village is not the best example, but <L\>, you are a little bit connected to the outside world.*

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

BJORN: *And a compound is a compound. It is quiet; children are playing.*

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

BJORN: *But normally one lives completely isolated, I’d say, from the Chinese world. You live in your European compound.*

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

BJORN: *You really notice it. Some of them really withdraw. Actually you can't say, that we really; like when, if someone from Germany asks, like, "What do you do in Shanghai?" I say, "I sit in my isolated compound the whole time and watch movies. And that's about it."¹¹*

Bjorn does not share the children's positive evaluation of the compound as a space to roam free, but mainly sees it as a space that isolates him "from the Chinese world." The desire for transgressing these spatial boundaries, which is also linked to a wish to explore city spaces and to participate in activities associated with youth—such as clubbing—will be explored further in Part IV, "Living."

The youths also cannot identify with the notion of community that the gated estates provide for adult expatriates. In contrast to the mothers I interviewed, teenaged Mia explains:

MIA: *But it's not a community. Well, back then it was.*

INTERVIEWER: *Back then it was?*

MIA: *Well, there is one compound close by, called Jiushi. It is really big, extremely huge. And a lot of Germans live there. And earlier it used to really be like that; you knew a lot of people there, who lived close by. But now the compound is a little old and not really nice anymore. And by now it's not like that anymore. Back then it was really like that. You had several people who you knew and you always did things together and so on. I used to live there. But now I don't feel that way anymore.¹²*

11 German original: BJORN: *Und so ein Compound, das ist was anderes als in so 'nem Dorf. Da bist du noch so ein bisschen. <L> Dorf ist auch nicht das beste Beispiel aber </L>, du bist ein bisschen an der Außenwelt.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* BJORN: *Und ein Compound ist ein Compound. Es ist leise, ein paar Kinder spielen.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* BJORN: *Aber in der Regel wohnt man ja komplett abgeschottet, sag ich jetzt mal, von der chinesischen Welt. Du lebst ja in deinem europäischen Compound.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* BJORN: *Das merkt man schon krass. Da ziehen sich manche auch richtig hart zurück. Eigentlich kann man nicht sagen, dass wir richtig; so wenn, bei mir, wenn die aus Deutschland fragen, so ja: „Was macht man so in Shanghai?“ Ich so: „Ja ich sitz die ganze Zeit auf meinen abgeschotteten Compound und schau mir Filme an.“ Und dann war's das schon.*

12 German original: MIA: *Aber 'ne Community ist es jetzt nicht. Also früher war das mal so.* INTERVIEWER: *Früher war es so?* MIA: *Also es gibt einen so 'nen Compound hier in der Nähe, Jiushi heißt der. Der ist so richtig riesig, also wirklich richtig groß. Und da wohnen halt richtig viele Deutsche. Und früher war das auch wirklich so, da kannte man dann auch richtig viele Leute da, die bei einem in der Nähe gewohnt haben. Aber der Compound ist jetzt auch schon etwas älter und nicht mehr so schön. Und inzwischen ist das jetzt auch nicht mehr. Also damals war das wirklich so. Da hatte man wirklich einige Leute, die man kannte und hat mit denen immer was gemacht und so. Also ich hab da früher halt gewohnt. Aber jetzt finde ich, ist das nicht mehr so.*

Besides pointing out possible changes in the compound, Mia's quote demonstrates that growing up also alters an individual's perspective on gated community living. Her social interactions moved beyond the realm of the compound, as she became interested in and allowed to enter new spaces. Of her current gated community, Mia openly says "I don't really do much there."¹³ While adults find that compounds and clubhouses serve as connection points in daily expatriate life (Willis and Yeoh 2002; Glasze 2006; Sander 2014), my fieldwork among teenagers reveals that these sites are of limited importance to expatriate youths (Sander 2014).

Returning to the issue of isolation addressed by Bjorn above, it is interesting to link his observations—"some of them really withdraw"—to Anne Coles' (2008) survey on the social lives of British diplomatic families living abroad. Her work shows that spouses of diplomats have considerably more contact with other diplomats and expatriates than with nationals of the host country. Although patterns of socializing vary, there is a correlation between gated community living and less socializing with locals (Coles 2008, 132). Gated communities are therefore vital to the process of drawing boundaries. Bjorn's descriptions also support anthropologist Fechter's argument that expatriates—in her case, in Jakarta—"are fundamentally concerned with the production and negotiation of boundaries" (Fechter 2007b, 61). Fechter does not simply link the construction of boundaries to a fear of the "other," but to the loss of control and "expatriates' discomfort with their bodily visibility as 'Whites' in a predominantly Asian society" (ibid., 62).¹⁴ Living in a suburban enclave sometimes means keeping the "other" outside. The following perspective shared by Don, a sixteen-year-old German student of Chinese descent and a member of "the boys," offers insight into his experience of the compounds' boundaries:

DON: *As a Chinese, if you look Chinese, you generally get less respect from the Chinese.¹⁵ They respect foreigners to the max. For example, quite often they don't let me into the compounds.*

TWO OTHER STUDENTS: *Fact. Yes. Right. True.*

INTERVIEWER: *Really?*

13 German original: *Aber ich mach da jetzt nicht wirklich viel.*

14 I see a valid point in this argument and agree that bodily discomfort plays a role. Part IV, Chapter 4 elaborates further on the role of physical and, specifically, racial differences.

15 It is interesting to see how Don's perception of the compounds differs from that of his white friends and how his physical differences, which suggest a different nationality, lead to him to experience the city differently. I will expand on this issue in Part IV, Chapter 4. It is also noteworthy that Don started the phrase with "as a Chinese," to then correct himself "if you look Chinese." This comment shows how the international students constantly have to negotiate their cultural identities in everyday life; processes that I discussed in the introduction and in Part I, Chapter 4.

DON: *That's why I don't like the guards. Because they don't let me in when I tell them I am looking for this [apartment] number. Then they say, "yes, but that's a foreigner who lives there." "Yes, I want to meet this foreigner."*

INTERVIEWER AND OTHER STUDENT: <L>.

DON: *"Yes, but what do you want there?" "Visit. Meet up." And then they just let me wait. Then they call and often nobody answers the phone. And then I think, crap, do I have to go back home now, or what? That was frustrating.*

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

DON: *Frustration at its worst. That's why I have this hatred for guards.¹⁶*

Don's story is one example of how the thick walls around the communities are symbolic of the barriers towards Chinese society that expatriates' practices contribute to. It also shows how many of the teenagers perceive the compound not only as guarded but also as restrictive.

In the previous chapter, I highlighted how teenage students' perceive and manage the divide between the city and familiar spaces. Gated community living strengthens this divide. In the August 2010 issue of *Shanghai Family*, for instance, a mother is quoted as commenting on life in a compound: "Although the French Concession gives you a better flavor of Shanghai, being here is like being at home" (Sparling 2010, 11).¹⁷ Here, home is juxtaposed to the French concession representing the city of Shanghai and its semi-colonial past. Bjorn also commented on the division between the spaces of gated communities and the city itself.

16 German original: DON: *Als Chinese, wenn du aussiehst wie ein Chinese, hast du hier generell weniger Respekt von Chinesen. Die respektieren Ausländer ja aufs Übelste. Zum Beispiel lassen die mich öfter nicht in Compounds rein.* ZWEI ANDERE SCHÜLER: *Fact. Ja. Stimmt. Echt so.* INTERVIEWER: *Echt?* DON: *Deswegen mag ich diese Guards nicht. Weil die lassen mich nicht rein, wenn ich sag, ja ich will zu dieser [Haus] Nummer. Dann sagen die, ja, dass ist doch ein Ausländer der da wohnt. Ja, ich will zu diesem Ausländer.* INTERVIEWER UND EIN ANDERER SCHÜLER: <L>. DON: *„Ja was willst du denn da?“ „Besuchen.“ „Treffen. So.“ Und dann lassen die mich einfach warten. Dann rufen die an und meistens geht dann keiner ans Telefon. Und dann denk ich so: „Mist, kann ich wieder nach Hause fahren oder wie?“ Das ist auch frustrierend gewesen.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* DON: *Frustrierend aufs Übelste. Ehm, deswegen hab ich einen Hass gegen Guards.*

17 The French Concession was a foreign concession within Shanghai from 1849 to 1946. Today, it maintains its distinctive character, despite being one of Shanghai's most central districts. It has also become popular among young foreigners; I lived there in 2010 and 2011, during my research stay. It is interesting that this part of the city, which still exhibits colonial traces, represents the flavor of Shanghai to other foreigners, something that also points to the nostalgia described by Amada Lagerkvist (2007), whose study is summarized in Part IV, Chapter 2.

BJORN: *Actually you only experience the “Shanghai world” on the weekend.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*

BJORN: *During the week you are only in your Western world, you drive from one compound to the next. And then you’re back again in this world, with Western people.¹⁸*

This juxtaposition, again, shows how Shanghai itself often plays a marginalized role in daily expatriate life and is experienced as a backdrop to their otherwise “Western world.” The gated communities do not form part of the city. For most teenagers, the city outside the gates not only embodies noise and dirt (see Figure 8), but also excitement and coolness, as will be shown in Part IV, Chapter 2, on nightlife activities. The city with its global nightscapes invites the students to transgress borders like the compounds’ walls and to explore spaces that enable them to establish an emotional connection to Shanghai. Focusing on the divide that Bjorn relates to gated community living, however, I argue that compound living makes it difficult to settle and build a relationship with the city, ultimately preventing Shanghai from becoming “home.” The gated communities in Shanghai form a space where expatriates see themselves as cosmopolitan, while the “other” is essentialized and kept outside. Expatriate youths in particular see gated communities mainly as spaces that disconnect them from the urban environment of Shanghai and thus impair their emplacement in the city.

Nevertheless, students also contemplate the positive aspects of gated community living, such as the short distance from school or their perceived safety, and point out that these gated estates host their homes—places they enjoy, as the following quote from a conversation with three of “the boys” (Don, Bjorn, and Alex) shows:

INTERVIEWER: *As we are talking about housing and Shanghai, what are your favorite places in the city?*

DON: *Alex’s house.*

INTERVIEWER: *<L> Alex’s?*

BJORN: *There are Alex’s and Peter’s [houses].*

ALEX: *There are two, well, for example my place, and Peter’s, that are where we are quite often if we don’t go downtown, and then we chill out, kick back.*

DON: *At Peter’s house it’s not as great as at yours.*

BJORN: *I think it’s relaxed at Peter’s.*

DON: *Yes, it is relaxed.¹⁹*

18 German original: BJORN: *Man kriegt die Shanghai-Welt eigentlich nur wochenends mit.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* BJORN: *In der Woche ist man nur in seiner westlichen Welt so, da fährt man von einem Compound zum nächsten. Und ist dann wieder in dieser Welt, mit westlichen Menschen.*

19 German original: INTERVIEWER: *Wo wir gerade über Wohnen reden und über Shanghai, was sind denn dann so eure Lieblingsorte in der Stadt?* – DON: *Alex’ Haus.* INTERVIEWER: *<L> Alex’?* – BJORN: *Es gibt Alex und Peter.* ALEX: *Es gibt so zwei, also,*

While some teenagers explicitly link the gated compounds to isolation, boredom, surveillance, and restrictions—which they either experience through the presence of adults or security guards (Sander 2014; see also Part IV, Chapter 3, which contrasts a little street outside the compounds with the communal spaces within)—they see their homes as safe places, places to meet friends, or to “chill out.”²⁰ The next section zooms in on these homes and investigates the role of domestic space and its related material practices in the process of feeling at home in Shanghai.

2.2 Material practices: belongings, food, and family

“Home is a process and, as such, involves continual practices of home-making to be felt and experienced,” argues human geographer Katie Walsh (2011, 516), based on her ethnographic research on the home-making practices of male British migrants in Dubai, a claim echoing the earlier work of Miller (2001) and Blunt and Dowling (2006). These practices are particularly important to expatriate teenagers, for many of whom home as “a site of everyday life” may differ from actual feelings and spaces of belonging. In Shanghai, this process of home-making is often based on material objects, food, and the connectedness of these objects with family practices.

PERSONAL OBJECTS

It is only years later that that [sic] I now understand the power personal objects play in our lives, but at the time when I lost my shipment, I was appalled at how much stock I put in material objects. I was embarrassed, ashamed to admit how much they meant to me. It wasn't so much the individual objects that I grieved for, rather it was what they represented as a whole; for me their value resided in where they were from. Together, collectively, these objects told the story of who I was, and this, as I gradually began to understand, was contingent on where I had lived (Burns 2011, 367).

In a very personal piece, Maureen Burns (2011) discusses her own expatriate childhood experience and links it to a few theoretical reflections from the angle of visual and material culture studies. Her article shows how any sort of documentation as a means of representing and articulating identity

ich zum Beispiel, und Peter, da ist man halt auch oft wenn man jetzt, man nicht mal in die Innenstadt geht und dann chillt man, gemütlich. DON: Bei Peter ist's nicht so toll wie bei dir. BJORN: Bei Peter finde ich es entspannt. DON: Ist auch sehr entspannt.

²⁰ The English word “chilling,” here adapted to German grammar as “chillen,” refers to the same relaxed form of “hanging out” that it does in English. Its use seems to have spread among various nationalities; see for instance Vanderstede’s (2011, 175) investigations into the spatial practice of “chilling” among young Belgians. For further examples of places where the German expatriate youths “chilled” in Shanghai, see Part IV, Chapter 3, “The Shop: Hanging Out.”

is a common strategy among migrants to deal with moving. Burns remembers the loss of a container shipment that included all her belongings when she moved to the USA, for college. Feeling “stripped bare,” Burns recalls that she had almost nothing left “to communicate a whole sense of self” (ibid., 366) after the shipment went missing. Having only the clothes and jewelry she wore and the things from her suitcase left, she remembers how the rings she wore during the trip, which she had collected throughout her many stays abroad, “became great conversation pieces that simultaneously piqued other’s interest and communicated [her] experiences.” She sees such objects as “containers” of her life that protect her personal history, “ensuring against the losses of the past” when symbolically displaced (ibid.).

Anthropologist Heather Hindman (2009b, 676) describes how the expatriate women she studied in Kathmandu strategically shopped for specific art objects to use “as means of transferring knowledge and status between locations.” The items displayed in their homes, similar to the rings Burns chose to wear, invited the opportunity to communicate experiences and share stories. As Hindman theorizes, “the objects expatriates collect are actants in the social drama of Expatria, lurking in freeze-dried form, ready to spring to life in a new location to impart status to their possessors” (Hindman 2009b, 676–677).

Such meaning-laden objects, including furniture from former stays, were present in many of the students’ homes. Most expatriate families take advantage of their employer’s financial support and ship their belongings around the world. A certain number of container shipments are usually included in the so-called packages that the employing organizations provide as part of their contracts.

In Shanghai, Mia, whose case I use here to exemplify the role material culture plays in what Katie Walsh calls “homing” processes, explains the whole relocation process:

MIA: *My home is simply where I live at that moment. No matter how long and no matter how comfortable I feel. [...] Because we always move with [our furniture]. Because some people only move with a few suitcases. But we are really, well, our furniture is always coming with us.*²¹

When, during my last stay in June 2012, I visited Mia at home, I moved through a big, airy house located on a green compound. Upon entering the villa, my attention was immediately drawn to the walls of the hallway and living room, which were decorated with Chinese calligraphy and a

21 German original: MIA: *Mein Zuhause ist einfach da wo ich wohne in dem Moment. Egal wie lange schon und egal wie wohl ich mich fühle. [...]. Weil, wir ziehen immer mit [Möbeln um]. Weil, es gibt ganz viele Leute die ziehen immer nur mit ein paar Koffern um. Aber wir sind halt wirklich, also unsere Möbel sind immer dabei.*

large framed painting displaying the harbor of their German hometown. The painting, like those of English landscapes that Walsh (2006a) found in British expatriate homes in Dubai, seemed to support the residents' claim to belonging elsewhere. The living room also housed several custom-made pieces of furniture in the modern Chinese style, which I came across in several expatriate homes, as well as in advertisements in the local expatriate press. These pieces seem to be favored objects for capturing memories of Shanghai. Mia's room upstairs sported a similar collection of objects and images, if more intimate than those downstairs. It is therefore not surprising that, when I asked the teenagers from the German school to send me an image documenting what "home in Shanghai" means to them, Mia sent me the following photo of her room (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Home in Shanghai: Mia's room. Photo by Mia.

Stuffed with magazines, books, clothes, photos, and souvenirs, Mia's room seems to bring all of her personal history together.

MIA: *Many people move with a suitcase. You know, in my case the furniture [...] my books, everything that lies in there. If you only move with a suitcase, or with two, three boxes, then you don't take everything along, but also leave a few things behind. I have things, my goodness, which I really don't need anymore. If I moved right now and opened a second room, I would leave a lot of things behind, but would not throw them away. [...] But I could not live in an empty room. Absolutely not. I think if I moved without my stuff, nevertheless, after a month at the most, my room would be full. I don't know, I just need that. It has always been like that.*²²

22 German original: MIA: *Viele Leute, die ziehen mit dem Koffer um. Weißt du, bei mir die Möbel, [...] meine Bücher, was da alles drinne liegt [sind dabei]. Wenn du nur mit dem Koffer umziehst, oder mit zwei, drei Kisten, dann nimmst du ja nicht alles mit, sondern lässt eben auch einiges stehen. Weil ich hab ja Sachen, meine Güte, die brauch ich ja echt nicht mehr. Aber man kann sich dann eben auch nicht trennen. Wenn ich jetzt umziehen würde und ein zweites Zimmer eröffnen würde sozusagen, würd ich halt viele Sachen auch stehen lassen, aber die ja trotzdem nicht wegschmei-*

Objects and the associations they evoke make her feel at home. The miniature Eiffel tower, the hat from Vietnam, the pillow on the bed displaying Shanghai's iconic buildings, for instance, all relate to places she has been. An issue of the German women's magazine *Brigitte* hints at connections to German or global female consumer culture. Photographs display friends, friendships, and memorable moments.

MIA: *I think photos are really important. Photos are what I cling to most. Oh, one time, I lost all my photos. Well, I deleted all of them accidentally. I was so desperate. <L> I was sooo desperate.*²³

Her narrative of losing all her photos, which she could only partly regain through friends and parents, is reminiscent of Burns' (2011) account of losing her belongings and, consequently, the reminders and markers of who she is. Mia's room shows that some items, for instance the Shanghai pillow, might have been purchased with the future in mind, like the objects belonging to Hindman's actors in Nepal, "ready to spring to life in a new location" (Hindman 2009b, 676–677). While Hindman stresses how such memorabilia "impart status to their possessors," I see them as helpful means for expatriate youths to adjust to new places of residence.

FOOD

In her article "The Taste of Home," Elia Petridou (2001, 89) studies Greek students' culinary practices in London, showing how food can create "the experience of home as a sensory totality." By exploring food culture, Petridou sees home as located "away from its physical structures of the house" but still linked to the material world, understanding it "as a practice and a combination of processes through which its inhabitants acquire a sense of history and identity" (ibid., 88). I can relate to the importance of food in feeling at home. While I enjoyed exploring my Chinese surroundings by dining out in local restaurants, eateries, noodle shops, and street food stalls, I occasionally prepared "home" food at home.²⁴ However, I was startled to find that, for many students, these clear place/taste relationships were dissolv-

ßen. [...] Aber ich könnte nicht in so einem leeren Zimmer leben. Echt nicht. Ich glaube wenn ich umziehen würde ohne meine Sachen, trotzdem, spätestens nach einem Monat wär mein Zimmer voll. Ich weiß nicht, ich brauch das. Und das war auch immer so.

23 German original: MIA: *Ich finde Fotos sind soo wichtig. Also, Fotos sind immer das, wo ich mich am meisten so dran klammere. Oh einmal, da hab ich meine ganzen Fotos verloren. Also ich hab die alle gelöscht, ausversehen. Ich war so am Ende. <L> Ich war sooo am Ende.*

24 I call this type of food "home food," as I would not consider these meals specifically German or "authentic" to other regions, but rather food that includes imported groceries which I or my research participants used before and that are specialties in Shanghai, such as cheese, olives, Italian pasta, bread, cream, wine, or other items. For Asian students, these ingredient lists also included

ing, or had even turned the other way around. While I had learned from the students' maps and participant observation that the teenagers enjoyed eating out in Western style restaurants, I initially underestimated the role of the *ayi*,²⁵ the maid or nanny, until a discussion with Paul drew my attention to the issue.

INTERVIEWER: *Do you mainly go to Western restaurants? Or do you go to eat Chinese?*

PAUL: *Well, my ayi can make Chinese food.*

The students experience Chinese food at home, prepared by the family's maid, and the city of Shanghai therefore often provides the international food they crave. Of course some of the students enjoy their native cuisine at home, as an *ayi* working for several foreign families told me. Although she would cook Chinese food two or three times per week, she was particularly proud of her skills preparing pizza, making spinach pies, and baking whole wheat bread. Not in all households, however, is the preparation of meals left to the *ayi*. After one interview with three of "the boys," Bjorn made everyone jealous by saying that his mom was awaiting him at home, along with homemade Spaghetti Bolognese. Apparently this was exceptional, as many expatriate families rely on their maid for food preparation. Generally, "home" food is noticeably missed. Paul, who grew up in the United States, for instance, would crave Slurpees (iced, flavored drinks). Most of the German boys commented on missing kebabs, or food they associated with their grandmothers' cooking, such as potato salad or roast beef. The category of home food, however, becomes questionable when Chinese dishes become an integrated part of the diet at home and "home food"—Western dishes—part of dining out in the city. For expatriate students, food therefore rather relates to broader ideas of home, as Mia's account on the relationship between certain food smells and feelings of being at home illustrates:

imports from Korea, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and India, such as different curry pastes.

- 25 Among expatriate families and middle class Chinese citizens, it is common to have a maid that helps with cleaning, cooking, or child rearing. As explained earlier, the maid is commonly called "*ayi*," which literally translates to "aunt." Teenagers, like everyone else in the expatriate community, have kept the Chinese term. For contemplations on the role of household staff in students' lives and its impact on understanding class and class-consciousness, see Heather Hindman (2009b) and Part III, Chapter 3.3 of this study. For the role of the maid in Chinese households, see Wanning Sun (2008).

MIA: *Well, Germany is my home, but Germany as a country. This is the case as soon as I step out of the airport and smell the bakery aromas.²⁶ That simply is home. That is not a specific place, but this feeling that I only have in Germany.²⁷*

Certain practices surrounding food, however, can encourage the process of home-making, as Bjorn's pride in his mother's Bolognese shows. The fact that his mother—and not the maid—prepared the dish was also crucial to its value.

FAMILY LIFE AND SETTLING IN

Mia's, Bjorn's, and their peers' experiences show that material culture plays a significant role in making home a meaningful place for teenagers' everyday lives. Further details from Mia's case highlight the reciprocal relationship between materiality and human practices in the process of turning a new place into a home.

Mia, who has moved several times in her life, always draws a lot of strength from her family. She and her two siblings have very close relationships and it seems to me that shared family activities are an important coping mechanism for her. This impression is confirmed when she tells me about her struggles when her father and older sister had to leave Shanghai due to job obligations and college. Mia, her mother, and brother stayed on in Shanghai, however, for Mia to finish her last year of school. During our interview a year later, she recalls:

MIA: *There was a difficult moment when we came to know that my father had to move. That really wasn't great. Especially in the beginning, because my father and sister both stayed in Germany. And the three of us came back to move into this house [in Shanghai]. We had lived in a different house before. That was no easy time. I was really... The first month, every evening, I was always sad, I cried a lot. It was okay during the day when I was at school, but [difficult] in the evenings at home. Our family life changed a lot. We all used to sit around the dinner table, and now we are only three, and usually someone is not there. Well, it really did change a lot.*

26 For an understanding of the meaning of bread for German communities abroad, see chapter nine "Vermissen, Organisieren, Neuentdecken" of Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich's (2002) ethnographic study of Germans in New Zealand, *Auswandern: Destination Neuseeland*.

27 German original: MIA: *Also, Deutschland so ist meine Heimat, aber Deutschland so als Land. Das ist schon so wenn ich aus dem Flughafen geh und den Bäckereigeruch rieche, das ist dann einfach Heimat. Das ist jetzt nicht wirklich unbedingt ein spezieller Ort, sondern so einfach dieses Gefühl, was ich in Deutschland nur hab.*

Sometimes we have to make plans: Okay, let's all go out for dinner together, so we can all talk for hours again. Otherwise you talk, sure, but only two of us, rarely all three.²⁸

Mia misses her father and sister, but she also misses the communal dinner as a family routine that is crucial to rendering the place of residence into home. When I inquire about her strategies for dealing with the new situation at home, she explains:

MIA: *Well, since we have become such a small family, I plan a lot of activities. So I am really out a lot, simply because... Well, I used to be happy to be home alone once in a while, because it so rarely happened. If you are five people, it rarely happens. And now I don't enjoy being home alone, then I am like, "Okay, what do I do now?" So when I am home alone I usually go downtown or just do something with friends. [...] My calendar is actually always full. That's sort of my strategy. Well, sure, I also think a lot. But sitting at home all the time, everything is kind of crashing down around you the whole time, but you can't do anything about it, and you're just sitting around stupidly.²⁹*

Since these dinners no longer convey the sense of home, Mia prefers to spend time outside with her friends, establishing new practices of home-making for herself in Shanghai.³⁰ Likewise, many of the expatriate students learn to live with fathers who are often absent. Eleven-year-old

28 German original: MIA: *Da war bei mir noch ein schwieriger Moment als es hieß, dass mein Vater wegziehen muss. Das war halt, das war wirklich nicht schön. Vor allem die erste Zeit, weil mein Vater und meine Schwester sind dann ja gleichzeitig in Deutschland geblieben. Und wir sind zu dritt wiedergekommen und sind in dieses Haus [in Shanghai] gezogen. Davor haben wir in einem anderen Haus gelebt. Das war keine einfache Zeit. Weil da war ich wirklich ... Den ersten Monat war ich jeden Abend so, oh nee, war immer traurig, hab viel geweint. [...] Also wenn ich tagsüber in der Schule war, war kein Problem [...] Aber abends halt zu Hause, hmm. [...] Das Familienleben hat sich schon verändert. Davor saßen wir immer alle gemeinsam am Abendbrottisch. Und jetzt sind wir halt, dadurch dass wir zu dritt sind, ist eigentlich fast immer einer nicht da. Also es hat sich schon sehr verändert. Wir müssen uns teilweise verabreden: „Okay, wir gehen jetzt mal wieder zusammen essen, damit wir mal wieder stundenlang alle miteinander reden können.“ Weil sonst, klar, man redet zu zweit, aber zu dritt halt seltener.*

29 German original: MIA: *Also seitdem wir so eine kleine Familie sind, nehme ich mir halt extrem viel vor. Das heißt ich bin wirklich viel unterwegs, weil ich halt ... Also früher war ich manchmal echt froh alleine zu Hause zu sein, weil es kam echt nicht oft vor. Wenn du zu fünft bist, kommt es nicht oft vor. Und jetzt bin ich nicht so gerne alleine zu Hause, das heißt ich bin irgendwie so „Okay, was mach ich jetzt?“ Deswegen, wenn ich alleine zu Hause bin, fahr ich meistens in die Stadt oder mach halt was mit Freunden. [...] Mein Kalender ist eigentlich immer voll. Das ist so meine Strategie. Also, klar, denk ich auch viel nach. Aber so die ganze Zeit zu Hause sitzen und die ganze Zeit stürzt so alles auf dich ein, aber du kannst eigentlich nicht wirklich was tun, sondern sitzt da nur so blöd rum.*

30 The chapters in Part IV, "Living," further discuss practices of emplacement in the city and outside the home.

Allen, for instance, only sees his father on the weekends, when he returns from his work site in a minor Chinese city.

It is evident that the expatriate teenagers' material practices of creating "home" are continuous negotiations, not only of home as a site, but also of processes of emplacement in the city and of larger understandings of belonging, as Walsh succinctly phrases it: "Domestic materialities can play a highly significant role in migrants' negotiation of geographies of belonging, residence, landscape and place" (2011, 516). Basu and Coleman argue that material culture shows how migrants not only change their place, but also "their place within the 'world' they have entered" (2008, 324). Having laid open the connections between belongings and belonging, the next section explores the latter in more detail and links theoretical positions to the students' own perspectives on their place in the world.

2.3 (Trans)local ties: theorizing students' negotiations of home and belonging

Diasporic identities are at once local and global. They are networks of transnational identification encompassing "imagined" and "encountered" communities (Brah 1996, 196).

The questions of belonging and home are central topics in migration studies and have led to various conceptualizations. Researchers across different disciplines have analyzed and conceptualized transnational migrants' practices and understood migrant forms of belonging, often "through abstracted spatial tropes" (Walsh 2006a, 124), putting emphasis on the state of "in-betweenness" and the multiple ties migrants maintain. For instance, Vertovec writes, in regard to these multiple ties:

Many migrants today intensively conduct activities and maintain substantial commitments that link them with significant others [...] who dwell in nation-states other than those in which the migrants themselves reside. Migrants now maintain such connections through uses of technology, travel and financial mechanisms more intensely than ever before possible (Vertovec 2004, 970–971).

With the rise of multiple connections, Simon Turner (2008, 1050) argues that "transnational migration and diasporic communities contain an inherent spatial tension, as populations no longer 'fit' their territory—belonging to several places at once." Other concepts using "abstracted spatial tropes" to understand the complex processes of linking places and people across borders and the migrant's "position" in these networks include "transnational social spaces" (Pries 2001), "ethnoscapes" (Appadurai 1996), and the "third space" (Bhabha [1994] 2009).

Katie Walsh (2006a, 124) succinctly outlines the discourse on migration and home, recalling that, at the end of the twentieth century, theorists described “contemporary social life and individual experience that privileged global movement.” Summarizing the discussion of, among others, Castells ([1996] 2000), Hannerz ([1996] 2001), Chambers (1994), and Robertson et al. (1994), Walsh proposes that “we live in a world of ‘flows’ and societies in which identities are destabilized and detached from place,” but points out that ideas which “privilege movement over attachment” have since been contested and criticized for “their insensitivity towards the continued importance of place, dwelling, and home.” According to Walsh, Geraldine Pratt’s (1992) reflections on the “problematic nature of the hierarchical dualism of mobility/dwelling established by these literatures,”³¹ inspired theorists such as Brah (1996), Rapport and Dawson (1998), and Ahmed et al. (2003) to understand home and migration as being interdependent (ibid.). Increasingly, scholars—Walsh (2006a, 124) refers to Lamb (2002) and the geographers Jackson, Crang, and Dwyer (2004); the ethnographer Englund’s (2002) post-globalist approach that was discussed earlier could be added—now call for research on processes of migration that is “grounded’ through attention to the ways such processes are locally lived and produced” (Walsh 2006a, 124). This critique of earlier conceptualizations of the impact of migration on belonging that disregard the role of place also echoes Avtar Brah’s warning that “the very strong association of notions of diaspora with displacement and dislocation means that the experience of *location* can easily dissolve out of focus” (1996, 180).

The two preceding parts of this chapter have therefore stressed the experiences and practices revolving around the concrete site of the home and its embeddedness in the larger context of gated community living in Shanghai, with its inherent demarcation from local society. But how are these practices of settling in and demarcation related to the movement of expatriate youths and global, flowing, and shifting connections and identifications? The final section of this chapter consequently investigates students’ own perspectives on belonging by investigating their relationships with places and people beyond Shanghai, and to abstract or imagined ideas or emotions as emerging from their experiences of mobility and home-making.

31 In a commentary on spatial metaphors and speaking positions, Geraldine Pratt warns against the “rhetoric of mobility and detachment from place” (1992, 241) that increasingly informs the metaphors used in contemporary cultural studies literature. This rhetoric praises mobility and privileges movement in the production of knowledge. Pratt argues that these metaphors run the risk of promoting an understanding of dwelling that focuses solely on reactionary ideas or problems, as in some forms of nationalism, for example, and calls for understanding dwelling also as “the legitimacy and value of peoples’ struggles to create their own places and memories” (Pratt 1992, 243). Pratt emphasizes that this focus needs to accompany “the rhetoric of movement that privileges detachment from place” in order to “break down a new hierarchy of difference created through the seemingly fashionable mobility—dwelling duality” (ibid.).

TALKING ABOUT HOME AND BELONGING

Following the importance given to home and belonging in previous research, I discussed the topic during all interviews with students. During these conversations, I sometimes feared that the term “home” referred to a quite prescriptive idea and that students would feel obliged to position themselves or state alliances to nationality or places of “origin.” However, I still considered “home,” as a part of everyday vocabulary, the best choice. I then tried to open up the discussion by asking not only “Where is home for you?” but by further asking: “What do you usually reply when someone asks you where you are from?” I initiated discussion following these questions and asked the students how they felt about them, and whether these were easy or difficult questions to answer. It became apparent that, for many students, the answers heavily depended on *who* would ask them, a trend that points out how performative and relational the politics of home are. The following section presents these interviews and a discussion in the form of mind maps that were produced at the German school. The students were asked to discuss their ideas of “Heimat” (belonging/home) in written form, in class. These mind maps show that home is a term which brings about many associations and emotions (Figure 12).

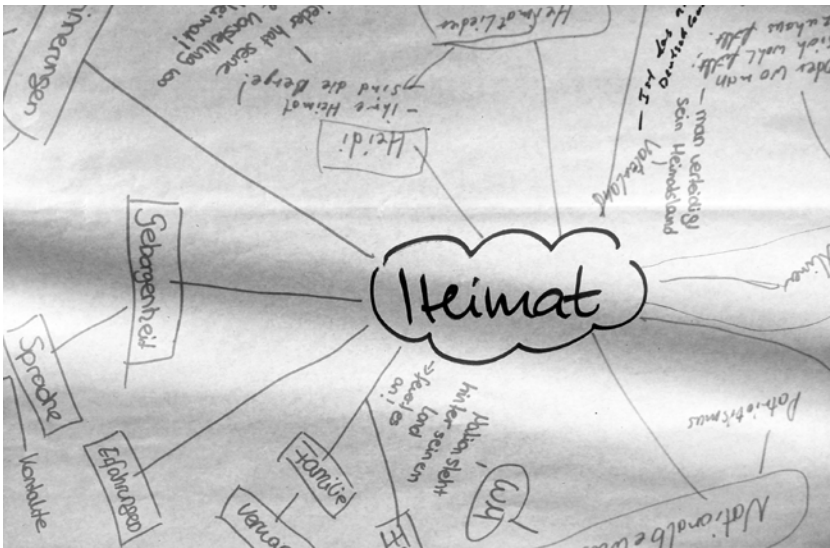


Figure 12. Section of Mind Map 1 on “Heimat.” Drawing by four students.

Covering a variety of issues, the students refer to the places where they grew up and “childhood,” as well as “memories” and “experiences” in general. They list “family” and the presence of relatives and pets. Likewise, friends feature prominently in all four sketches, and are linked to comments on community and trust. “School” also finds its way onto one of the posters.

The teenagers also discuss sensorial experiences, such as climate and food, and familiar cultural practices, such as festivals and language. Houses and apartments as well as objects such as photos, videos, and music appear on the maps, too.

“Heimat” also evokes comments on patriotism, birthplace, nationality, nation states (“Germany, China”) and mega-events like the World Cup (“Nation stands behind its country → roots for it”).

Moreover, all the sketches display discussions on media, listing social networks and services such as Facebook, Gowalla, Twitter, Myspace, and forms of communication such as VoIP (Voice over IP) and instant messenger platforms. Next to these ways of staying in touch with friends and family, German online media is also mentioned as a way that many of the students relate to their country of citizenship (Figure 13).

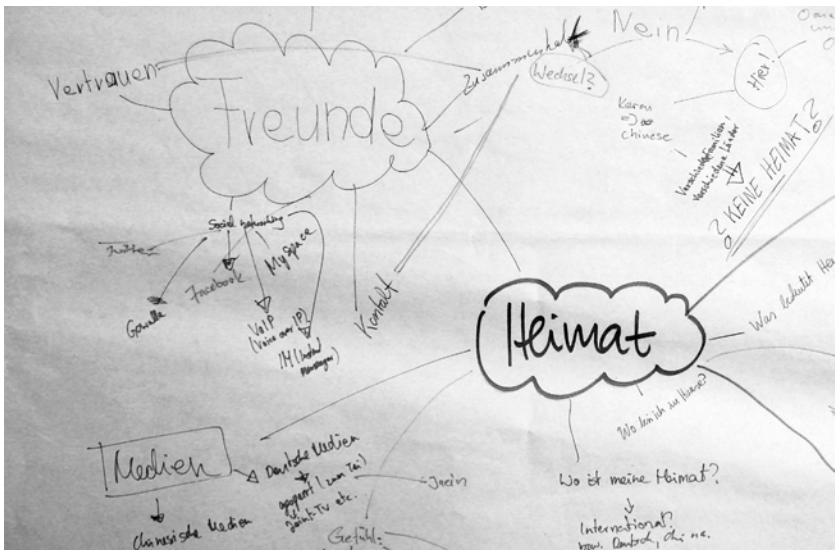


Figure 13. Section of Mind Map 2 on “Heimat.” Drawing by four students.

Emotions such as feeling accepted or safe play a prominent role in their written discussions of home, with students noting that home is “where I can be myself,” with “people who really know you,” or that “home is where the heart is.” Some remarks refer to individual aspects of and ideas about belonging, such as “everyone imagines home differently.”

“Moving” is mentioned in connection to the question “Does ‘home’ change?” Other comments simply inquire “no home?” or “homeless?” On one poster, students ask “What is homeless?” and answer their own question with “when you feel you are wanted nowhere and have no relation to any specific place” and “neither place nor people.”

“Heimat” evokes various associations and questions among students. The students make it clear that it is something they continuously negotiate and relate to “childhood,” “family,” “friends,” “nationality,” “media,” “everyday

practices," "experiences," "memories," and "feelings." It seems that, through moving, contemplating the notion of home becomes even more relevant. The next sections therefore look at several individual students' thoughts about and negotiations of their subjective ideas of home.

STUDENTS' POSITIONS ON HOME AND BELONGING

Home is often associated with stability and continuity, as the following quote from sixteen-year-old Arnaud, whom I introduced earlier in Part I, Chapter 4.3, demonstrates:

ARNAUD: *You think it's gonna be the same all your life. And you want it to stay that way and not change. I was nine years old and I had my friends and my... Cause I was in France, in Paris, in a small city called, not even a city, it's just between a city and a village.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yeah. A suburb?*

ARNAUD: *Exactly. And so I knew lots of people around. It's really, you feel like home a bit. At nine years old. And then you come to China and it's a huge city, and you say "oh." The style of life, there is a big change in the style of life.*

However, due to the fact that continuity and "everything staying a certain way" is not a given for children moving transnationally, many of my interviewees have difficulty pointing out what home is to them. Japanese student Kazuo, whom I interviewed at the Singaporean school, explains:

KAZUO: *Home is like, when you ask that question in Shanghai, like, in Shanghai. I have no home in Japan. So, I cannot answer my home is in Japan. In Japan, I always, like, <x> grew up in other places. So I cannot say "where are you from?" "Japan." I am not sure.*

Like Kazuo, the international students with their transnational ties and connections to multiple locations have to negotiate the term and find a way to go beyond prioritizing one place over the other. In the eyes of expatriate youths, home is nothing fixed or easy to define.

Some students deal with the problem of defining home by claiming home as "back home." For instance, eleven-year-old Allen, who has already lived in several places, sees his home tied to the current house his parents own in the US:

ALLEN: *I'd say South Carolina, cause that's the house there right now. But I am originally from Chicago, Illinois, but I never actually, I don't have any memories in my brain about it.*

This definition of home is related to the way his whole family conceptualizes their stay abroad. His parents' influence, as well as how his family defines "home" as the house in the US, can be seen in his account of traveling back to the US in the summer and the consistent use of "we" in his narrative:

ALLEN: *One other disadvantage for me is, living in China is very far away from my home country. And where we have a house in the USA is the farthest it could be away from us, in the US. Because it is east of the US, so we have to ride a fifteen-hours flight home, and we have to ride another two-hour flight back to our house. And then plus driving hours.*

INTERVIEWER: *And plus the waiting hours in the airport. It feels like a whole day of traveling.*

ALLEN: *That is a long thing that we don't enjoy. All the flying.*

INTERVIEWER: *But that is still your home?*

ALLEN: *Yeah. I call it home.*

For seventeen-year-old Karina, Shanghai is her fourth city of residence. However, she prefers Prague, which she links to her friends' and family's presence:

INTERVIEWER: *But you feel comfortable in both places, somehow?*

KARINA: *I feel more comfortable in Prague. Because I have my friends and my family there. And I was simply born there. I spent the biggest part of my life there. And, yes, I have a much closer relationship to Prague than to Shanghai. Shanghai, I think, okay, I moved here because of my father and I get my diploma and
goodbye. And then I maybe come back some time for my studies. But I always try to spend as little time here as possible. I don't know.³²*

Karina and Allen both actively maintain their ties to what they consider their true "home," Prague and the house in the USA. Shanghai is only a transitory space to them. Karina not only defines Prague as her home, but also Shanghai as a place where she tries to spend "as little time as possible." She points this out during a follow-up interview that I conduct with her one year after her initial move to Shanghai. Karina had difficulties with the "homing" process and, even after one year, limits her relationship to Shanghai to see-

32 German original: INTERVIEWER: *Aber du fühlst dich in beiden wohl, irgendwie?* KARINA: *In Prag fühl ich mich wohler. Weil ich da eben meine Freunde und meine Familie hab. Und ich wurde da einfach geboren. Ich hab da den größten Teil meines Lebens einfach verbracht. Und, ja zu Prag hab ich eine viel engere Beziehung als zu Shanghai. Shanghai, denk ich mir, okay, ich bin jetzt wegen meinem Vater hierhin gezogen und ich mach jetzt mein Abi und tschüss. Und dann komm ich hier vielleicht mal wegen meinem Studium her zurück. Aber ich versuch hier immer so wenig Zeit wie möglich zu verbringen. Ich weiß nicht.*

ing it as merely an aspect of her father's job. However, just before the interview she had returned from a summer in Prague and was really missing her family and friends there. In short, for some students, home is connected to "elsewhere," to necessary travel, and to missing people and places.

Keeping the migratory experiences of the young actors in this study in mind, it is not surprising to find that their transient relationship with Shanghai might make it difficult for some of these students to consider it home. Tamara, who was twelve years old when we talked during a group discussion at a British school, explained:

TAMARA: *For me, I think I should call China home, because I feel more comfortable here than <x>. Erm, but I don't really know if China should be my home, because I think I will be moving somewhere else after three or more years.*

For Tamara—who grew up in Singapore and China—the fear of leaving, of moving on, makes it difficult to relate to Shanghai as home, even though she “feels comfortable” there. Shanghai can only be a temporary home, a transit space. Giovanni has a similar understanding. He describes himself as “feeling safe” and “a little bit like at home” in Shanghai,³³ but when he further reflects on the question of home, he argues that, although he has not lived in Switzerland—the country of his parents and nationality—for three years now, he would, nevertheless, call it home. His major argument is that he is only “temporarily” in Shanghai, “like a long holiday” (wie lange Ferien). Again, his quote shows how Shanghai is perceived as a transient space, a temporary home.

Giovanni's contemplations, however, also point to the possibility of having two homes simultaneously, Switzerland and Shanghai, an idea many students present in interviews. In her writings on diaspora, Avtar Brah (1996) answers the question of what “home” means with a conceptualization based on distinguishing “homing desire” from the “desire for homeland,” which she sees as two different simultaneous processes and discourses (1996, 16):

On the one hand, “home” is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of “origin.” On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, somber grey skies in the middle of the day ... all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations (Brah 1996, 192).

33 German original: GIOVANNI: *Aber eigentlich fühl ich mich hier ganz sicher. Und eigentlich auch wie zu Hause. Ein bisschen. Ich mag es eigentlich hier.*

Akin to Avtar Brah's two notions of home, eighteen-year-old Matthias explains: "I think, like, both are kind of home. Maybe right now I'd say rather here [in Shanghai] than Germany." Later, however, Matthias identifies home less hesitatingly: "For me. Germany." This seeming contradiction, having two homes, is not surprising. Students have the sense that they have to choose, to decide. Yet, they maintain emotional connections to both places.

Sixteen-year-old Mia's musings that I discussed above also illustrate Brah's conceptualizations of home. Her reflections on material practices and "home-making" in Shanghai have shown that, while she clearly considers where she lives as "at home" (Zuhause), her sense of where she truly belongs, of a true "home" (Heimat), is tied to Germany as a country, and is symbolized by the smell of bakeries. She comments on this dualistic concept:

MIA: *You don't have a place where you can say, this is where I've spent all my life or big parts of my life. That's where I belong, because I have lived here [in Shanghai] the longest. But still I would... no idea... it is my home [Zuhause], but it's not my home [Heimat].*³⁴

The distinction she draws in German between "Zuhause" and "Heimat," perhaps comparable to the English distinction between one's house and one's home, coincides with Brah's (1996) two formulations of home. However, discussing the matter further, Mia stresses that being at home is, due to her experiences, not only tied to a single place in her life, but is multi-local.

MIA: *It's really like that! Also, if you go somewhere you have lived before. For instance, when I go with my family to Singapore. Even years later. You don't even have to remember it that well. Just at that moment when you are riding in a taxi and you look out the window and see these palm trees. That is simply home. It's as if you were coming home!*³⁵

Mia's descriptions remind us that Brah's definition, although at first tempting us to see a dualistic form of home for migrants, encompasses the

34 German original: MIA: *Weil man hat einfach nicht einen Ort wo man sagt, da hab ich mein ganzes Leben verbracht oder Großteile meines Lebens. Da gehör ich hin. Weil ich hab jetzt am längsten hier [in Shanghai] gelebt. Aber trotzdem würd ich das, keine Ahnung. Das ist jetzt mein Zuhause, aber das ist nicht meine Heimat.*

35 German original: MIA: *Das ist aber wirklich so! Auch wenn man irgendwo hinfährt wo man vorher schon mal gewohnt hat. Also zum Beispiel wenn ich mit meiner Familie nach Singapur fahre. Noch Jahre später. Man muss mich noch nicht mal so sehr daran erinnern. Einfach in dem Moment wo du da fährst im Taxi, raus guckst, diese Palmen. Das ist einfach zu Hause. Das ist einfach als würde man nach Hause kommen!*

“double, triple, or multi-placedness of ‘home’” (Brah 1996, 194). Brah’s definitions of home have to be understood as applicable for multiple locations. This dualistic view of home, however, is wide spread in migration studies. When social anthropologist Steven Vertovec writes about the transformation, through transnationalism, of “the everyday social worlds of individuals and families in both migrant sending and receiving contexts” (Vertovec 2004, 974), he summarizes various concepts describing “practices of exchange, communication and frequent travel” (ibid., 974) among transmigrants under the umbrella term “bifocality” (ibid.). This “migrants’ orientational bifocality” draws from concepts such as “bifocalism” (Rouse 1992), “life world” (Smith 2001), and Guarnizo’s concept of a transnational *habitus* which is linked to a “dual frame of reference” (Guarnizo 1997, 311 cited in Vertovec 2004, 974).³⁶ While Vertovec’s concept of “bifocality” may hold for many cases of migration, it is not applicable to all expat youths, due to their high mobility and bicultural families. While we note that, for these children, the terms “Zuhause” (at home) and “Heimat” (home) do not coincide, the following accounts will demonstrate the need for concepts which go beyond “bifocality” (Vertovec 2004, 974) and acknowledge multiplicity.

Jennifer Robinson (2010, 16) similarly stresses the importance of the imaginary in connections between cities, the “imaginative ways in which places are drawn together or kept apart.” She therefore includes people who physically stay in one region in the process of connecting places when she argues that “residents are always in the process of preparing to leave for an imagined elsewhere, that they already know much about other cities or live [sic] an imaginary world that is both here and there. Within a topological imagination, making one’s way in a city commonly entrains a wide diversity of other places” (Robinson 2010, 16). Robinson’s argument, which I presented in the introduction and on which I expand here, shows that ties to other places are vivid in our everyday lives. Moving through and living in Shanghai is thus constantly tied to elsewhere. However, for expatriate youths, these ties are not only based on imaginary scenarios (centering on future places of residence or travel destinations), but on memories and sensory experiences from elsewhere. Due to their many moves, the actors of my study are able to constantly draw from their memories of other places. Marco, a student at the German school and the child of a Brazilian-German marriage, for instance, stresses his positive relationships to a multiplicity of places. However, he also emphasizes the difficulties he has conceptualizing these:

36 *Habitus*, as described by Bourdieu in “The Forms of Capital,” can be understood as a person’s unconscious embodiment of cultural capital over time (1986, 244–245). However, the term simultaneously characterizes the formative relations between individuals and their socio-cultural surroundings, as Bourdieu argues in his work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984, 170): “The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world [that] is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes.”

MARCO: *I have lived in Leverkusen all my life. But we were also often at my grandparents, on one side [of the family] in the Black Forest and, on the other side, in Brazil. Yes, I have so much there that I feel very connected to both places, because we really spent a lot of time there. Usually we'd go there once a month, to my grandpa's in the Black Forest. And the whole summer vacation we'd spend in Brazil.*

INTERVIEWER: *In Brazil.*

MARCO: *Yes, and there, erm, now, I don't know. It's really complicated.*

INTERVIEWER: <L>

MARCO: *I have been living here for one and a half years now. And, erm, I don't know. I don't know where I feel more connected or what, now. My home [Heimat] is actually in Leverkusen. Yes, but I am living in Shanghai. I don't know. Somehow I can't express that.³⁷*

In this interview, Marco openly voices his difficulties explaining his attachment to several places at once. His comments read as if the questions about where home is pressure him to make a choice. At first refraining from using the word "home," he makes it clear that he feels connected to former places of residence as well as to the different places his family came from. He reluctantly uses the German term "Heimat" to refer to the city he grew up in, only to immediately state his uncertainty about this choice and to make it clear that he cannot state preferences or put his relationships with those places into words. His life is embedded in a network of different places in which family relations play a key role.

Paul, whose case I presented in the Introduction, is also the child of a mixed-nationality marriage, and similarly grew up in several places, although he and his parents moved more often. In contrast to Marco, Paul describes his multi-local experiences by stating his non-attachment to places. He defines home as "wherever I am staying."³⁸

37 German original: MARCO: *Ich hab halt mein Leben lang in Leverkusen gelebt. Wir waren aber auch oft bei meinen Großeltern, einerseits im Schwarzwald und andererseits halt in Brasilien. Ja da hab ich halt auch so viel, fühl ich mich sehr zu verbunden. Zu den beiden Orten, weil wir da echt viel Zeit verbracht haben. Wir waren da normalerweise einmal im Monat, bei meinem Opa, also im Schwarzwald. Und in den Sommerferien eigentlich die ganze Zeit immer in Brasilien.* INTERVIEWER: *In Brasilien.* MARCO: *Ja, und da, ehm, ja jetzt, ich weiß nicht. Das ist echt kompliziert.* INTERVIEWER: <L> MARCO: *Ja, ich wohn hier jetzt ja auch seit eineinhalb Jahren. Und ehm, ich weiß nicht. Ich weiß nicht genau, wo ich mich jetzt mehr verbunden fühle. Oder was ich jetzt. Meine Heimat ist eigentlich in Leverkusen. Ja, aber ich wohn halt in Shanghai. Ich weiß nicht, ich kann das irgendwie nicht so ausdrücken.*

38 INTERVIEWER: *So when people ask you where home is, what do you usually give as an answer?* PAUL: *I don't.* <L> *I don't say anything.* INTERVIEWER: *You don't say anything?* —PAUL: *[Pause] Or I say wherever I am staying. If I live here, I say here is home. [...] Yeah I guess here'd be home, because I wouldn't wanna live anywhere else.* As I have already described in the Introduction, home seems to be a vague idea for Paul, who attributes his attachment to Shanghai mostly to the fact that it is his current place of residence. His world is greatly in flux; a couple months after

Other students see their connections with multiple places as a potential status symbol. As Alex notes, when describing his experience to others:

ALEX: *That is also bragging a little. And simply interesting, I guess. I would be interested in someone who has lived in Shanghai for three years.*³⁹

Alex is proud of his expat lifestyle and ties his experience to cosmopolitanism rather than seeing difficulties with negotiating what “home” means. One could also describe Alex’s classmate Kressi’s outlook as cosmopolitan. Kressi, who was fifteen years old when I met her and who moved from Germany to Shanghai as a toddler, verbalizes her idea of home by tracing her relations to relatives and friends in other places and by fixing home as an emotional state.

KRESSI: *It is this feeling. That’s why I say “the world is my home.” The whole world. The world is my home, because there is something. My uncle is in America. I like to go shopping there and love it there. And all my friends, who have now moved on, are in Germany.*⁴⁰

Her simultaneous attachment to many places is based on people, practices, and emotions. These experiences of places lead to the feeling that she has a whole network of homes, which emerged from her family’s multiple migrations over generations. Thus for expatriate youths, home is always multifocal: a connection of several places, people, and practices. These connections can be understood as “rhizomatic.”

Hindman (2009b, 676) has compared the way “the expatriate family can spring from the soil again”—due to the tendency among expats to collect objects which help them articulate and recreate personal histories and positions in new places—to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s (1987) formulation of the rhizome. Such a rhizome, as these students’ comments illustrate, is not only a connection of objects, but also of places, people, and practices. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) employ the image of the rhizome “as subterranean stem” to encourage a new way of thinking about the representation and interpretation of data and the production

the interview, he moved to Germany, while his parents settled in another part of Asia. This decision was mainly based on his wish to experience Europe, due to his being a German national, despite not speaking the language or ever having lived in Germany before.

39 German original: ALEX: *Weil das ist so ein bisschen angeben und so. Und halt auch, das ist einfach, interessant, denk ich mal. Also mich würde jemand interessieren, der irgendwie drei Jahre in Shanghai gelebt hat.*

40 German original: KRESSI: *Das Gefühl ist es. Deswegen sag ich auch: „Die Heimat ist meine Welt.“ Also das ist die ganze Welt. Also meine Heimat ist die Welt, weil da ist was. In Amerika ist mein Onkel und da geh ich gerne shoppen und ich liebe es da. Und in Deutschland sind meine Freunde, die jetzt weggezogen sind.*

of knowledge. They chose the image of the rhizome in contrast to that of “roots and radicles” which they see as having dominated our ways of analyzing thought until now (ibid., 6). Unlike a tree or its root, “which plots a point, fixes an order” (ibid., 7) the rhizome “connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states” (ibid., 21). It is in the same manner that the rhizomatic home includes different groups of people, practices, places, material goods, and senses of belonging. The rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari argue, underlies “principles of connection and heterogeneity” (ibid., 7) and may be broken, but is not hindered by breakage, since ruptures are inherent to it.

Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another (ibid., 9).

This ceaseless connection despite ruptures is also visible in the students’ perceptions of home—moves, as ruptures, do not interrupt feelings of belonging to places or people that, at first glance, seem cut off. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that a rhizome, which has no beginning or end, cannot be traced but only mapped (ibid., 12), because it is “always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*” (ibid., 25.). This in-betweenness of the rhizome, of the notion of home is, for Kressi, the child of second generation migrants from Hong Kong and Vietnam in Germany, who was born in Germany but grew up in Shanghai with transnational family ties to several places, simultaneously linked to challenges in cultural identity:

KRESSI: *The thing is, some people can simply say: “I am from Germany, but I live in Shanghai.” In a sense I am, yes, I am actually German. Because my Chinese isn’t that good. I also have a German passport and I grew up as a German. But the problem is that I don’t look German. And I look like a Chinese or something, but I just live here. But then Shanghai, nonetheless, somehow became my home [Heimat], just because everything I really know is here.*⁴¹

41 German original: KRESSI: *Das Ding ist, manche Leute können ganz einfach sagen: „Ich bin aus Deutschland, aber ich wohn in Shanghai.“ Bei mir ist es eigentlich so, ja, ich bin eigentlich Deutsche. Weil ich kann Chinesisch nicht so gut. Ich hab auch einen deutschen Pass und bin deutsch aufgewachsen. Aber das Problem ist, ich seh nicht deutsch aus. Und ich seh aus wie eine Chinesin oder so, aber ich wohn hier halt nur. Aber Shanghai ist dann doch irgendwie meine Heimat geworden, weil hier einfach alles ist was ich so wirklich kenne.*

Feeling at home is also tied to questions of identity and the right to claim a place as “home.” “Not looking German,” as Kressi puts it, thus makes the claim to Germany as her “Heimat”—according to Brah’s first definition, the place of “origin”—difficult. Home is tied to the politics of identity and belonging, even for affluent, privileged migrants. In Brah’s words:

The question of home, therefore, is intrinsically linked with the way in which processes of inclusion or exclusion operate and are subjectively experienced under given circumstances. It is centrally about our political and personal struggles over the social regulation of “belonging” (Brah 1996, 192).

Kressi’s quote supports Brah’s argument that the question of home is tied to the “social regulation of ‘belonging.’” She explains the difficulties her non-German looks, and the fact that she does not speak Chinese or own a Chinese passport, cause her in terms of defining her home to others. Nonetheless, Kressi also explains how processes of emplacement—“because simply everything I really know is here”—make Shanghai her home. Her emphasis that living in Shanghai makes her see the place as home resonates well with Brah’s argument that “the double, triple, or multi-placedness of ‘home’ in the imaginary [sic] of people in the diaspora does not mean that such groups do not feel anchored in the place of settlement” (Brah 1996, 194). Additionally, Kressi’s case shows that the idea of defining “back home” can become difficult.

For some of the students, especially those who move quite often and/or have parents of different nationalities, Brah’s first understanding of home as “a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination” (Brah 1996, 192) seems to become less important and a source of conflict within the family. Nine-year-old Jacob, the son of Malay parents, describes how he has difficulty seeing Malaysia as a place he could call home:

INTERVIEWER: *So what do you consider home?*

JACOB: *Everywhere.*

INTERVIEWER: *Everywhere.* Yeah.

JACOB: *Cause there is not a lot of places, except for Beijing, that I stayed long enough to actually get really, really used to it. And also, maybe I shouldn’t count Beijing, because when I was in Beijing, for the first few years, I was just a tiny thing and I wouldn’t remember anything. And when we moved to a different place, besides China, like Bangkok, I totally forgot all my Mandarin. [...]*

INTERVIEWER: *So home is? [Pause] Everywhere?*

JACOB: *Yeah [Exhales loudly].*

INTERVIEWER: *Does that make it hard sometimes that home is everywhere?*

JACOB: *I don’t know. Maybe I should say that home is Malaysia. Because, um, I actually have a house there. And once in a while we go back to our house, and well, just do some cleaning.*

INTERVIEWER: *So does it feel [like] home when you are there?*

JACOB: *No. Cause I have never slept there. And I have never used anything. Except I have seen all my old toys, [from] when I was much younger.*

Although Jacob was shown his birthplace and his old toys, he could not relate to them. For him, home seems to be tied to the idea of feeling emplaced, of "having slept there." His sister Emily has similar difficulties considering Malaysia her home. During an interview, she describes how she was looking forward to returning to Shanghai during a summer spent in Malaysia:

EMILY: *Like, when I go back for holidays [...] I see my grandparents, my family. And then like... Sometimes you don't actually know where to go. Because you don't feel part of that place. Some people go back and they are like: "Oh I am at home!" And stuff like that. But, then, you eventually miss where you actually live every day. Like, I would miss coming, I would miss being here. So whenever I go back, like for summer. I went back for, like, a month. After three weeks I told my mom: "What's the date we are leaving?"*

INTERVIEWER: <L>

EMILY: *Mom tells me that day and I start counting the weeks. And my mom asks: "Why? Do you miss home?" "Erm, yeah." And then my brother goes: "What do you mean home? We are home." My brother just has a different concept.*

She further discusses her relationship with Malaysia during the interview:

EMILY: *So I basically never... Okay, I could say about myself I have never lived in Malaysia. And I can't speak a word of Malay. And English is my first language.*

INTERVIEWER: *Okay. So what do you usually answer when people ask you where you are from? [...]*

EMILY: *I am from Malaysia. But, [...] then the next question that will come every day would be like: "Can you speak Malay? Can you teach me some Malay?" Like: "Eeeeh, no."*

INTERVIEWER: *No. <L> So what would you yourself say? What is, like, home to you?*

EMILY: *I always say home is wherever I have a roof, in whichever country.*

INTERVIEWER: <L>

EMILY: *So like, since now I live here, this is my home. I do have a house in Malaysia, but...*

INTERVIEWER: *It is not home?*

EMILY: *It's not home. [...] It is such a hard question to answer that. Where are you from? Where do you live? Where is your home country? What is your town? And, you can't.*

Emily evidently does not feel “part of that place” that is supposed to be “home.” Returning to Brah’s concept, Malaysia can, in Emily’s case, be seen as constructed in the first category of home, by the parents, as a “mythic place of desire” (Brah 1996, 192). However, when Emily arrives, she cannot call it home, because home—for her and her brother alike—is linked to Brah’s second conceptualization of home as “the lived experience of a locality.” When she discusses this on a meta-level by stressing that her brother “has a different concept,” she only refers to her brother still calling Malaysia home. That the siblings’ difficulties to accept Malaysia as home can lead to intergenerational difficulties can be seen in the following narration by Emily:

EMILY: *The worst thing is the international week here. And they ask you to write a poem about your country. Or a story about your country. Sometimes I have to go up to my teacher and ask: “I don’t know which country to pick.”*

INTERVIEWER AND TWO OTHER STUDENTS: <L>

EMILY: <L> *And then my teacher will ask me: “Well, where have you lived the most?” And then I say “Beijing.” Then she said, “fine, then do it about Beijing.” And then I say, “But honestly I have, I don’t really know what I did when I was young. I was only three.” And she says, “Okay, where do you remember the most?” And I would say “Bangkok.” So, then I would write about that. And then my mom would ask me, “Why did you choose that? You could have just come to me and ask about Malaysia.” I said, “Yeah, but, it is not gonna be like my words, it’s gonna be your words.” And so my mom says, “Yeah you are right.”*

INTERVIEWER: *Maybe your mom was sad that you didn’t pick Malaysia?*

EMILY: *Yeah, cause I think, as a parent they have all lived in one country until they grow up. And then they move. So, I think they don’t really know how it is like for the rest to move. And move and move.*

The siblings’ discussion of their relationships to multiple places focuses on the intergenerational conflicts arising from their parents seeing Malaysia as their supposed “home” and the children’s refusal to accept the idea of a fixed home in a world of flux. For expatriate youths, ideas of home and belonging can conflict with those of their family or with their nationality due to how their experiences and emplacement processes differ. The issue is further complicated when they feel that others could reject their claims of belonging due, for instance, to their physical appearance—as Kressi mentioned in her interview.

Some students, however, clearly see Shanghai as their home. Two students from the German School, Andrea and Antonia, both members of “the girls,” refer to Shanghai as their home. Andrea links this claim to her having an everyday routine there. She explains how she feels after returning from summer breaks in Germany:

ANDREA: *I like coming back here. [...] Now I can relax again. Now it is routine again. Now I don't have to live out of my suitcase anymore and so on. In a way, you come back home.*⁴²

Antonia's point of view is similar to Andrea's; she emphasizes the "normality" of coming "home" to Shanghai even more.

ANTONIA: *How is it to come back from a vacation? Like for everyone else, I believe. <L> I don't think there is a big difference between us and other people. Just home again. I go to my house and say hello to my dog, my ayi, my house, my bed.*

INTERVIEWER: <L>

ANTONIA: *There is no difference. Well, I don't know how it is supposed to be different from other people.*⁴³

Andrea and Antonia both consider Shanghai to be their home due to their current residence and routine practices in the city. Antonia's statement, "I don't know how it is supposed to be different from other people," demonstrates how she has no difficulty defining the city as her home. Her answer also points to an underlying annoyance provoked by the question. This might be because she senses that my position as a researcher is based on a latent assumption that the mobile lifestyle of expatriates brings about difficulties, an assumption which she refuses to accept. Her seeming annoyance may be further related to the fact that, despite growing up in Shanghai, being fluent in Chinese, and referring to herself as "Shanghai-ese," as the child of a mixed-marriage and a German national, she might not be accepted as such. She attributes her diverse notions about feeling at home to her living in the city, although claiming that belonging in Shanghai often remains difficult as reciprocal processes of boundary drawing between "foreigners" and "locals" remain prominent. But, as Brah has argued, "it is quite possible to feel at home in a place and, yet, the experience of social exclusions may inhibit public proclamations of the place as home" (1996, 193). Antonia thus emphasizes the idea of Shanghai as her home, while possibly also feeling the need to convince me during the interview because my questions often considered the high mobility of students. Antonia, however, has lived mostly in Shanghai, and distin-

42 German original: ANDREA: *Ich find das dann immer ganz schön hierher zurückzukehren. [...] Jetzt kann ich mich wieder entspannen. Jetzt ist wieder Routine. Jetzt muss ich nicht mehr aus dem Koffer leben und so. Man kommt dann auch nach Hause zurück eigentlich.*

43 German original: ANTONIA: *Wie ist es aus dem Urlaub wieder zurückzukommen? So wie bei jedem, glaube ich, also. <L> Ich glaub nicht, dass da ein großer Unterschied ist von uns wie bei anderen Leuten. Ist halt wieder nach Hause. Ich geh zu meinem Haus und sag meinen Hund Hallo, meiner Ayi, meinem Haus, meinem Bett. INTERVIEWER: <L> ANTONIA: *Da ist kein Unterschied. Also ich weiß nicht was da anders sein soll als bei anderen Leuten.**

guishes herself from other expatriate kids by repeatedly stating that she grew up in the metropolis.

ANTONIA: *I think for me it is, I simply—*

INTERVIEWER: *You grew up here, didn't you?*

ANTONIA: *—grew up here.*

INTERVIEWER: *Sure.*

ANTONIA: *Others are only here for one year. And, erm, I don't think they are happy about having a traffic jam again.*

INTERVIEWER: *<L>*

ANTONIA: *For me it is simply, well, I totally grew up here.⁴⁴*

Talking about experiencing the city, I shared that I sometimes find Shanghai stressful, but she emphasizes again:

ANTONIA: *But, I don't know. I don't find it stressful. Because I am ... I think that is because I grew up here.⁴⁵*

As Andrea's and Antonia's positions show, everyday practices and the desire for routine as well as (long-term) processes of emplacement contribute to students' claiming Shanghai as their home, and prioritizing the city over other places in their spatial networks. Nevertheless, while many expatriate youths may feel at home in Shanghai, public proclamations of the place as home remain difficult for them.

2.4 Concluding thoughts on home

A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 9).

As these students' narratives and practices have shown, home is not only anchored to a place, but also tied to people (relatives, friends, and classmates), emotions (such as "feeling safe"), objects (such as furniture, photographs, and books), sensory impressions (such as bakery smells), and practices (like a family dinner). As Walsh succinctly states, "The home is experienced simultaneously as both a material and immaterial, lived and imagined, localized and (trans)national space of belonging" (Walsh 2006a, 123). Home is therefore not only a bifocal outlook on one's "homeland"

44 German original: ANTONIA: *Ich glaube, bei mir ist es auch so, ich bin halt hier* INTERVIEWER: *Du bist ja hier aufgewachsen, ne?* ANTONIA: *aufgewachsen.* INTERVIEWER: *Na klar. Andere sind ja nur ein Jahr hier. Und ehm, ich glaub nicht, dass die sich darüber freuen wenn es wieder Stau gibt.* INTERVIEWER: *<L>* ANTONIA: *Also bei mir ist es einfach nur. Ja, ich bin hier total aufgewachsen.*

45 German original: ANTONIA: *Aber, ich weiß nicht. Ich finde es nicht anstrengend. Weil ich bin. Ich glaube das liegt auch daran, dass ich hier aufgewachsen bin.*

and “current home,” as former conceptualizations suggest (see summary by Vertovec 2004), but a multi-focal one, a network of homes. I believe that these diverse connections can be best understood as rhizomatic in the sense that Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) understand it. As noted earlier, unlike a tree or its root, “which plots a point, fixes an order” (ibid., 7), the rhizome “connects any point to any other point,” even if it is not usually classified as having a comparable nature (ibid., 21). It is in the same manner that the rhizomatic home connects different people, practices, places, material goods, and feelings of belonging. My analysis of the students’ rhizomatic home therefore identifies and maps the following aspects:

First, concerning the localized and material space, the expatriate students themselves are actively involved in the creation of home. While they have difficulties claiming the communal spaces of the gated communities as home, they decorate their bedrooms and sometimes other domestic spaces or turn the house into home by initiating and taking part in family activities. In short, they transform the new site into a meaningful space. These home-making practices help them to not only claim the current place of residence as a kind of home, but also serve to identify places where they lived before as home. These different locations are often still closely connected. For example, I often witnessed that my informants’ friends who used to live in Shanghai still came to visit, which helped to tie the new expat location to the old one.

Second, the rhizomatic home is not a mere network of multiple postings; instead, former and current dwelling places usually coincide with the presence of the nuclear family. It can therefore be said that, regardless of how “uprooted” the teenagers’ networks of multiple homes may seem, the underlying hegemonic idea of “home” as the nuclear family staying together prevails in the majority of cases. Sometimes, as in Kressi’s or Marco’s situation, having a large extended family can be important in the creation of the youth’s network of home. Melissa Butcher highlights the importance of transnational relationships for migrants as tools for demarcating identity and claiming a place of belonging:

The shared meaning embedded in relationships reaffirmed the practices of identity associated with that place. [...] There is still an impulse to belong to a place that is marked by characteristics of familiarity and comfort, including elements of the national imagination. This is supported by the maintenance of particular relationships to confirm that this identity and its associated practices and values are shared and therefore of value (Butcher 2009, 1369).

Apart from the actual places where the students used to live, home is also understood as a feeling of connectedness and belonging.

Third, regarding the imagined and immaterial aspects of the rhizomatic home, my discussions have shown that teenagers continuously nego-

tiate belonging in relation to family members, peers, society, and many other factors, including material objects. While, for some students, mental images of home coincide with their parents' ideas or their nationality according to their passport, for others, the issue of belonging can become a matter of conflict. Some struggle to negotiate conflicting feelings such as the desire to claim Shanghai as their home while also feeling like they are seen as "an exotic animal" by Shanghai's other citizens, as Antonia describes, or handling conflicts with parents who consider home a fixed and definite location elsewhere, as shown in the discussions between the siblings Emily and Jacob. The problem of defining an emotional space of belonging can also lay in experiences of exclusion due to physical differences, as Kressi noted, when explaining her difficulty being accepted as German, due to her Asian phenotype. To expatriate students, the idea of home is thus also rhizomatic because it is "always in the middle, between things" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 25), and the concomitant feelings of belonging and positions of cultural identity often are as well.

Finally, home can also be related to feelings of "missing." Homelessness, as mentioned on all the students' posters, and homesickness, as described by Karina who misses Prague and her network there, or by Mia who misses practices like the family dinners she used to participate in, are thus also part of the overall "homing" process.

Based on the idea of the rhizome, this chapter concludes that, for many expatriate youths, home is always multi-sited and constantly in progress, as well as negotiated in relation to others. These findings can be related to the concept of TCKs (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009) and to Franke's (2008) study mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. However, the rhizomatic home is also tied to concrete sites, physical belongings, and practices. While privileged migrants might be used to a home in flux, place nevertheless holds an important role in their lives. One concept investigating migrants' mediating processes of belonging and the relationships they form between various spaces that fits the experiences of these expatriate youths better than the TCK concept is David Conradson and Deirdre McKay's (2007) theory of "translocal subjectivities." Conradson and McKay argue that mobility in particular "provides opportunities for new forms of subjectivity and emotion to emerge" (ibid., 168). In order to understand these emerging emotions and understandings of the self, the authors suggest adopting the concept of translocal subjectivities based on Appadurai's (1996) notion of translocality. This concept aims "to describe the multiply-located senses of self amongst those who inhabit transnational social fields" (Conradson and McKay 2007, 168). The authors understand translocal subjectivities as "emerging through both geographical mobility and multiple forms of ongoing emplacement" (ibid.). Additionally, these translocal subjectivities are often based on migrants relating to specific localities, rather than nation states; thus their positioning, relationships, and experiences become more translocal than transnational (ibid., 169). Finally, Conrad-

son and McKay maintain that translocal subjectivities are shaped by “the emotional and affective states accompanying mobility” (ibid.). All of these aspects describe the subjective experiences these expatriate youths provided in their narratives.

Relating to the last aspect, the impact of emotions on these youths’ relationships with their current residence can also be traced in their home-making practices, which can be seen as coping mechanisms. These behaviors, making and (re)imagining homes, and collecting belongings to produce a sense of belonging, help the youths deal with feelings of loneliness and enable them to let the rhizomatic home, to return to Deleuze and Guattari, “start up again” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 9).

When it comes to coping with feeling uprooted, and the often conflicting feelings about home that this chapter discusses, children and youths tend to draw from the resources provided by their new school. It is in these schools that they receive further support, especially from their peers, to deal with such challenges. The following chapter explores the spaces of international schools and their role in the process of creating a community for students and their families.

CHAPTER 3

Building Community: The Role of International Schools

School is actually the most important thing here. During the week we spend our entire time here.⁴⁶ (Giovanni, seventeen years old)

Here, friendships only form through school.⁴⁷ (Bjorn, sixteen years old)

You only have this one environment, the school.⁴⁸ (Peter, eighteen years old)

With remarks similar to those of these three teenage boys, all of the students I interviewed confirmed the importance school played in offering them the opportunity to make friends and fight loneliness, while also offering a sense of continuity. School provides a space to establish a new social circle outside the family. Eleven-year-old Allen explains the role of the school in the following way:

ALLEN: *Depending upon what your everyday life is like, for instance, if you live near lots of Chinese people and you go to a private Chinese school, it makes a big impact. And then if you go to an international school, it makes the moving a lot easier. Because everyone there, they're in the same, same space as everyone else around them, from moving from their home country to somewhere other than their home country. And also because of the communication, because it is easier to communicate than with a lot of Chinese people.*

What is this experience that Allen describes as everyone being in “the same space?” What constitutes this space that schools provide, where, according to Allen, communication is easier and everyone feels unified by a common experience? This chapter attempts to answer these questions by examining the sites, values, practices, and students’ experiences within international schools in Shanghai.

The chapter begins with a description of the international schools in Shanghai and their common characteristics. Next, by describing a short movie that was produced by two students at a German school, I provide a detailed example of the efforts schools make to create a sense of community (at which they are the center). In the third section, I argue that

46 German original: GIOVANNI: *Die Schule ist ja eigentlich das Wichtigste hier. Wir sind auch unter der Woche die ganze Zeit eigentlich hier.*

47 German original: BJORN: *Freundschaft geht hier nur über die Schule.*

48 German original: PETER: *Man hat hier nur dieses eine Umfeld, die Schule.*

these different school “communities” all see themselves as part of a larger unifying expatriate collective, where everyone is in the “same space.” I show how this “expatriateness” is learned, maintained, and performed along three aspects that were particularly prominent during my fieldwork: the common comfort lying in the norm of having a maid and a driver, the social concern cultivated through practices of charity, and the distinctions maintained through cosmopolitan cultural capital. Finally, I investigate the youths’ own experiences of attending an international school in Shanghai by contending with two topics which dominate their narratives: privilege and pressure.

3.1 Shanghai’s landscape of international schools

The private international schools in Shanghai are places of central importance for expatriate youths. Upon analyzing these schools, not in terms of their academic curricula or achievements, but as particular places, they can be characterized by the five following attributes: their exclusion of Chinese students, the exclusion of foreign students without the financial means to meet high tuition fees, their geographical locations in the suburbs, their strict regulations and well-guarded gates, and their roles as expatriate community centers. I will expand on these points, and the last two aspects in particular, to illustrate the role of the school in (teenage) expatria.

The first main characteristic of the international schools in Shanghai is that students with Chinese passports are excluded. International schools form a distinct sub-sector. Within this sector, schools can be divided into foreign-run schools and divisions of local schools. Both are targeted solely at foreign passport holders. Shanghai’s numerous international schools differ in their curricula, teaching language, type of diploma offered, student body nationalities admitted, and form of organization. Yamato and Bray (2006, 79) found that “the English-medium schools were more international because they used a language that has wide portability.” This point is in keeping with my findings: at the French and German-medium schools, students represented considerably fewer nationalities than at their English counterparts. While Chinese government regulations prohibit local children of Chinese nationality from enrolling at any of these international schools (Yamato and Bray 2006, 64), the Shanghai municipal authorities can grant exceptions to special cases. During my research, however, I only met one student who had been granted this permission.⁴⁹ The resulting absence of locals therefore seems to be a major difference between the international schools in Shanghai and those elsewhere (see Dobeneck’s (2010, 115–118) descriptions of German-medium schools in Sao Paulo, for example).

49 Xia was the only Chinese passport holder I met who was also enrolled at the German school; his experience is discussed further in Part I, Chapter 4.4.

International schools in Shanghai all charge tuition fees. This is also the case for schools that are run by non-profit agencies. Their tuition fees for the 2010–2011 school year ranged from approximately RMB 88,500 to 240,000 (€9,735 to €26,400) per year at the high school level. In many cases, tuition costs are covered by the expatriate packages provided by the parents' employers. Some schools offer different fees for families paying through private means. However, the second main characteristic of the international schools in Shanghai is that they exclude students whose parents cannot afford the tuition fees.

Yamato and Bray found that the schools they studied, and the English-medium schools (2006, 59; 79) in particular, were in competition with each other. In consequence, they try to find their own niches, sometimes also through location: "Schools can increase their market shares by securing premises in the suburbs in which their potential clients are concentrated" (ibid. 2006, 59). The choice of school and the choice of housing area are therefore connected. Thus a third main characteristic of the international schools is their location on the outskirts of the city, in the vicinity of the spacious gated communities described in the previous chapter.

Finally, international schools are highly regulated and sealed-off spaces. It is not surprising that human geographers of youth stress that the space of the school is under-researched (Valentine 2003, 42). Studies involving minors and closed institutions are complicated by difficulties of access. Many of my own email inquiries remained unanswered, even though I included letters of references, research outlines, my résumé, and other information. Whenever I had opportunities to meet principals in person, they were usually in favor of my research project, although the disruption of school activities and regular classes was a concern. Some schools, like a British international school located in Pudong, supported the project by contacting students and parents and letting me conduct interviews with them on the school's premises. A German school's staff was even so kind as to let me sit in on certain classes. A Singaporean school principal and teacher were also supportive and found a solution that included me teaching a Theory of Knowledge class and allowed me to conduct interviews. An American middle school's counselor allowed me to see the school facilities and meet teachers at a career development day for staff. Interviews with students, however, were denied as the school objected to the perceived organizational effort that would be required. The only other personal contact I had was with the principals of another American international school. Here, although one language teacher and six of her students were eager to participate, the school management objected. We had to cancel the interviews despite students', parents', and teachers' agreements. However, I learned much about the same school by visiting one elementary class in another capacity. Although another British school never replied to my inquiries, I had the opportunity to see their campus during a volunteer activity. For the students from a French school and an American Christian school, the path was different, as their friends whom I had interviewed

earlier introduced me to them. I conducted these interviews outside of school and thus without any discussions with the schools' management. As the German and French schools I visited are on the same campus, I had the opportunity to acquaint myself with the French school's setting. I did not have the opportunity to see the campus of the American Christian school, though. I also contacted numerous other schools, from which I never received an answer or which I simply could not include for consideration, due to constraints in time and resources.

All of the schools are located on the outskirts of the city and have fenced-off campuses with regulated access to their spaces. At every school I visited, I had to get a visitor's pass before being allowed to enter, which I then had to wear around my neck for the day. Policies varied from providing your name, phone number, and the name of the person to be visited, to requiring identity checks and body temperature controls for health reasons. Some of the schools, such as an American school I visited in Pudong, even have a second wall around them because they are located within gated communities. The following image, which depicts this gated community, is included to give an impression of international schools' surroundings (Figure 14). However, as the security guards in front of the school prohibited me from taking photos of the school itself, and in order to keep institutions anonymous, I cannot show specific buildings.



Figure 14. A Gated Community Hosting an American School. Photo by M. Sander.

These experiences of efforts to regulate access are of course less obvious to students than they are to a researcher or outsider. However, schools with their dress codes (some schools require uniforms), schedules, and scheduled breaks are well-regulated spaces for the students as well. Students from the German and French campus have to enter and exit the

school premises through doors equipped with card readers. Only the upper-grade students can exit these during the school day. However, sometimes students sneak around these, risking the punishment of having to work in the cafeteria.

KARINA: Some for instance don't pass through these check points, but through this door instead. It is usually open. They just walk through it. The Chinese that stand there, they don't pay attention. That's why, because it's open, you don't need this card. They keep on introducing new things, like blocking the cards, but the students always come up with a new way to break out of school <L>.⁵⁰

The fifth aspect of international schools in Shanghai is their role as community hubs. Students' lives obviously revolve around their schools as places of education, friendship, and after-school activities such as sports or artistic hobbies. However, in many cases, the international schools in Shanghai seem to be not only central to the children, to for the adult expatriate community as well. It is not surprising that a popular parental guidebook for expatriates strongly advises parents to become active at the school:

Finally, I want to stress again the importance of getting involved with your child's new school in an overseas setting. Not only will your child find this a positive sign of your interest in them, but your involvement in the school community is a wonderful way to help create a new "extended family" for celebrating holidays far from home, traveling within the country, or just getting together with other parents to compare notes on the weekend. If you stayed away from parents organizations before you moved abroad (and let other parents handle all the volunteer work that enhanced your child's life), now's your chance to repay that debt (Pascoe 2006, 142).

Many schools offer social activities where parents can meet, or cultural activities that everyone (or at least everyone associated with the school) can participate in. Some schools are more ethnically focused in their activities and networks than others, but all have parents' organizations and provide cultural activities, such as plays, dances, bazaars, sporting events, or orientations. Schools also sell branded items such as yearbooks, T-shirts, or school bags. Fiona Moore (2008), who examined the German school in London (Deutsche Schule London, abbreviated here as "DSL") from an

⁵⁰ German original: *KARINA: Aber manche, die gehen zum Beispiel auch nicht durch diese Schalter durch, sondern durch die Tür da. Die ist meistens immer offen. Die gehen einfach durch. Die Chinesen die da stehen, die achten da ja nicht drauf. Deswegen, weil die einfach offen ist, da braucht man diese Karte nicht. Man führt immer irgendwas ein, die Karten zu blockieren, aber den Schülern fällt immer irgendwie ein Weg ein, um aus dieser Schule auszubrechen <L>.*

adult perspective, found that it serves a central role for the German community. "One of the DSL's explicit functions is a site for the adjustment and development of networks of the spouses of expatriates, with a particular focus on female spouses" (Moore 2008, 94). She furthermore argues that this important connection in the network for German expatriates in London "not only educates the children, but also provides a forum for the expression of Germanness" (Moore 2008, 91).⁵¹ The international schools in Shanghai obviously create similar important ties within the expatriate network, solidifying its role as what Simon Turner described as a "safe haven:"

However, mobility does hold the potential for creating liminality: a space of indeterminacy where established structures are put out of function. It is in these situations of indeterminate meaning that some institutions—such as the family—are put under pressure and forced to change [...] while others—like some religious and political movements—seem to flourish, lending themselves to the creation of new identities while guaranteeing some stability. Appealing to the anxieties of mobility, such institutions may provide safe havens while being immensely transnational themselves (Turner 2008, 1052).

While schools seem attractive when presented as such "safe havens," their exclusionary practices also have to be kept in mind—an aspect that this metaphor problematically conceals. As major nodes in the expatriate networks, schools have a strong influence on the expatriate way of life. The British school I visited, for example, provides a "Shanghai resident map" that, in addition to the school campuses, includes the location of compounds, foreign-run medical centers, churches, shopping locations, spas, cinemas, and restaurants that have become favorites among expats. The German school provides lists of popular residential compounds online. While some school communities, such as the German school, are strongly tied to national communities, they all, however, see themselves as part of the larger expatriate community. The expatriate experience is a unifying framework based on the construction of a shared concept of expatriate identity that transcends the national, cultural and ethnic differences among the various expatriate communities in Shanghai. In the following section, I provide a key example of the schools' pivotal and well-guarded role at the core of the larger expatriate network in Shanghai, by zooming in on the German school, the site of the largest portion of my research.

51 It is also likely that my own German ethnicity facilitated my access to the German School.

3.2 Image and community

The international schools actively support processes of national as well as international expatriate community building through various means and see themselves as major centers in Shanghai's expatriate communities. One project, produced by two students at the German school, exemplifies the efforts such schools make to encourage the idea that communities revolve around them. The project, a short video produced by the student Kressi and one of her friends, was made to be shown at an awards ceremony in Berlin.⁵² The roughly five minute video opens with an image of the school's logo and motto, followed by a black screen, and the announcement "präsentiert" (presents). The next sequence shows impressions filmed out of a moving car. The color of the vehicle and the driver's taxi license reveal what locals would recognize as a typical Shanghai taxi. A title then fades in to announce what the clip presents, "My Time is Now: Das Zeitprojekt" (The Time Project), a reference to an art project for which the school won a prize, as is further introduced in the next caption: "Kinder zum Olymp!—Sonderpreis-Gewinner 2011" (Children to Olympus—Award Winner 2011). These images and texts are accompanied by melodic whistling, the beginning of the song "Home," by Edward Sharpe & The Magnetic Zeros. When the lyrics start, "Alabama, Arkansas, I do love my ma and pa," the taxi ride changes to blurry images zooming in on Shanghai's Bund and a Chinese flag, while a caption in white letters introduces "Shanghai, China, 上海." Despite being targeted at a German audience, the Chinese characters are included in the caption, presumably to emphasize the school's special or even "exotic" location. The words then make room for images. The flag and buildings become increasingly clearer. The viewer realizes that the camera is zooming in on the Bund with its iconic buildings. While the Bund is still a blurred image, we read "21 Millionen Einwohner" (21 million inhabitants), which then fades and reveals the full, now-focused image of the new Pudong side of the Bund. A photo of overpasses and traffic signs, with high-rise buildings in the background, follows. Inserted text which appears and fades out again simply reads: "modern" (Figure 15).

The subsequent shot shows a temple yard with people burning incense; the caption now reads "traditionell zugleich" (traditional at the same time). Images of the old lane houses in Taikang Road are next, blending into a picture of metro signs and then again of high-rise buildings with the caption: "dynamische Wirtschaftsmetropole" (dynamic commercial metropolis). The white letters fade, the skyscrapers become sharp and then quickly dissolve into numerous squares that turn around to reveal an image of the school building. While the school building appears,

52 The competition "Kinder zum Olymp!" is organized by the cultural foundation of the German federal states in cooperation with the Deutsche Bank Foundation. It grants awards to individual art projects as well as schools with strong arts-oriented profiles that manage to include the arts in everyday school life.

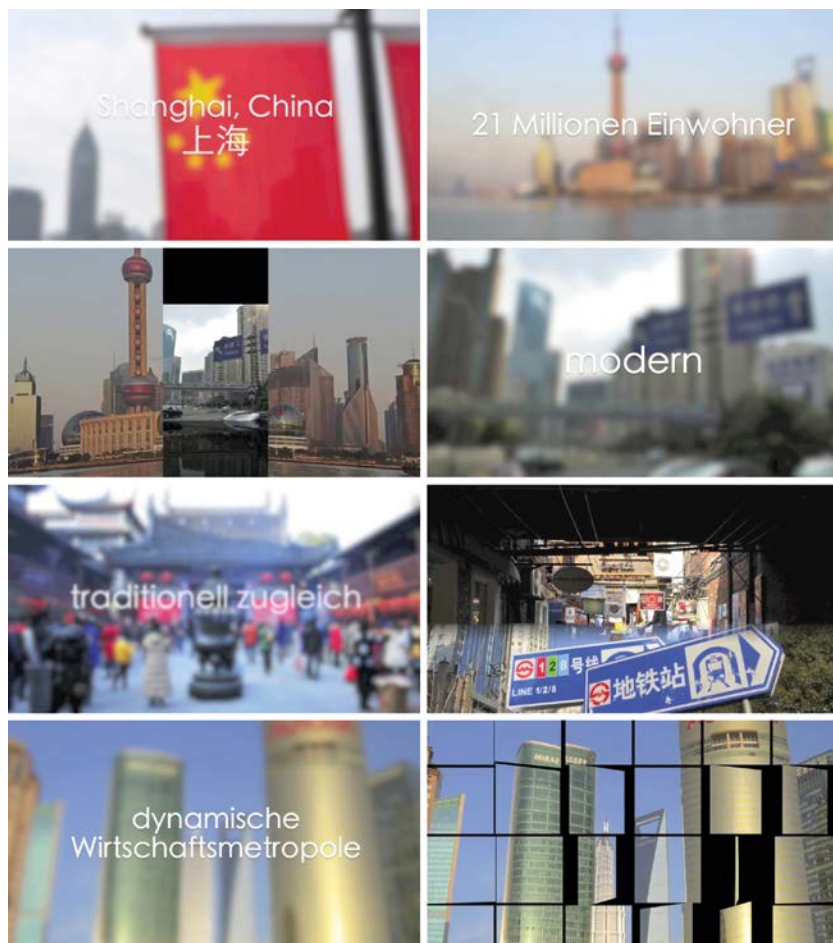


Figure 15. Images of Shanghai. Screenshots from the students' video, 0:19, 0:23, 0:25, 0:26, 0:29, 0:37, 0:42, and 0:45.

blurs, and comes into focus again, letters boldly announce: “Zuhause” (Home)—(Figure 16a).

This image is followed by recordings of students entering and leaving school, played in fast-forward, with a new text line appearing, continuing the message from the last image: “Für 1230 Schüler an zwei Schulstandorten” (For 1230 students on two campuses). We then, still in fast mode, enter the school premises, while the song continues: “Home, home, home, is wherever I’m with you.” (Figure 16b).

Inside the school, we can observe, for a few quick moments in fast-forward mode, the daily business of students running around and parents picking up their children. Then a series of photographs follows, introducing the viewer to numerous school projects and events, such as music workshops, concerts, art projects (I will further explore one such project by

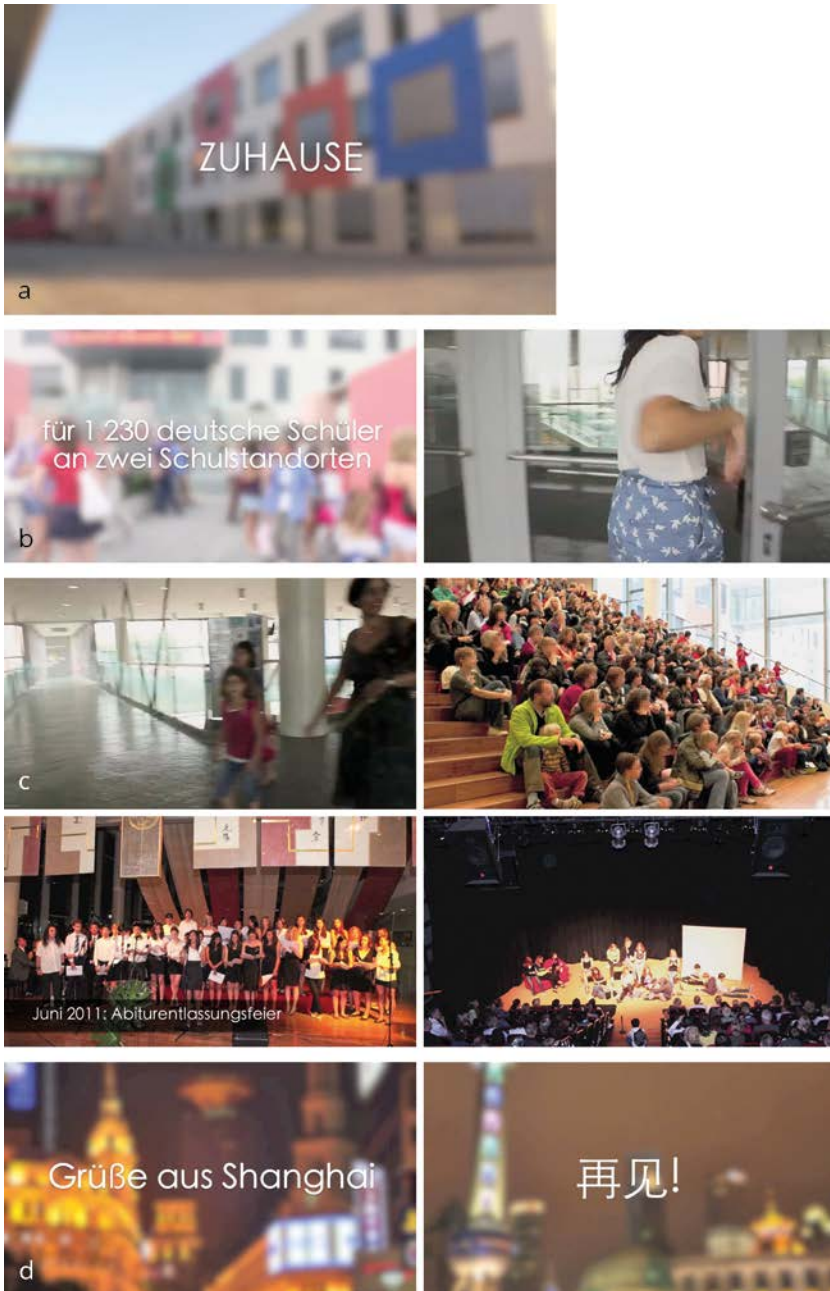


Figure 16. Screenshots from the student's video; a) "Zuhause," 0:48; b) Entering the School, 0:53 and 1:00; c) Events and Audiences, 1:02, 1:17, 1:41, and 3:54; d) "Greetings from Shanghai," 4:23 and 4:28.

the student Andrea in Part IV, Chapter 1), yearbook awards, theater, and the graduation ceremony (Figure 16c).

Four of the almost five minutes of the video present numerous activities, but do not offer any insights into the daily routines or regular classroom interactions that shape everyday life at school. Here, the school is presented as an active, arts-oriented, lively community, not only depicting numerous projects and students, but also different audiences at the events. At the end, the video clip takes us back to the Bund, this time at night. The city of Shanghai, depicted in the beginning and at the end, thus frames the images of the school, staging the campus—which could be anywhere—as international. These last shots are then headed with captions that bid the viewer “Good bye!” in Chinese and “Greetings from Shanghai” in German, to then finally return to the school’s logo and motto from the very beginning (Figure 16d).

In the video, the institution is staged as a lively community framed by recognizable, even clichéd images of Shanghai. When talking with student Kressi about the production of the video, it becomes clear that it was filmed with the intention of representing the school’s art class on the one hand, and the school as a whole on the other.

KRESSI: *Everything had to be in it. The Fine Arts Center, all the events that took place, and some information about our school. So that we simply show what our school actually does in terms of cultural life. What it is generally like, how many students are here.*⁵³

Kressi and her friend were happy to shoot the movie on behalf of the school because she enjoys being creative, but also because it enabled her and her friend to get the chance to spend a weekend in Berlin. The movie therefore is not only a creative project by two teenage girls, but also a public relations product that was requested by the school, which in turn funded their trip to Europe. However, while the school decided which events and art and music projects were to be depicted, it was the two girls who chose to accompany the images with the song. When I asked her about the choice of music, Kressi explained:

KRESSI: *Well, we looked through [our music] and we just somehow liked the song. The home, in fact. And it was somehow, I don't know, erm, it is also somehow like Shanghai is only like it is because of the people, or because of the people we know. And that's why*

53 German original: KRESSI: *Da musste halt alles drin sein. So Fine Arts Center, und diese ganzen Events, was da halt war und auch so ein bisschen Informationen über unsere Schule. Einfach das wir mal zeigen, was unsere Schule eigentlich so an Kulturleben macht. Wie sie generell ist, wie viele Schüler hier sind.*

the song just fit really well. Well, we also liked the beat and we could cut the images along with it nicely.⁵⁴

For Kressi, school life is tied to her friends, and these friendships and connections create a feeling (in the words of the song) of home. The people, everyday practices, and ideals presented in the video produce, in a reciprocal process, the image of the school as being central to the community. In this process, the school's material culture also plays a role. Gerd Baumann and Thijl Sunier (2002, 34–36), in their detailed description and comparison of four different comprehensive schools in Paris, London, Berlin, and Rotterdam, see different national ideas of citizenship reflected in the ways the school premises are decorated and managed; the school gates in particular are seen as symbolic of the attitudes and practices each nation espouses, along with that nation's ideas of how to manage ethnic diversity and political engagement. David MacDougall's (2006) concept of social aesthetics, which I presented in the Introduction and now expand upon, emphasizes how this specific material culture—a school's premises, the equipment, and the regulations revolving around it—affects the students engaging with that environment on a daily basis. With the term “social aesthetics,” he describes “the creation of an aesthetic space or sensory structure” (2006, 105). Aesthetics here do not mean notions of beauty or art, but a “wider range of culturally patterned sensory experience” (ibid., 98). MacDougall understands the social aesthetic field as a coalescence of different elements such as “objects and actions.” Analyzing the social aesthetic field therefore means focusing on a specific community and its landscape—its material environment as well as the day to day practices taking place in that environment. MacDougall suggests, based on his work on the prestigious Doon School in India, that societies “may find in the sharing of a strong aesthetic experience a unifying principle” (ibid., 99). The social aesthetics in the spaces of the German international schools therefore can also be seen as serving to create the students' sense of belonging. MacDougall suggests paying attention to specific objects in relation to daily practices: “The social aesthetic field is never mutual or random: its patterning creates forces and polarities with strong emotional effects. Ordinary objects with which one comes in daily contact take on a particular aura, and this aura is augmented by repetition and multiplication” (MacDougall 2006, 111).

While this aura of repetition is not present in the video described here, which focuses primarily on community events, it is omnipresent in the everyday school experience of expat youths. This aura of repetition is, for

54 German original: KRESSI: *Also wir haben so durchgeschaut und dann hat uns das irgendwie sehr gefallen das Lied. Das Zuhause eben. Und. Es war irgendwie, ich weiß gar nicht, ehm, es ist auch irgendwie so ... Shanghai ist nur so wegen der Leute, oder wegen der Leute die wir kennen. Und deswegen hat das einfach mit dem Lied richtig gut gepasst. Also es hat uns auch gefallen vom Beat und da konnten wir gut die Bilder zu schneiden.*

instance, evoked by the routine of passing through the school gates with student IDs in the morning, seeking out one's place in the rarely changing seating arrangement in the classrooms, or waiting for the teachers. Specific structures further shape the social aesthetics, whether they be the precisely measured units of lessons and breaks, the rules of where and when to eat, the decision about who is allowed to take the elevator and who must take the stairs—a major issue at the Singaporean school I visited—or the regulations about leaving the premises. These routines provide the students with a sense of community. It is therefore not surprising that, only after comprehending all these rules—which were somehow self-evident to the students—I began to feel comfortable at the school myself (see my descriptions of a day at the German school in Part I, Chapter 2).

The school events (such as those presented in the students' PR film) help the school present itself as a true community by including parents and other (German) adults. I myself, for instance, gained access to the German school through such an event. Fiona Moore, in her article on the German school in London, shows that the network revolving around the school actively aims for the creation of a new generation of young German transnational actors, for example through providing students with internships at prestigious institutions (Moore 2008, 97). A sensitive look at the role of Shanghai's international schools reveals that they not only play a key role in creating a home or community for the students, but also promote general identification with other international expatriates. In other words, schools become powerful institutions for both educating and fostering a national or school community and shaping forms of belonging by unifying expatriates.

3.3 Learning and living “expatriateness”

The sense of an expatriate community is produced through various means under the strong influence of international schools. The creation of and belonging to expatria can be seen as diasporic forms of community creation and simultaneously understood as a class or habitus consciousness, rendered visible through everyday (material) practices, identity performances, and the accumulation of cultural capital. Before drawing on three cases from my fieldwork to support these arguments, I will briefly discuss the role of education in forming a community, class, or habitus and explain my choice of the term “expatriateness.”

Johanna Waters, drawing on Butler (2003), argues that “education is inextricably linked to the existence and recreation of a middle-class habitus that includes a closely guarded sub-culture of ‘community’” (Waters 2007, 480). In her article, “Roundabout Routes and Sanctuary Schools: The Role of Situated Educational Practices and Habitus in the Creation of Transnational Professionals,” Waters (2007) examines the formation of transnational professionals in Hong Kong. Since children's education has been cited as a major reason for internationally-educated locals to leave Hong Kong,

her study focuses particularly on the role of international education and the complex familial strategies centered on it. Her case studies in Hong Kong and Vancouver suggest “the active creation of group boundaries and the cultivation and inculcation of an exclusive identity through segregation and similar education and migration experiences” (Waters 2007, 492). Waters’ description of the creation of group boundaries provides a very different reading of the phenomenon that Pollock and Van Reken ([1999] 2009) present in their literature on TCKs, which sees the formation of these boundaries as a positive experience of healing and belonging for mobile youths. Education and habitus among the internationally-educated locals Waters studied in Hong Kong therefore create a group that is both spatially and socially distinct. While international schools and overseas schooling “is clearly the preserve of the wealthy and privileged,” Waters also argues that “it is often used as a means of avoiding failure in the local (and far more ‘challenging’ and competitive) system.” Waters concludes that education “plays a pivotal role in the creation of an exclusive and elite group identity” and that this distinctive group identity is “rewarded in the labour market” (Waters 2007, 494). German sociologist Michael Hartmann’s research on social origin and educational trajectories among the business elite in Germany and France (Hartmann 2000) similarly found that a class-specific habitus is decisive—in a direct sense in Germany and, indirectly, through attending elite universities in France—for an individual’s career. He argues that “it is a class-specific habitus that ensures the high stability of social recruitment” and that it “can forge a sufficient internal bond even without such an institutionalization of ‘cultural capital’ in education” (Hartmann 2000, 258).

The significance of a distinctive habitus in the creation of an exclusive class or community of transnational professionals is evident in my research in Shanghai as well. I argue that, just like the group of transnational professionals Waters (2007) studies in Hong Kong, the international education of expatriate offspring plays a major role in forging bonds and creating an exclusive group identity. The opportunity to attend an international school is an argument for the move, as well as the pride and status many families gain from the experience. A German mother of three children (ages seven to fourteen) whom I interviewed during my earlier fieldwork in 2007, for instance, explained how the option for international schooling influenced her decision to move to Malaysia and later Shanghai:

GERMAN MOTHER: *One reason to move abroad is always that the children have the opportunity to learn English. Our children don’t go to the German school, but attend an English school, an international school with an English curriculum. And we always find this quite good. There, they have the chance to broaden their horizons, to learn another language.*⁵⁵

55 German original: DEUTSCHE MUTTER: *Ein Beweggrund ins Ausland zu gehen ist dann immer, dass die Kinder halt auch die Möglichkeit haben Englisch zu lernen.*

The young actors of my study, all in the process of receiving their formal education, are acquiring this distinctive habitus, best labeled as “expatriate,” drawing from their education and different networks and contributing to their family’s sense of belonging in the community.

I use the term “expatriate” here to refer simply to a network of mobile professionals and their families. Most expatriates might simply be (and see themselves as) “middle class” in their home countries. At first sight, Conradson and Latham’s term “‘middling’ forms of transnationalism” (2005, 229) seems fitting.⁵⁶

What is striking about many of the people involved in these kinds of transnational travels is their middling status position in their countries of origin. They are often, but not always, well educated. They may come from wealthy families, but more often than not they appear to be simply middle class. In terms of the societies they come from and those they are travelling to, they are very much of the middle (Conradson and Latham 2005, 228).

I can easily identify with and categorize my own movement according to Conradson and Latham’s understanding of “‘middling’ forms of transnationalism.” However, there seems to be a difference between the expatriate families mentioned above and those whom I studied in Shanghai. While most of these families might be middle class “in terms of the societies they come from,” they are certainly not middle class in China, where “they are travelling to.” Their new lifestyle includes the service of maids and drivers, private schooling, regular international travel, and vacations. Their financial status is not comparable to that of the Chinese middle class.

The term “elite,” nevertheless, proves difficult as well. I am hesitant to apply it to my research group because it is “a term of reference, rather than self-reference,” as George Marcus (1983a, 9) has pointed out. Furthermore, the term “elite” is unsuitable for my research perspective due to its associated research tradition.⁵⁷ My focus on expatriate youths’ voices, which

Unsere Kinder gehen nicht in die deutsche Schule, sondern die gehen auf eine englische Schule, eine internationale Schule mit englischem Curriculum. Und das finden wir immer ganz gut. Dass sie da die Möglichkeit haben ihren Horizont zu erweitern, eine andere Sprache zu lernen.

56 Conradson and Latham argue that research in transnationalism has overlooked these people, while often focusing on migrants moving between Central America, the Caribbean, and North America. The authors therefore propose a few examples of other forms of transnational mobility that they term “middling” and that “similarly involve repeated movement and the maintenance of enduring ties across international borders,” such as studying or taking gap years or career sabbaticals abroad (Conradson and Latham 2005, 229).

57 In the 1980s, George Marcus summarized the research on the elite, whether taking a “pluralist view” or the “power elite’ view” (1983a, 13), as having “failed to pay systematic attention to the cultures and forms of life of those identified as elites” (ibid., 25). While, on the one hand, Marcus considered the anthropology of elites suitable to fill this lacuna in research, he, on the other hand, regarded

allows for the in-depth analysis of age-specific and subjective experiences of transnational migration, cannot simultaneously center on the “nature of the larger system in which it is meaningful to label them as elites” (Marcus 1983a, 13). Therefore, I find the term “elite” misleading for my analysis of the processes of community building, status, habitus, and class in the realm of the students’ schools and their environment. These entangled negotiations of a community/habitus/class shall therefore, instead, be described as practicing “expatriateness.”

The expatriate community in Shanghai is diverse in many ways and maintains inner divisions of class, ethnicity, and nationality. It consists of its many specific groups revolving around certain clubs⁵⁸—which are often tied to nationality—institutions, companies, neighborhoods, and other organizations. Here, the international schools play a lead role. People connected to the German School, for instance, despite their differences, consider themselves a group, as one small community in expatria. Most youths and their families would, at the same time, also see a larger expatriate network as existing in Shanghai and, for example, by labeling various places they frequent as “expatriate,” consider themselves part of Shanghai’s overall expatriate community.

The making of this expatriate community can be viewed in the same way that anthropologist Cris Shore (2002) discusses the making of elites, drawing on Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of distinction: “in order to constitute itself as an elite in the first place an elite group must develop its own par-

the earlier research frameworks of contrasting elites to the masses as “the least adequate for empirical investigation” (ibid., 13):

For the ethnographer, relating elites to corporate systems, rather than to specific people, requires the ability to define closely observed subjects as elites, not in relativistic terms which would be appropriate for small-scale societies, but in reference to the total larger system in which they are elites. Thus, selection of elites as ethnographic subjects presupposes considerable prior knowledge or guesswork about the nature of the larger system in which it is meaningful to label them as elites (Marcus 1983a, 13).

Marcus also saw the term “in its manifestation as an Anglo-American research tradition” (1983a, 25) as an “uncertain guide” regarding how it could be appropriately applied to research on elites in a range of different societies. Almost two decades later, Shore and Nugent (2002) edited another volume on the study of the elite in anthropology, which connects similar issues and questions, as in the anthology edited by Marcus (1983b). Shore and Nugent’s volume further stresses the anthropology of the elite as “an exercise in political reflexivity” since it obliges anthropologists to position themselves “more self-consciously in relation to the wider system of power and hierarchy within which anthropological knowledge is constructed” (Shore 2002, 2).

58 For detailed insights into expatriate clubs and their role in everyday life, see Beaverstock’s (2011) article “Serving British Expatriate ‘Talent’ in Singapore: Exploring Ordinary Transnationalism and the Role of the Expatriate Club.” For ethnographic accounts of expatriate associations and clubs in the lives of female expatriates, so-called “accompanying spouses,” see Fechter’s (2007b) descriptions of the German Women’s Association in Jakarta in *Transnational Lives: Expatriates in Indonesia*.

ticularistic set of interests, norms and practices to differentiate itself from the masses. It must achieve 'distinction'" (Shore 2002, 2-3).

Regarding the distinction of elite groups, Shore sees the question of "how they do this" and the examination of the "cultural resources they mobilise and the way they cultivate functions" as important issues for anthropology (ibid., 3). In order to understand how expatriate youths learn "expatriateness," I investigated spatial practices and other forms of everyday activities that serve to create a distinct collective expatriate identity. Exclusion and inclusion along ethnic lines also play a major role, as exemplified by the experience German student Don, who is of Chinese descent, shared (see Part III, Chapter 1) regarding his treatment by entrance guards at his friends' compounds. Undeniably, whiteness is one of the strongest markers for "expatriateness" (see also Part IV, Chapter 4).⁵⁹ However, there are many subtle practices of creating and maintaining "expatriateness," be it through sharing educational values or through creating demarcations from not only those "back home" but also from the local Shanghainese. I will use three examples that were particularly relevant during my fieldwork to tease out how "expatriateness" is performed, maintained, and taught among expatriate youths: first, the convenience associated with the norm of having a maid and a driver, second, the social concern cultivated through practices of charity and social outreach work, and third, the distinctions maintained through their cosmopolitan cultural capital.

EXAMPLE 1: EVERYDAY COMFORTS

ANTONIA: *When I hear expat children talk, eh, then I think "what kind of shitheads are they?!" [...] "My ayi, my driver." All these servants. <L> [...] But it doesn't feel like that. It doesn't feel as if we were totally, no idea. That's not a chauffeur, with servants and so on. But it's just simply an ayi and a driver. It doesn't feel particularly [special].*⁶⁰

Antonia, who grew up in Shanghai, recognizes the privileged ways of life Shanghai offers expatriate youths on one hand but, on the other hand, does not associate having staff at home with privilege or luxury; she sees

59 I will comment on the different experiences of white and Asian students in Shanghai in Part IV, Chapter 4, but it is beyond the scope of this study to focus on the topic of racism in China and within the expatriate community. I interviewed one black girl at the Singaporean school and a black female trailing spouse in 2007, but my material is too limited to address the experiences of black expatriates.

60 German original: ANTONIA: *[Wenn ich] Expatkinder reden höre, ey, dann denke ich: „Was sind denn das für Scheißkinder?!“ [...] „Meine Ayi, mein Fahrer.“ Die ganzen Bediensteten. <L> [...] Aber es fühlt sich gar nicht so an. Also es fühlt sich nicht so an als wären wir so total, keine Ahnung. Das ist ja kein Chauffeur, und mit Bediensteten und so. Sondern das ist halt so eine Ayi und halt ein Fahrer. Das fühlt sich jetzt gar nicht irgendwie [besonders an].*

these circumstances as quotidian, as an ordinary part of life. Her double perspective, maybe triggered by my presence as a researcher, reminds me of Conradson and Latham's call to consider aspects of the ordinary underlying transnational mobility:

Viewed from this quotidian angle, even the most hyper-mobile transnational elites are ordinary: they eat; they sleep; they have families who must be raised, educated and taught a set of values. They have friends to keep up with and relatives to honour. While such lives may be stressful and involve significant levels of dislocation, for those in the midst of these patterns of activity, this effort is arguably simply part of the taken-for-granted texture of daily existence (Conradson and Latham 2005, 228).

This ordinary comfort is usually put in perspective in comparison to life in the (parents') home countries. Giovanni, after his return from a summer holiday "at home" in Switzerland, for instance, replies to my inquiries about his experience of coming back to Shanghai by stressing the comfortable life Shanghai provides.

GIOVANNI: *I then realize that life is quite comfortable again. Because the driver waits for you. Because in Switzerland you don't have that sort of thing. And then I actually realize again and again how comfortable life is here. That is actually the biggest difference, I think, that life here is much more comfortable. If you live in a city in Europe, you just have to do a lot yourself, I think.*⁶¹

His fellow student Andrea, during a follow-up interview around the same time, reflects in a similar way about her stay in Germany and her return to Shanghai.

ANDREA: *Well, I found life in Germany this summer quite exhausting. You have to, well, life is just easier here. Life has much more luxury.*⁶²

Marco, during a group interview with Peter in May 2011, comments on the high financial standing of expatriate families by comparing the mobile phones belonging to students at his former school with those of his school in Shanghai.

61 German original: GIOVANNI: *Ja, dann merk ich eigentlich, dass das Leben wieder ganz bequem ist. Weil der Fahrer dann wartet. Weil in der Schweiz hat man ja so was nicht. Und dann merk ich eigentlich immer wieder wie bequem das Leben hier ist. Das ist eigentlich der größte Unterschied, denke ich, dass das Leben hier viel bequemer ist. Wenn man in Europa in einer Stadt wohnt, muss man halt schon viel selber machen, denke ich.*

62 German original: ANDREA: *Also ich fand das Leben in Deutschland diesen Sommer ziemlich anstrengend. Man muss eben viel, also, hier ist das eben leichter. Das Leben hat viel mehr Luxus.*

MARCO: *You notice that the people here have more money. Well, I used to attend a public school in Germany. And there, erm, for example nobody had an iPhone. And here, about half of the class has one. That is a huge difference. You notice the differences. That people who come here are actually more like [that]. Or the families who come here, the fathers have higher positions and therefore more money.*⁶³

Marco's comment directly addresses the privileged financial status that the expat community shares and how this can be seen in expat students' material culture, not only in their homes, but also at school. Housekeepers, drivers, and expensive electronic equipment make the financial privileges of expatriate life more visible and become the norm of a lifestyle that is associated with "luxury" or—in everyday practices—with "comfort." Marco, recalling how, in the beginning, he had objections to move abroad, states that he does not regret moving to Shanghai.

MARCO: *I think my life is better here than it would be in Germany.*⁶⁴

Bjorn, only about six months after his move to Shanghai, in a group discussion with Don and Alex, admits that he sometimes feels uncomfortable with the expatriate lifestyle.

BJORN: *[I miss] acting a bit anti-social <x> from my environment. I used to be...*

INTERVIEWER: *Acting a bit anti-social <L>*

BJORN: *Yes [...]. Especially among the Germans. Here, for example, teachers [stare at you/scold you] for coming to school in loose sweatpants <x>. And in Germany that wasn't a problem at all. One always wants a bit of the high life here. That's the problem. I can't deal with that.*⁶⁵

63 German original: MARCO: *Man merkt schon, dass hier die Leute mehr Geld haben. Also, ich war früher auch an einer öffentlichen Schule. Und da war halt, ehm, zum Beispiel hatte niemand ein iPhone. Und hier, hat ungefähr die Hälfte der Klasse welche. Das ist halt schon ein krasser Unterschied. Man merkt schon die Unterschiede. Dass hier halt mehr so die Leute hinkommen, die auch so so. Oder die Familien hinkommen, wo der Vater halt die höhere Position hat und insofern mehr Geld hat.*

64 German original: MARCO: *Ich glaub mein Leben ist hier besser als es in Deutschland wäre.*

65 German original: BJORN: *[Mir fehlt hier ein] bisschen asozial Getue. <x> aus meinem Umfeld. Ich war ja in ...* INTERVIEWER: *Asozial Getue? <L>* BJORN: *Ja. [...] Gerade bei den Deutschen. Hier wird man zum Beispiel von den Lehrern [komisch angeschaut/zurechtgewiesen] [...] wenn man mal mit so einer weiten Jogginghose in die Schule kommt <x>. Und in Deutschland war das überhaupt kein Problem. [...] Man will hier immer so ein bisschen high life. Das ist hier so das Problem. Damit komm ich nicht zurecht.*

Maybe their awareness of such everyday comforts—of the ease with which “luxury” or “the high life” is obtained—triggers the second element I observed as crucial for the building of collective expatriate identities: the engagement in charity work.

EXAMPLE 2: CULTIVATING CONCERN

The previous section shows that a certain amount of material wealth and displays of class status contribute to the meaning of “expatriateness,” a meaning that will dissolve if certain activities are not repeatedly performed and valued. “Expatriateness” is, therefore, also a performance (Goffman 1966) and one practice contributing to it is charity work. In September 2010, very early in my fieldwork, I consulted different websites providing help for expatriates living in Shanghai. I registered for an event called Interkom CityServe that was directed at teenagers. Interkom is a youth program at the Community Center Shanghai that offers various courses and activities for the expatriate community. At this event, different outreach organizations were presenting their work at the community center in the Jingqiao district and teenagers had the opportunity to contact these organizations in person and get involved in social outreach work in Shanghai. While initially impressed by the high turnout, I later learned, in conversations with students, that community work is part of the mandatory curriculum if you pursue an IB (International Baccalaureate). Social outreach work is thus a requirement for all students at many international schools.

I also registered for a so-called “sorting party” organized by the social outreach organization Rivers of Hearts, in October 2010. The organization had been collecting clothing donations over the last several months. During the six hours I spent sorting clothes to go to rural areas in China I was able to glimpse yet another part of expatriate life. Working at a table with three teenage girls from Taiwan, I learned through short conversations in-between the shouts of “Men winter? Women summer! Children winter!” and “What do we do with towels? Shoes? Hats?” that many of the students who attended the event had done so together for school, and were awarded credit points afterward. The students from the school where the three girls I worked alongside had come from were accompanied and supervised by a social worker from their school. While constantly running to bring clothes to the packing station or to get new piles of unsorted donations, I counted approximately 200 people attending the event, mostly teenagers, although young children from scout troops, as well as a group of American college students and a few older adults, mostly teachers, helped out as well. The clothes had all been donated by expatriates in Shanghai and the event was handled entirely by expats. At the beginning, everyone was in high spirits and convinced of the event’s good cause. Only toward the end, when the truck was packed and cleaning and tying shoes together were the last tasks to remain, did students start to leave, tired from their work (Figure 17).



Figure 17. Community Work: Teenage Boys Loading Donated Clothes and Admiring their Day's Work. Photo by M. Sander.

Although social outreach work was not mandatory at the German school that I focused on, the role of charity had also become an integral part of their community. When a devastating earthquake hit Japan in the spring of 2011, for instance, the older students organized a bake sale to collect money (Figure 18).



Figure 18. Bake Sale at a German School. Photo by M. Sander.

While observing the older students selling and the younger students buying the home-made cake—mostly baked by mothers—during breaks at school, I learned that the school principal himself had encouraged students to organize such an event. Such involvement on the highest administrator's part underlines the central role of the school in communicating the importance of and fostering engagement with social outreach work. Cultivating concern for the social and ecological problems of today's world is, therefore, not only part of schools' lesson plans; this concern is also expressed through charity work that simultaneously reaffirms collective expatriate identities as compassionate donors and managers of global problems. It is this claiming of a global outlook that particularly unites and fosters the expatriate community.

EXAMPLE 3: CONVENIENT COSMOPOLITANISM

When visiting international schools, I could not help noticing their preference for decorating school buildings with various national flags. Indeed, it was often these flags that enabled me to recognize the school building at first sight (Figure 19).



Figure 19. Flags Used to Decorate at Four International Schools. Photos by M. Sander.

As the first and fourth image above show, the schools display flags, often representing all the nationalities of their enrolled students, not only outside, but also inside to decorate corridors. These banners are an element of the “social aesthetics” (MacDougall 2006) of all international schools. The pride taken in the internationality of a school community, rendered

visible for every student and visitor by these flags, is also mirrored in the students' narratives of international school life. When, during an interview in June 2012 (just after graduation), Kressi commented, as I had heard so often, on the internationality and diversity of her classmates, I suggested, in an attempt to be a bit provocative, that the German school might not even be considered very international, as most of the students who attended it were German. Kressi, however, insisted that it was, explaining:

KRESSI: *The point is, it isn't the cultures themselves, rather the cultures in which the people have lived. And [...] this is also what defines them. They always had new knowledge. And there were always people who, so many people who saw new things, something you didn't know yet. Many things you already know as well, all people know, but somehow from other perspectives. And it is interesting how all this comes together, through stories and so on. It is not necessarily cultures, but everyone is so different here. You've simply had so many extremely different experiences. In my old class, for instance, there were two students who had moved almost every two years. And they were sixteen, seventeen years old, and had already been I don't know where in the world.⁶⁶*

Kressi's description of the different "perspectives," "stories," and "experiences" students share due to the "cultures in which the people have lived," illustrates how she sees classmates as not simply being tied to one culture, but as individuals whose practices and cultural identities are shaped by a plurality that relates to the ideas of transculturation and the gaining of transcultural perspectives that I discussed in the Introduction. In the realm of school and education, however, I think students' experiences of processes of transculturation, of experiencing different places as crucial for "what defines them," can also be conceptualized as what German ethnographer Jana Binder defines as "globality" (Binder 2005). Binder interprets and summarizes backpackers' travel experiences in Asia and convincingly argues that long-term travelers develop their narratives of the trip along with their competence dealing with the challenges of a globalizing world. She calls these experiences and their representations—such as being in a certain place, experiencing

66 German original: KRESSI: *Das Ding ist halt, dass, ehm, es eher nicht die Kulturen alleine sind, sondern die Kulturen in denen die Leute gelebt haben. Und [...] das macht sie auch aus. Und die haben immer neue Kenntnisse gehabt. Und es gab immer Leute, so viele Leute die haben was Neues gesehen, was gesehen was du noch nicht kanntest. Vieles kennt man auch, also kennen alle Leute, aber von anderen Seiten irgendwie. Und das ist halt interessant, wie das halt zusammen kommt und von Erzählungen und so. Also es ist nicht unbedingt Kulturen, aber man ist hier so verschieden. Man hat einfach so extrem verschiedene Erfahrungen gemacht. Zum Beispiel in meiner alten Jahrgangsstufe gab es zwei, die sind fast jede zwei Jahre umgezogen. Und die waren dann halt mit ihren sechzehn, siebzehn Jahren schon, schon ich weiß nicht wo alles auf der Welt.*

oneself in a different environment, meeting people of other nationalities, or changing one's lifestyle—"globality." She further argues that this "globality" should be understood as a cultural resource in the Bourdieusian sense, as capital. Using the example of young backpackers, Binder shows how knowledge of contemporary processes of change and their associated discourses are turned into cultural capital and can be used advantageously (ibid., 215). Applying this understanding of "globality" to the moving practices of expatriate teenagers and their career prospects brings similar views to the fore. Accumulating experiences of different places is seen, by expatriate teenagers and their parents, as a symbol of status and competence. Luke Desforges (1998), who explores the ways in which British middle-class youths negotiate and build their identities through travel, claims (not unlike Binder) that young people convert the cultural capital they gather from their independent travels into economic capital in the workplace upon their return. Drawing on Desforges's study, Gill Valentine argues that, through their travel, youths "participate in a process of othering and constructing first world representations of the third world, while simultaneously earning themselves a privileged position in the West" (Valentine 2003, 45). As student Kressi argues, the exchange of the experiences of various places, cultural practices, and values within the school community provides students with a variety of "new things" and/or "other perspectives"—what Binder calls "globality"—as cultural capital. This "globality," however, does not describe the degree of integration and entanglement of global experiences—the processes of transculturation—but views them as experiences gathered for future benefit. Likewise, the experiences described by Kressi are seen, by many students, as helpful for gaining a privileged position in the future. As sixteen-year-old Lara phrased it:

LARA: *And [my parents] decided that, later, an international school abroad on your CV will be well-received. If you speak foreign languages, several languages, this will go down well. Life experience, that you just see something different.*⁶⁷

Lara's quote shows that growing up abroad and receiving an international education is linked to the idea of "globality" as cultural capital. Her way of imagining a future CV proves this particularly well. Nevertheless, the age-specific context has to be kept in mind, where parents play a major role in planning their children's lives and making decisions in their "best interest" (see, for instance, the discussions about the move to Shanghai described in Part II, Chapter 1). Some attributions to the idea of "globality"

67 German original: LARA: *Und [meine Eltern] sind halt zu dem Entschluss gekommen. Internationale Auslandsschule. Wenn man später, Lebenslauf kommt gut an. Wenn man andere Sprachen spricht, mehrere Sprachen spricht, kommt's gut an. Lebenserfahrung, einfach, dass man mal was anderes sieht.*

drawn by Binder's study on backpackers, such as the alternative experience of everyday life, and a special time for development and self-fulfillment are therefore not part of the expatriate youth's sense of self. Youths consider being abroad a part of everyday life. The conceptualization of "globality" as the awareness of cultural resources that fit into globalized ways of living and subsequently serve as an important identity resource, however, is applicable to expatriate youths in Shanghai. It is the school that helps to provide, foster, and turn the youths' global experiences into "globality" as part of their educational ambitions as well as part of establishing their community markers and values. As a result, these international schools ultimately foster an international community that can see itself as open-minded, diverse, and cosmopolitan without specifically including the local neighborhood, Shanghai, or China. These latter places are merely used as stages on which one experiences the differences contributing to their "globality." While expatriate youths and their families thus create their own communities, which often revolve around schools, they practice demarcation towards "locals" in Shanghai as well as those back "home"—with both groups perceived as lacking international experience. Similar to how Brosius, investigating the everyday lives of India's middle class, conceptualizes cosmopolitanism as "a practice of status-creation" (2010, 26), the students and their families use the educational environment and the surrounding network to mediate their "expatriateness."

My three examples show how "expatriateness" is performed, maintained, and taught among expatriate youths who, under the influence of the international schools, and despite differences in their nationality, class, or ethnicity, create a distinct, unifying expatriate group consciousness. Looking at the everyday dimensions of transnational mobility at an international school, I highlight the significant amounts of energy, resources, and organization that go into building and sustaining a community with its distinct practices and norms. It becomes apparent that acquiring the habitus of an expatriate, to claim belonging to an expatriate community, goes hand in hand with processes of demarcation and a certain classism. While the habitus includes valuing cosmopolitanism and diversity, demarcation is an essential part in claiming these values and turning them into useful capital as "globality." As David Ley has argued, "cosmopolitanism itself is always situated, always imbued with partiality and vulnerability" (Ley 2004, 162). The performance of a collective expatriate identity is thus not only tied to aspiring and learning cosmopolitan values, but simultaneously to practices of demarcation towards peers perceived as less mobile, globally connected, and educated. For many students, a school's "nationality" does not necessarily correspond to their own, such that the school itself is seen as providing an added dimension of internationality.

Nevertheless, nationality, in addition to the choice of school, still provides a major marker along which various expatriate communities align themselves. It is therefore not surprising that access to a German school and the German expatriate community proved easier for me than it was

to gain similar access to other (school) communities. While I have set my focus on the schools' impact on the process of creating collective expatriate identities, it can also be said that sometimes, within expatriate communities, in Fechter's words, "national boundaries are still anxiously guarded" (2007b, 110). Despite the efforts made to sustain a sense of community, the student body (as well as the staff and parents) at the different international schools is highly diverse and internal divides still exist. My discussions with teachers and students from the British and American international schools suggest that these internal dividing lines might be even stronger at schools with a larger student body and greater ethnic and national diversity than the German school I studied. Danau Tanu studied these hierarchical divides and the ideal of being "international" at an international school in Jakarta and succinctly summarizes these dynamics:

Money and cultural hierarchies influence perceptions and interactions that take place on campus. Racial and other identity labels are sometimes used to signify status and cultural difference, but their meanings constantly shift and at times bear no semblance to actual physical appearance. Various forms of social assets, such as language, accents, mannerisms, and money, are used to mark and vie for status. Thus, being "international" is not a straightforward matter. International schools may be a multicultural bubble, but it is a bubble that is not immune to the dynamics at work in the world outside the school gates (2011, 231).

As Tanu's findings show, the student bodies of international schools are highly diverse and crisscrossed by many dividing lines under the guise of a single school community or habitus.

Students' differing stances on the experiences of international education that are presented in the next section allow for a few glimpses into the dividing lines underlying school communities. The section captures expatriate youths' reflections on going to an international school by taking up their main narrative of privilege and pressure.

3.4 Privilege and pressure: youths' experiences at school

PAUL: *They have like a high standard of learning and if you don't have good grades, you get kicked out of school. Or it depends in the schools. There are warning systems and stuff. My school, if you have like a C, all the parents get emails, all the teachers get emails, you are like blacklisted. You have to have As or Bs to like do stuff at my school. If you have a C, forget about it. Parents are called and stuff. It is really a tough type. But, on the other hand, all the teachers are really nice.*

"Tough type" but "really nice," as Paul, a student at an American Christian school in Shanghai puts it, succinctly summarizes the student discourse about these international schools. It is a discourse I encountered in various narratives revolving around the privilege—and pressure—associated with international education.

Fourteen-year-old Keith from Singapore, for example, praises the positive aspects, the privileges of international education.

KEITH: *Well, I think, academic wise, the school is very open, to erm, every student. Especially in the international school, because they are dealing with very different cultures. So, for one the school is very open. So, it teaches different things at different levels, for different students. Like some are better in English, some are so-so. They split them into groups, and just, I think it is very helpful and effective in teaching them. And they also have lots of extra-curriculum activities. Like sports and other forms of activities. And I think that is good, because it helps, teach, and educate in a very different and interesting way.*

Keith, attending an international British school in Shanghai, is clearly proud of his educational institution and, during the group interview, continuously stresses its quality. He describes his school as "open" and attending to the various needs of a diverse student body. Many students described their educational experience in similar ways. German student Peter, reflecting on his education, feels that the privileged environment renders schooling easier.

PETER: *For me, school is easier here. Or rather, you simply study much better here and that's why it's easier. [...] It's all much more efficient here.*⁶⁸

68 German original: PETER: *Für mich ist die Schule hier auch einfacher. Beziehungsweise man lernt einfach viel besser und deswegen ist es einfacher. [...] Viel effizienter ist das hier alles.*

Peter bases his argument for school being “easier” on the privileged circumstances under which lessons take place. During the lessons I attended, I also observed small class sizes, new equipment, and teachers who address students (and their problems) individually, thus supporting those who have difficulties, rather than simply giving them a bad grade. Based on this learning environment, Peter consequently argues that many of his fellow students would not be able to succeed in the same way at other schools that would require much more assertiveness. While some students thus experience private schooling as a mark of privilege—a privilege that echoes the theme of comfort and luxury presented in my first example, “Everyday Comfort”—others feel this privilege is tied to pressure. Mia, for instance, who indirectly compares her school in Shanghai to elite schools in Germany and thus stresses her privileged form of education, also relates her school environment to a communal pressure to perform well.

MIA: *And [school] is somehow taken much more seriously here than in Germany. I believe here they all want an average of 1.3 or 1.4 [straight-As in the German grading system] and, in Germany, they often don't care. Elite schools also exist in Germany, but in general, if you just ask around, for instance when friends move and then talk about their school, then you always think to yourself: "What? They are happy about a 4 [equivalent to a D or a pass]?"!*⁶⁹

The pressure to perform well can certainly be found among students elsewhere. Many expatriate youths, however, depict this pressure as particularly crucial to their school experience in Shanghai. Norwegian student Britta, from a British school, and Charlie, from the German school and a member of “the girls,” explain:

BRITTA: *And also in IB [International Baccalaureate], I pretty much have to do like homework at least two hours every day. So, I don't really have that much, like, time after school. Just have to eat, and then do my homework. And then I have to go to bed as soon as possible after my homework. I get so tired. That is also something I don't like here.*

CHARLIE: *I somehow feel the pressure at the German school in Shanghai is also much higher. Actually, I can't really say. [...] But I find the pressure very strong here.*⁷⁰

69 German original: MIA: *Und das wird hier ja auch irgendwie viel ernster genommen als in Deutschland. Ich meine, hier wollen alle einen Schnitt von 1,3 oder 1,4 und in Deutschland ist's denen eigentlich meistens egal. Also es kommt drauf an auf die Schule. Es gibt auch Eliteschulen in Deutschland, aber so generell, wenn man sich jetzt einfach erkundigt, zum Beispiel wenn Freunde wegziehen und dann von ihrer Schule erzählen. Dann denkt man sich immer so: „Was? Die freuen sich über eine Vier!“*

70 German original: CHARLIE: *Ich finde irgendwie auch der Druck an der deutschen Schule Shanghai ist auch irgendwie größer. Eigentlich kann ich es nicht genau sagen. [...] Aber ich finde den Druck hier halt sehr stark.*

When talking to me, the students (and those at the German school, in particular) often drew comparisons to schooling elsewhere, stressing the comparatively high expectations of their schools in Shanghai, as Paul's, Mia's, Britta's, and Charlie's remarks demonstrate.

To delineate the various factors leading to such pressure (or at least the perception of it) I want to discuss Charlie's perspective on schooling and pressure in detail and use her voice as one case-in-point. Charlie was sixteen when I first met her. Her parents were born in China and met in Germany during their studies at university. Charlie grew up in Germany and her parents took on German nationality. In the beginning of her high school years, her family decided to move to Shanghai.

One day, when I interview Charlie out in the schoolyard during her free period, she abruptly changes the topic (we are discussing the rising taxi fares in China) and announces:

CHARLIE: *I am scared of the Abitur [A-Levels or final exams for the diploma].*

INTERVIEWER: *What is it that scares you most about it?*

CHARLIE: *That in the end... Well, in the end I would really like to study medicine. And I am afraid that I won't succeed. Directly. I don't want to wait for six semesters or so to get in. Then I would rather study something else. Because medicine already takes so long, then I would already be, no idea, twenty. And when I'm forty I would still be studying or something. Yes. That's why I sometimes put myself a little bit under pressure. And Antonia always puts herself under a lot of pressure, too, because she, too, wants to study medicine. But her grades are really good. She doesn't even need to put herself under pressure. And then, when I'm standing next to her and she starts to put herself under pressure—"I won't make it! I won't make it!"—then I think, "Okay, I can just forget about it."⁷¹*

Due to her wish to go to medical school in Germany, Charlie demands perfect scores and grades from herself. While she already has doubts about her success, the fact that others at her school also fear failing entrance into med school makes her feel even more pressured.

71 German original: CHARLIE: *Ich hab Angst vorm Abitur.* INTERVIEWER: *Was macht dir da am meisten Angst?* CHARLIE: *Dass ich am Ende... Also, ich möchte am Ende voll gern Medizin studieren. Und ich hab Angst, dass ich es nicht schaffe. Direkt. Ich möchte aber auch nicht so wieder, sechs Wartesemester oder so machen. Dann studiere ich lieber was anderes. Weil Medizin dauert schon so lange, dann bin ich schon so, also keine Ahnung, zwanzig. Und wenn ich vierzig bin, bin ich immer noch am Studieren oder so. Ja. Da mach ich mir manchmal ein bisschen Druck. Und Antonia macht sich halt auch immer sehr viel Druck, weil sie möchte auch Medizin studieren. Aber sie hat so gute Noten. Sie braucht sich gar keinen Druck machen. Und wenn ich dann neben ihr stehe und sie fängt an sich Druck zu machen "Ich schaff das nicht! Ich schaff das nicht!", dann denke ich mir „okay, dann kann ich es ja direkt vergessen.“*

When I discussed the high pressure to perform with teachers at the international schools, many pointed at the high involvement of parents in their children's education. During my fieldwork, I also came across the idea of "tiger-mothers" (Chua 2011), those who constantly challenge their children by enrolling them in further educational activities from piano lessons to Chinese tutoring. There is indeed a hyperactivity in many students' lives that seems to go hand-in-hand with expatriate (hyper)mobility; both are seen as beneficial for the development of the child. When I ask Charlie about her parents' views about her med school plans, she explains:

CHARLIE: *They always say it doesn't matter what I study. But [...] I've wanted to study medicine for a long time. And now they've already told their friends. Like really proud, "Yes, my daughter wants to study medicine."*

INTERVIEWER: *And now you almost feel the pressure that you have to do it, something like that?*

CHARLIE: *Yes. I would really like to do it, but I also don't want them to... No idea. I think it's maybe not that important to my parents. But, I don't know. It's somehow important to me that I don't disappoint my parents. No idea. It sounds really stupid.⁷²*

The pressure of parental expectations, as Charlie voices them, is something many students share regardless of where they are. I feel, however, that in the case of the expatriate teenagers in Shanghai, their parents, as successful transnational professionals, set the bar particularly high. Still, Charlie, a straight-A student, thinks her parents are not necessarily demanding too much. She explains to me that her parents were rather conservative and her father had voiced his thoughts that, if Charlie were a boy, he would be much stricter and his expectations for her grades would be much higher. "I think he already gave up on it a little bit,"⁷³ Charlie contemplates during our conversation in the schoolyard. When I voice my surprise about her father's position, she elaborates:

CHARLIE: *Yes, they just meant, probably, that boys have to work and so on and earn big money. And my parents just think that, if I study medicine, I should open a practice. Have a child. Just laid-back. [...]*

INTERVIEWER: *<L> That's not that laid-back! <L> Med school, just opening a practice!*

72 German original: CHARLIE: *Aber sie meinen ja auch immer, es wär ja egal was ich studiere. Aber [...] ich will schon sehr lange Medizin studieren. Und jetzt haben sie es auch schon ihren Freunden erzählt. So ganz stolz: „Ja, meine Tochter will Medizin studieren.“* INTERVIEWER: *Jetzt fühlst du dich fast schon unter Druck gesetzt, dass du das machen musst, so ungefähr?* CHARLIE: *Ja. Ich würd es wirklich gern machen, Aber ich will jetzt auch nicht, dass die das ... Keine Ahnung. Ich glaube meinen Eltern ist es vielleicht nicht so wichtig. Aber, ich weiß nicht. Mir ist es irgendwie wichtig, dass ich meine Eltern nicht enttäusche. Keine Ahnung, das hört sich voll doof an.*

73 German original: *Ich glaube er hat es schon ein bisschen aufgegeben.*

CHARLIE: *No. But my parents think, well, university is really laid-back and so on. But I think that's also because they were in China before that. And studying in Germany is likely to be more relaxed than school in China. [...] But my parents are actually pretty lenient. Well, for being Chinese parents. <L> Because they also let me go party in the evenings. Well, they don't like it if I go out too often. But once in a while is okay. And they support it when I do something with friends and so on. Just now they think studying for the Abitur is the most important issue. But there are also parents who don't allow that at all.*⁷⁴

Like Charlie, expat youths generally consider Chinese schooling to be hard and academic success more important for Chinese parents.⁷⁵ Consequently, at the schools, I regularly came across the prevailing conception among expat teenagers that those who have Chinese parents were automatically under more pressure than their peers from other backgrounds. Although friendships between students with Asian or non-Asian backgrounds were normal, I felt that having a Chinese parent was sometimes a dividing line that subtly underlay the shared experience of school. Through the eyes of the teenagers at the German school, for instance, high expectations from parents with Chinese roots are normal and also thought to indirectly influence the overall pressure to perform for all students in class. In school, a student's "Chineseness" is thus often equated with diligent studying, learning to play an instrument, and abstinence from nightlife activities, due to the parents' assumed objections. Students often play with these stereotypes and use these as a basis for jokes. They see their own international education as influenced by "Chinese" pressure and high expectations. Some students, mostly those who are relatively new to the expatriate community in Shanghai, voice their annoyance—sometimes by again "othering" students with Chinese backgrounds—about the pressure to perform.

74 German original: CHARLIE: *Ja, die meinten halt, wahrscheinlich so Jungen müssen arbeiten und so und das große Geld verdienen. Und meine Eltern meinen halt, dass, wenn ich Medizin studiere, [soll ich] eine Praxis aufmachen. Mit Kind. Halt so gechillt. INTERVIEWER: <L> So gechillt ist das auch nicht. <L> Mal ein Medizinstudium, eben mal eine Praxis aufmachen! CHARLIE: Nee. Aber meine Eltern meinten halten, so ja, Studium wäre voll entspannt und so. Aber ich glaub das ist auch, weil sie vorher in China waren. Und in Deutschland Studium ist bestimmt entspannter als in China Schule. [...] Aber meine Eltern sind eigentlich ganz locker. Also dafür, dass sie chinesische Eltern sind. <L> Weil sie lassen mich auch feiern gehen abends. Also sie mögen es nicht so gerne, wenn ich so oft gehe. Aber ab und zu ist okay. Und sonst unterstützen die das auch wenn ich was mit Freunden mache und so was. Nur jetzt meinen sie halt Abiturler- nen ist das Wichtigste. Aber es gibt halt auch so Eltern, die das gar nicht erlauben.*

75 For urban Chinese youths' perspectives on the role of academic success in developing personal "quality" (suzhi), see Vanessa L. Fong (Fong 2007). Drawing from interviews and thirty-two months of participant observation conducted in schools in Dalian between 1997 and 2006, Fong examines how urban Chinese "only-children" negotiate the popular idea of "quality" by stressing the importance of aspects of quality—such as morality, cosmopolitanism, or academic achievement—that favored their own strengths.

LARA: *And we don't have to say that it's bad to be good at school, or to think about the future. We do that, too. But we don't say it. The strong interest [in school] here [leads to] other things being pushed to the back that are actually pretty important for enjoying life. I mean, I don't live only to have achieved something in sixty years. No friends, no contacts and then I die. That's not the meaning of life; I don't think so.*⁷⁶

Lara criticizes the importance her classmates place on having good grades. This emphasis is likely connected to the pressure to work hard for future success. This focus on the future is discussed in more detail in Part IV, Chapter 1.

Privilege and pressure thus seem to have a dialectic relationship in the students' narratives and lives. The awareness of enjoying a privileged education and lifestyle, for some students, also carries with it the pressure to perform well. In all expatriate families, careers—and the education perceived as necessary to excel at them—are almost always viewed as highly important; they are considered worth the move to Shanghai to begin with. Unemployed parents are altogether unknown in the expatriate community. While the community is heterogeneous and class divides within Shanghai's expatria of course exist, the international students also have no classmates whose parents have a working-class background. However, as I observed during my fieldwork at the German school, students are quite aware of the differences in degree of pressure exerted on students with Chinese versus Western backgrounds.

3.5 Concluding thoughts on “expatriateness” and the role of schools

This chapter examined expatriate youths' shared experiences of belonging to an international school community—an experience that the student Allen, in the beginning of this chapter, described as everyone being in “the same space.” I described how this space is shaped by Shanghai's specific international school landscape, which does not allow Chinese passport holders to enroll at any of these schools unless special circumstances exist. These schools are therefore almost hermetically sealed spaces. At the same time, as the second subsection illustrated, the schools put much effort into creating a shared experience for students. This building of a school community is based on establishing certain “social aesthetics”

⁷⁶ German original: LARA: *Und wir müssen jetzt nicht sagen, dass das schlecht ist, wenn man jetzt gut in der Schule ist, oder über Zukunft nachdenkt. Das machen wir ja auch. Aber wir sagen das halt nicht. Dieses starke Interesse hier [an Schule führt dazu], dass schon andere Sachen einfach in den Hintergrund geschoben werden; was eigentlich auch relativ wichtig ist um Spaß zu haben am Leben. Ich meine, ich lebe nicht nur damit ich in sechzig Jahren irgendwas erreicht habe. Keine Freunde, keine Kontakte und sterb dann. Das ist nicht der Sinn des Lebens, glaub ich nicht.*

(MacDougall 2006) that involve a specific material culture and concrete everyday routines for students. The resulting school communities are all unified in the collective experience of belonging to an expatriate network in Shanghai. The schools here play a vital role in mediating what it means to be or act like an expatriate. In this way, the schools not only affect students' lives, but also those of their families. They are community hubs for Shanghai's expatriate and offer parents an entrance to an expatriate community. I therefore argue that it is precisely in the spaces of the international schools that collective expatriate identities are negotiated and mediated on an everyday basis—through community events, communal valuing of the school as a site for the youths' (cosmopolitan) formation, and through the admission process that requires the "right" financial means or jobs, the "right" passports, and the "right" grades. The schools are seen as bringing together students from various international backgrounds, but—as with the gated communities—the diversity there is controlled. However, while the negotiations of collective expatriate identities forge a common consensus on what it means to be an expatriate in Shanghai, they do not always bridge internal divides, particularly along the lines of nationality or ethnicity, as the student discourse on the privilege and pressure of international education and the role of Chinese parents reveals.

The controlled spaces of the schools are largely shaped by their institutional frameworks, but there are also places that teenagers seek out and shape on their own. These places are crucial for enabling teenagers to gain meaning and agency in their migration experience. As Massey (1995, 207) succinctly notes, "making of place is part of constructing the identity and coherence of the social group itself." It is these reciprocal processes of space and age group identity performances that the next part, "Arriving," foregrounds, with the aim of further understanding how expatriate youth culture is caught in the dynamics of "uprootings and regroupings" (Ahmed et al. 2003), "flows," and boundaries.