Reluctant Germans:
Performing Identity Abroad

By

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Abstract

This thesis deals with members of a particular age cohort of German migrants in Cape Town. The informants all belong to Germany's 'post-boomer' generation, which has been the subject of much recent popular media coverage in Germany. Similar situations have been portrayed in writings from the USA. Being members of the middle-class, the respondents are equipped with both financial and cultural capital, which facilitates their connectedness to both home country and receiving society while abroad. This form of multiple connectedness implies a transnational identity as described by various authors.

The particularity of these respondents' performance of national identity in Cape Town is based on both their perception of, and attitudes towards, Germany as well as the impact of their new surrounding. The perception of their home country is informed through a combination of the informants' upbringing in an era of financial wealth, being part of a particular generation in Germany, and existing stereotypical images of 'Germanness'.

In Cape Town these respondents avoid creating an ethnic enclave and distance themselves from the established German community in the city. Instead they seek contact with citizens of other nation-states and engage in behavior that has been deemed 'cosmopolitan'. This cosmopolitanism surfaces in their everyday life in South Africa, in relationship to, for example, their social networks, areas of residence and material culture.

Loss of national identity, in this case, is not felt as a painful process as described in most other studies on diasporas, but rather as a willful action.

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Chapter 1.
Introduction

Resulting from an exceptional increase in mobility and a more rapid flow of people, as well as goods and information of all kinds than ever, fewer and fewer people live all their lives in the country of their birth. Some people are involuntary migrants, having left their countries for reasons such as persecution or war. Others, mostly middle class voluntary migrants, move because of pull-factors in the receiving countries. Whether out of choice or force, the phenomenon of expatriation is omnipresent and concerns many more people than those of the 'traditional' diasporas such as Jews, Armenians and Chinese. This occurrence has led to an abundance of studies on dispersed people to the extent that some authors complain about the current "sexiness" of the topic which, they claim, causes scholars from different fields to tailor their work to fit this fashionable category (Butler, 2001: 190). But obviously there is a strong interest in diasporas and the need to make sense of transnational interaction in general, and in specific cases too.

Even though long-distance migration is not a new phenomenon, recent development has facilitated interactions of new dimensions (Appadurai, 1990: 324). While migration over vast geographical distances used to be limited largely through time and money, spatiality has nowadays been rendered largely irrelevant. Enhanced speed and lower costs of traveling, easy, fast and affordable communication systems and internationally available media - especially through the Internet - make it possible for many to get or keep in touch with 'communities', which were previously far removed. As Hannerz noted, "Distances, and boundaries, are not what they used to be." (1996: 3). The boundaries of modern nation-states too are becoming increasingly weakened by phenomena of globalization. Since the collapse of the communist world, state boundaries do not usually serve the purpose of keeping the population within a certain territory, but rather select whom to allow to enter. Yet the global flow of capital in the form of transnational corporations, highly mobile tourists and media which transport images and ideas from one country to another, altogether undermine the significance of state borders (Vertovec & Cohen, 1999: xiii).

While the discussion around globalization is mostly concerned with deterritorialized, *global* trends, the term transnationalism is not applied in such a wide context. As the word itself suggests, this term is used to describe movement from one country to another (Kearney, 1995: 548). Although the place of residence has changed, transnationalism implies a multiple connectedness independent of geographical position (e.g. Vertovec, 1999).

The young Germans in Cape Town who are the subjects of this study, usually have the financial means, necessary skills, and financial and symbolic capital (see Ortner, 2002), to be multiply connected. They live in a country where they are foreign and where their mother tongue is not commonly spoken. Yet they create new ties with inhabitants of the receiving country and enrich their lives with new patterns of behaviour, while maintaining links with their home country. Those links are individual persons from the migrants' families or social circle, as well as certain media that keep them informed about news and trends in Germany.

While the scheme described above applies to many transmigrants from various home countries and in various receiving countries, the studied group exercises a specific performance of multiple connectedness, informed through their position in the social hierarchy, their age, the society at home and the receiving society.

Germans have been part of Cape Town's white population ever since the colonisation of the Cape in the 17th century. However, during the course of history, the migrants' reasons for leaving Germany and coming to South Africa have changed, due to varying conditions both in their home country and the receiving society.

Historical Background on German Migration to Southern Africa

In Germany, as in other countries, migration has taken on enlarged scope and new meanings through new technological achievements. But Germany has long been a country of emigrants. Scholars concerned with the German Diaspora have studied this phenomenon, which reaches as far back as the ninth century (Hoerder, 2002: 7). Migration occurred long before people began to speak of the phenomenon of 'globalization' and migration continues, which makes for different segments within the German diaspora, defined through chronology and receiving country. German-speaking populations can be found almost all over the world (ibid). Eastern Europe and North America have been identified as the major and 'traditional' centres of settlement, while smaller numbers of dispersed Germans can be found in South America and Australia.

Even though Southern Africa is known for its German populace too, German settlements in this part of the world have hardly ever been looked at in scholarly discourse. Some work has been done on German Namibians; a recent publication is Schmidt-Lauber's work (e.g. 2000). Namibia, which under colonial rule was known as South West Africa, has a large German population of about 20.000, the earliest of whom arrived at the end of the 19th century.

Ever since the first European settlers occupied the southern tip of Africa, its white population has been interspersed with Germans. The earliest German migrants to the territory that is now known as Cape Town were on board Jan Van Riebeeck's ship when he set foot on African soil in 1652 (Grünewald, 1998: 11). During the 17th century, when the Dutch formed the most powerful nation of traders and colonialists, Germany was still divided and underdeveloped, recovering from decades-long wars and religious schism. Consequently, many Germans, seeking an income, applied for work with their rich neighbour and landed jobs as sailors. While the first Germans who settled in South Africa can be regarded as guest workers who worked for the Dutch colonialists, later objectives were slightly different. In the 18th century, Germans moved to South Africa for reasons such as religious difficulties, employment and an 'easy life' in South Africa compared to life in Germany (ibid). Those factors have to be seen as 'push-factors', factors which forced or at least triggered their leaving Germany.

Lutherans, for example, who were restrained from practicing their religion in Germany, immigrated to South Africa while it was under Dutch rule. Here their religion was not forbidden, but initially they weren't allowed their own parish either, as the only officially acknowledged faith was Calvinism, just as the only official language was Dutch (ibid: 14). Therefore, instead of contributing a distinct flavour to the (early) national "fruit salad" (Frankental, 1998: 228) many Germans opted for assimilation to the Dutch majority and were for a long time not distinguishable from the Dutch population at the Cape. Germans were the only foreigners the Dutch allowed to settle at the Cape, but "geen Engelsche, Fransche or annere Natien" (from Grünewald, 1998:11), who, in terms of economic power, were a potential threat to Dutch supremacy at the Cape.

From the late 18th century, German Lutherans were allowed to practice their own religion officially (ibid: 7). This gave rise to the emergence of several Lutheran mission stations, which often developed into small settlements and their names such as Heidelberg, Wuppertal and Berlin can still be found on the South African map.

Next to religion, warfare has been the most important reason for long-distance interactions (Appadurai, 1990: 324). In South Africa, Germans did not fight in the interest of their home country, but were hired as mercenaries by the Dutch to help secure European superiority over the indigenous population. According to James A. Michener's novel "The Covenant", the underdeveloped and uneducated Germans had no choice but to join the military of other nations. The author certainly had poetic license for this statement, but it seems exaggerated: after the Thirty Years War many Germans, including aristocrats,

academics and merchants, were impoverished and therefore forced to take whatever job was available (Grünewald, 1998:16).

During the 1930s and mainly in the years 1939 to 1941, another group of German refugees came to South Africa. These were Jews fleeing their country to escape the horrors of Hitler's 3rd Reich (Schulz, 2000).

As becomes clear from these paragraphs, the early migrations of Germans to the Cape had various causes, but were generally related to financial constraint or persecution of various sorts in their home country. Contemporary German migration can still be informed by push-factors, but these are neither as grave as those of the past, nor are they the sole cause for migration.

The German-speaking Population in Cape Town Today

South Africa underwent major transformations throughout its history, including the rise and fall of the apartheid system in the 20th century. All the time German-speakers were part of the white population. Under apartheid, skilled Germans were, as all whites with proficiency, welcome to move to South Africa. Several automobile companies did and still do manufacture their cars in South Africa, a phenomenon that dates back several decades. Those large corporations are located predominantly in the Eastern Cape and the Gauteng area; none of the big German companies are to be found in Cape Town. Cape Town's industry, formerly concentrated in the textile and garment sectors, relies nowadays heavily on tourism. As one of the largest groups of tourists are Germans, many German-speaking employees are required in the tourism industry to meet the needs of the generally more affluent, but linguistically challenged, older travellers and to maintain contact with corporations based in Germany.

Cape Town, the 'mother city' of the 'rainbow nation' South Africa, is home to a very heterogeneous population. This has well known historical reasons, but is also due to a high influx of foreigners who have recently been drawn to the city for a variety of reasons and remain there for periods of different lengths. South Africa, especially Cape Town, is becoming more and more popular with tourists from all over the world: the increase of overseas tourists in South Africa rose 21 % from 2001 to 2002. In 2002, the largest group of tourists consisted of visitors from the U.K., followed by the Germans who comprised 14 % of the total 1.8 million overseas tourists (source: pamphlet from the Western Cape Tourism Board, 2003).

Even though tourists are not counted as inhabitants of a city, they influence daily life through their presence and interactions with locals (Hannerz, 1996: 131). Most tourists come

to Cape Town because of its many attractions. Among these are Table Mountain, Cape Point, the Wine Route and a shopping centre, the V&A Waterfront (Western Cape Tourism Board). Some tourists come to Cape Town to visit German relatives or friends who are resident at the Cape, such as the informants of this thesis.

Even apart from tourists, Germans are ubiquitous in Cape Town. South Africa and particularly Cape Town have become a popular destination for German students who want to enrich their studies with a year abroad or finalize their studies with an internship at a South African company or NGO. An Internet search showed eight different organizations that offer placement of German interns in Cape Town. One of those organizations, *Magister*, claimed to have placed about 90 students in 2003 in Cape Town alone, with an average length of stay of four months (email exchange with *Magister*).

Another prominent group consists of older Germans. According to the official in charge of press and public relations of the German Consulate in Cape Town, an increasing number of German pensioners spend the summers of the southern hemisphere in Cape Town, while hibernating in Europe during the months May to September.

In addition to short-term residents, there are many Germans who have come to stay in Cape Town for an indefinite period. Unfortunately in the latest census data (2001), Germans are categorized as "Europeans" with all other European immigrants and first language speakers of German are included under "others". Official numbers can therefore not be obtained from these recent statistics. Estimates from the German consulate reach figures of between 20.000 and 30.000 in Cape Town. According to the consulate, there are about 150.000 German-born and German-speaking persons in the whole country, thereby forming a substantial part of the white populace of 4.293.640 (2001 census). Yet, despite the current trend of diaspora studies, publications on Germans resident in South Africa are scarce and I know of no analysis of the present population.

Nowadays Germans generally seem to migrate to South Africa because they are financially able to do so. Migration to South Africa now happens not only because of push-factors, which made life in Germany unbearable, but is a more complex mix of both push- and pull-factors. However, this mix has no general recipe and particularities are visible in each individual case.

Despite the fact that in the past South Africa used to be an immigration country for whites, its immigration laws are nowadays just as strict as in most other countries in the world and apply regardless of ethnic or national origin. Only those who are judged able to benefit the country are allowed to enter. Apart from battles with immigration bureaucracy, of which

every immigrant has a story or two to tell, moving from Germany to South Africa actually means financial loss to most. Jobs in Germany for equal qualification are or were remunerated with considerably more money than in South Africa, of which the migrants are very well aware. However, whilst living in South Africa and spending their money there, the different value of the Rand and the Euro is no hindrance to the informants' affluence, since the cost of living in South Africa is lower than in Europe.

There are many pull-factors for migration to Cape Town, as will be dealt with in detail in later chapters. Most of the German-speakers, in addition to infamous exceptions such as Juergen Harksen who had to flee his home country because of criminal activity, moved away from Germany deliberately and Cape Town was often their destination of choice. Some pull-factors are similar to general tourists' interest in South Africa. Clearly the weather is one of the more attractive elements of life in Cape Town and the impressive scenery and close proximity to nature reserves also attract many foreigners to the Cape. Although they hardly ever mention sunshine as the main reason for settling in Cape Town, younger Germans certainly do appreciate the Mediterranean climate of the Western Cape, which allows for far more outdoor activity than in their home country. According to the respondents of this study, the above-mentioned attributes influenced their decision to move to Cape Town. Some say that initially the reasons for coming to Cape Town differed. They came to Cape Town because of spouses, studies or internships; others travelled in the area and liked it. Yet others merely sensed the chance to enhance their lives with a touch of adventure. Sometimes those interest fields overlap and sometimes reasons for staying in Cape Town change over time, as will be shown in chapter 2.

Research Question

I decided to conduct a study on Germans in Cape Town, partly because the lack of work on German expatriates is conspicuous and made me curious. In addition, this curiosity was enhanced by the fact that I am a German expatriate myself, and I will elaborate on my position within this study below. Furthermore, some recent German literature dealing with the same generation that I relate to in this thesis, raised the question of their lifestyle abroad.

I singled out a particular group for the study, as a general work on Germans in Cape Town would be far too broad a theme for a thesis of this limited scope. The studied group is probably as large as it is elusive. Amongst most of the numerous German institutions in Cape Town, youngish adult Germans simply don't feature; as a consequence most of those sites were not suitable for fieldwork. Therefore participant observation in German institutions was

not very useful, but did help me decide on the focus of this thesis. I decided to do my research on those Germans who do not, or only erratically, make use of German institutions in Cape Town.

The task I set myself consists of two parts. The first can be described as exploratory and ties in with the aim of most diaspora studies, namely, exploring people's connectedness to both home country and receiving society and looking at the actors' embeddedness in their new place of residence. The first part also examines the extent to which theoretical models established by writers on migration apply to the subjects of study. Migrants have been identified as transnationals and expatriates, as being in diaspora and exile, and in many other categories and sub-categories. In this thesis I attempt to assess those migratory schemes against the informants' actual choices and behaviour patterns.

After having identified the migrants' connections to both home and receiving country, the second, more specific aspect of the study is concerned with testing the described group's particular performance of being German in South Africa. In this regard, a detailed consideration of the aspects of age and class was necessary.

The number of Germans in Cape Town led to the emergence of a multitude of institutions, which have been designed to uphold a 'sense of community' amongst the members. It is striking though, that within this population the studied group is virtually invisible. On random visits to some of these institutions in preparation for this research, such as the German Club, a beer garden and a Catholic church, I never met a single person who would meet the criteria for this study. Even though this could be attributed to bad luck, I learned from the respondents themselves that they hardly ever went to any of those places, or they tried them out once and dismissed them as irrelevant, or even consciously avoided them.

This implies the question of whether moving to a new location, in this case Cape Town, constitutes an attempt by some young Germans to re-shape their identity while abroad and if so, what are their reasons for doing so. New settings and experiences surely play a role in such a process, but this behaviour is also bound to be linked to the identity of a generation of members of a particular country, who grew up with certain resources and either put them to use or abandoned them, which in turn informed their very particular performance of being German.

An assumption I had held, and which has been confirmed during the course of my fieldwork, is that most belong to the so-called middle-class, a background that others would certainly dub as well protected, financially as well as socially. The informants' parents are generally doctors, teachers, lecturers or are in other professions that require tertiary education.

With one exception, the informants have themselves enjoyed tertiary education or are in the process of completing their studies, facilitated through their own or their parents' financially sound position. This repetitive pattern emerges as a central factor for my thesis, and the aspect of middle-class background is dealt with more thoroughly below.

As a recent spate of popular media suggests, Germans of the age group 25-35 (give or take) seem to lead their lives away from an organized form of identity that is seemingly predetermined through factors such as national membership. This applies to those resident in their home country as well as to those abroad. When abroad, these youngish Germans seem not to relate too well to other Germans for various reasons, amongst them a German image that they don't want to be associated with or the shame connected with Germany's past. But it seems that this relates not only to being German; any sense of community that has not been chosen individually seems to have lost appeal. For these respondents, belonging to a specific group by default is being avoided and identity is being shaped through ostensible individual experience. Often the categories that are identified with are 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983), that is, anonymous communities whose members identify through consumption of certain goods and media.

Sample selection

In this study I have focused on a specific segment of the German diaspora defined through certain shared attributes. The first of these is age; the participants can be described as belonging to one generation. At the time of the interview the youngest was 23, the oldest 36. The second characteristic is the fact that they were born in Germany and came to Cape Town as young adults. By the time they reached this age, South Africa had entered the post-apartheid era. The final criterion for eligibility was their existing social networks at the time of arrival in South Africa. I looked at people who did not arrive in South Africa with an established German family, but nevertheless included persons whose prime motivation for coming to Cape Town originally was a South African spouse or partner. This choice is based on the assumption that migrants arriving in the receiving society without company from their country of residence are under more pressure to rebuild their social circle than those accompanied by a family. Eventually I came to conduct fieldwork with nine key-informants, who met these criteria.

Methodology

The nine participants in this study blend in with their new environment; they practice a kind of mimicry that often works but sometimes fails. They mingle mostly with non-Germans therefore speak English most of the time. Places where Germans of the particular age cohort congregate do not exist. The informants are often singled out as Germans, mostly due to their accents that remain even after prolonged stay in South Africa. Nevertheless, as long as I do not hear a German accent, I cannot tell Germans apart from others, even though it is often claimed that 'you can spot a German a mile away', as elaborated below. I, however, lack that skill and find on the contrary that they blend in well with the white population of this country. Consequently I had to rely on different methods to recruit informants. A search via advertisements on the Internet turned out to be just a modest success, but at least put me in touch with one eligible person. The most successful method turned out to be 'word of mouth' - letting as many people as possible know what kind of informants I was looking for. I met some potential respondents co-incidentally, when I overheard a conversation conducted in German.

The prime method of data collection for this thesis is based on semi-structured interviews, conducted in a very loose and informal style at the informants' homes in the German language, often interspersed by the informants with English and Afrikaans words or whatever language they considered appropriate to express themselves. I had several topics in mind before I met the interviewees, but often the conversations drifted far from the original plan and it took some time to get back to the 'red thread'. Nevertheless, I found these semi-structured interviews useful in most cases, because I would hear about aspects of the informants' lives that I had not initially considered inquiring about. Due to their informal nature, I prefer to call the interviews 'chats', as they were in most cases not conducted through a question-and-answer technique and many interviewees turned out to be just as curious about my life as I was about theirs and almost reversed the role of the researcher and the researched.

Some of the interviewees seemed to have waited for a chance to talk about their situation in Cape Town and spoke openly about their lives. But, as often is the case with first-time encounters, I sometimes felt that others did not quite as readily reveal certain aspects of their lives. This was partly due to initial shyness, sometimes due to the fact that their legal status in South Africa is based on bogus marriages and sometimes out of mistrust against a complete stranger who approached them on the basis of their national identity. Therefore 'going back to the field' was often required in order to establish rapport.

In order to gain enough information about the respondents' everyday lives, as required to write a thesis that leans to the principle of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973), I chose to meet the informants on an informal basis, too, when no interview was scheduled. I found the technique of participant observation adequate, when the interviewees were interested in the subject themselves and certain 'chemistry' between interviewer and interviewee secured. If this was the case, it was possible to join the respondents at parties or other events, inviting them home for supper or having a Sunday's 'Kaffee und Kuchen' at either their or my home. Sometimes I just turned up at their homes without prior arrangement, thus trying to eliminate the possibility of rehearsed answers.

The interviewees' homes are situated in particular parts of Cape Town, which seem well chosen, as elaborated below. At their homes, I looked at artefacts that had been acquired by the informants and found out about their origins, meanings and use.

As it was clear from the beginning that these contacts were primarily based on my task of researching for a thesis, I am reluctant to call my relationship with the respondents 'friendship'. And it is probably not realistic to think that I could maintain all relationships formed in future. What I can be sure of is that I have been a friendly researcher.

One factor informing the choice of focusing on the particular group is the fact that those criteria could include me as an informant. As is a recent trend in social anthropology, I attempted 'anthropology at home'; including situating the 'self' instead of the 'other', as far as this is feasible.

Situating 'self'

The majority of anthropologists subscribe to the concept of cultural relativism, meaning that there is no objective ethnographic research, but rather many "partial truths" (Clifford, 1986). One focus is thus reflexivity; to question one's own viewpoint and the discursive elements that have contributed to its emergence. Therefore it is considered important to position oneself in the work and to take one's own perspectives and conceptions into account when interpreting the findings.

I live in Cape Town myself, in a comparable suburb to that of the informants, and therefore did not have to move to a distant location, but could comfortably conduct fieldwork - often not just proverbially - 'on the *stoep* of my house'. Being a middle-class German of 31 years, who has spent about six years in Cape Town, I see myself in a similar situation to the participants of this study and would qualify as an informant for this thesis. Due to many parallels between their lives and mine, I can relate to the informants' concerns, joys and

worries. I had to bring myself into my work, but tried to avoid the technique of 'vulnerable writing', as for example done by Ruth Behar (1996). In vulnerable writing I think it very difficult not to move oneself into the centre of the work, thereby giving insufficient room and voice to those one has worked with.

But a field site that does not seem foreign or exotic in any way has its pitfalls for researchers too. Actions performed by people who are perceived as familiar are in danger of being overlooked or under-theorized, as they might be convergent with the researcher's position. As Bernard notes, in such cases, "Your rapport may be great, but your gaze myopic." (1994: 90). Asking the right questions and receiving information from the respondents was mostly effortless, but I had to be careful not to project my personal experience and opinions onto the respondents' utterances. Seeing particularities in the informants' behaviour is probably easier if sets of meaning of the researcher and the researched are clearly distinct.

Introducing the Informants and their Background

Some basic data about the informants is presented here in table form for easy reference. Further details will emerge in later chapters, as appropriate. For reasons of confidentiality, the respondents' names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

None of the respondents knew each other prior to my study. They therefore do not constitute a group in any sense even though several aspects of their lives pertinent to this study are common to all or most of them.

As can be seen from the table, the youngest and the oldest informants are 12 years apart; therefore this group qualifies as belonging to one generation. Eight of the nine informants come from a rural middle-class background, and this factor will be elaborated below. Only two informants grew up in the Eastern part of Germany, the former Soviet-dominated German Democratic Republic (GDR). West Germans might be over-represented in this study, which can be attributed to the generally higher affluence of West Germans. Due to the population numbers of both parts, which is about 60 million (West) to 20 million (East), this constellation seems justifiable.

None of the informants have applied for South African citizenship, nor do they consider giving up their German nationality.

Table 1. Profile of informants

Table 1. Profile of informants

	age in 2003	East / West Germany	rural / urban origin	year of arrival in S.A.	legal status in S.A.	highest educational qualification	occupation
Eva	32	East	urban	1994	perm. resident	M.A.	marketing
Katharina	29	West	rural	2001	perm. Resident	M.A.	waitress
Katja	33	West	rural	2002	Tourist	M.A.	DJ
Konstanze	32	West	rural	2000	perm. Resident	M.A.	stills producer
Markus	33	East	rural	1994	work permit	Honours	call centre employee
Peter	30	West	rural	1999	Tourist	matriculation	tour guide
Rita	34	West	rural	1996	perm. Resident	M.Sci.	call centre employee
Tobias	24	West	rural	2002	study permit	B.A.	student
Wiebke	36	West	rural	1995	perm. Resident	B. Tech.	yoga teacher

Chapter outline

Chapter 2 provides the respondents' various reasons for coming to Cape Town and staying there. Chapter 3 gives information about the informants' background in their home country and how being part of a certain generation of a particular era created desires that could not be fulfilled in Germany, eventually leading to discontent. The fourth chapter can be seen as the outcome of the previous two, as it shows how the respondents of the study group manage their lives at the destination of their choice under the cultural influence of both their German upbringing and their new surroundings. The final chapter draws on the materials presented throughout to show that the cosmopolitanism of the research sample, while partly a consequence of individual taste, choices and personality, is also directly influenced by factors of class, generation and national origin – to show that they are not merely individuals, but young German expatriates.

Chapter 2.

Reasons for leaving Germany, choosing Cape Town, and staying.

As mentioned in the introduction, early German migrants did not leave Germany voluntarily, but primarily because of push-factors such as poverty and religious persecution and can therefore be described as refugees or as being in exile. In contrast to those early migrants, recent German arrivals in South Africa cannot be as easily categorized. The respondents in this study left Germany out of a mixture of push-factors in the home country and pull-factors in South Africa, particularly in Cape Town. In most cases the pull-factors outstripped the push-factors. But more important than this observation is the fact that they have been able to move to the destination they chose as fit for residence.

Those who are sufficiently intrigued by the pull-factors of a particular place, have to be willing and able to accept sacrifices of various kinds, including financial ones. Immigration to South Africa, as to any other country, can mean financial loss initially. Application for a permit of residence, the costs of airfares and the means required for moving personal possessions to the destination of choice, all demand financial means not equally available to everybody. Coming to South Africa with the intention of saving money and sending it back to Germany is not sensible due to the low value of the Rand relative to the Euro.

Consequently it has to be recognized that many recent migrants, and certainly the participants of this study, do not come to South Africa because they have to, but 'because they can'. The freedom to choose one's place of residence is more easily available to people of relative affluence, and middle-class Germans are therefore over-represented at the Cape. Members of the middle-class don't face the same problems and have different objectives than the working class and the financial elite (Frankental, 1999: 2), some of which will be discussed below.

As can be seen from Table 1, the informants' life histories share some convergence, yet there are individual nuances in which they differ. All were born in Germany to German parents, spent most of their lives there, received the larger part of their education there and still have German citizenship. Coming from a middle-class background, they had the financial means to travel and were, due to their relatively high level of education, equipped with at least basic linguistic skills.

This chapter deals with the reported reasons for leaving Germany, choosing Cape Town and the desire to stay there. However, some aspects cannot be ascribed entirely to either

pull- or push-factors. The most problematic of those aspects seem to be the one of spouses and other relationships and has to be dealt with outside of the categories mentioned in the title of this chapter. Information containing their current marital status and household constellation will be given in the following table.

Table 2. Marital status and living arrangements

	marital status	nationality of partner	living arrangement
Eva	Married	South African	husband and two children
Katharina	life partnership	South African	partner and friend
Katja	divorced	n/a	sharing with US-American
Konstanze	life partnership	South African	sharing with a German and a South African
Markus	Single	n/a	alone
Peter	Single	n/a	alone
Rita	Married	South African	alone
Tobias	Single	n/a	sharing with people of several nationalities
Wiebke	Married	South African	husband

As can be seen from Table 2, five of the nine informants are currently married to a South African, or have been registered as their life partners[1].

Relationship with or marriage to a South African has in some cases been crucial to the decision to move to Cape Town. The three informants, who agreed to move to South Africa because of their life partners, left Germany because of an obvious pull factor in the receiving country. Eva, Katharina and Markus initially came to Cape Town because they met South Africans abroad and fell in love with them. Konstanze, Rita and Wiebke all met their boyfriends while staying in Cape Town. But even together with their partners, none of the five (Markus is currently single) engaged with South Africans plan to go back to Germany. It is understandable that a South African who doesn't speak German is reluctant to move to Germany, but it seems that the determination of the German partner to stay in Cape Town is equally important, as it reveals that their partners are not the only aspects they enjoy about living there.

[1] Same sex couples, whilst enjoying nearly equal rights as 'mixed' couples in South Africa, cannot marry one another, but can formally be registered as 'life partners'. Some heterosexual couples too favour this option rather than marriage.

Eva, Katharina and Wiebke are formally engaged with South Africans with whom they maintain a relationship. Eva took the chance to gather experience abroad after the collapse of the GDR in1989 and went as an au pair to London, where she met Walter, a South African student and developed a relationship with him. After Walter returned to South Africa, Eva joined him and they married there, enabling Eva to apply for permanent residence, which she was granted. They now have a four-year-old son and a two-year-old daughter. Katharina was granted a bursary to study in Sussex for two years in 1999, where she was awarded an MA in the subject 'Culture, Race and Difference'. In Sussex she met Melanie, a South African also on an exchange program at Sussex University. The two became a couple, and when Melanie had to go back to South Africa, it was obvious to Katharina that she would follow. Katharina and Melanie registered as life partners, so that Katharina would be granted permanent residence in South Africa.

Some informants who are married to their 'loved ones' would probably not have married if it did not equip them with a legal status in South Africa. Wiebke, for example, met her South African husband Jakobus while she was doing an internship in Cape Town. She returned to Cape Town several times on different kinds of permits, but eventually decided to marry Jakobus in order to avoid the inconvenience of applying for permits repeatedly. She still finds it ludicrous to call him 'husband' instead of 'boyfriend'.

As it is, relationships do not always last a lifetime and are therefore often not reliable as pull-factors. Markus, currently single, had two long-lasting relationships while living in Cape Town. His first relationship with a South African, the initial reason for coming to Cape Town, ended after several years and so did the relationship thereafter, but in neither case was the break-up of the relationship seen as sufficient reason to return to Germany. He claims: "I don't change countries because of relationships; I've done that once before." This statement evokes the impression of somebody who lives strictly according to his principles. But it must also be taken into consideration that Markus has lived in Cape Town for almost ten years, and that attachment to a place can evolve to be of greater importance than attachment to individuals.

It has to be noted, however, that not all of the above-mentioned formal commitments result from affection. Some emerged through purely practical considerations: marriage or life partnership is sufficient reason to apply for residency in South Africa, and two of the informants have made use of this legal 'loophole' and another is currently considering this option. Rita, for example, worked for the German School in Cape Town. In 1999 the school did not renew her contract and therefore she also lost her work permit, which meant that she

had to leave the country. Rita 'saved' herself from returning to Germany through a last-minute marriage of convenience to a South African friend, which enabled her to obtain the status of a permanent resident.

Konstanze, in order to be granted permanent residence, married a friend whom she met during her internship in Cape Town and shared a house with him in order to appear a 'believable' couple. Besides this marriage of convenience, she has a 'real' boyfriend, Lorenzo, whom she could have married. But she does not believe that a relationship has to be declared valid by state officials, and therefore prefers not to be formally engaged to the person she loves. One year ago, Konstanze bought a house in the suburb of Observatory, which she shares with her 'bogus' husband. Her 'real' boyfriend lives in a different house close by. She feels comfortable with this arrangement and doesn't see any reason to change it in the near future.

Reasons for Leaving

Reasons for leaving one's home country are generally manifold and can be attributed to push-factors in the home country and pull-factors of the receiving country. Push- and pull-factors are not always identifiable as distinct from each other, as already established by writers on other voluntary middle-class migrants (Frankental, 1998: 56). Obviously voluntary middle-class migrants' reasons for leaving their country differ from those of the working class or refugees. But, contrary to many participants in Frankental's study, middle-class Israeli migrants, the German informants reported on here did not suffer significant loss or live through other pivotal events which made life in Germany unbearable for them and so triggered their move. The desire to leave Germany was a general attitude they developed to their home country while growing up. In the case of these German respondents, this attitude has been informed through their upbringing in relatively stable circumstances, often described by the informants as static, which provided them with financial security but did not suffice as a model according to which they intend to lead their lives, as will be elaborated in chapter 3.

Even though none of the informants show a particular patriotic pride in Germany, most claim that the need to leave was secondary in their decision to change their place of residence. What they emphasized was the objective of coming to Cape Town. All informants indicated that they were generally willing to explore life in a different country, something most of them had done before for short spells during their studies, internships or when traveling. Some were desperate to move away from Germany, experiencing the confines of their settings as agonizing. Others had personal, individual reasons. Katja, for example, felt

she was not coping with her life in Germany due to job-related high stress levels and the divorce from her husband. She hoped to improve the overall quality of her life through moving to Cape Town.

Apart from such personal experiences, the informants' decisions to leave Germany can mostly be attributed to boredom, longing for change, or the search for adventure. Counteracting boredom is an important element in the lives of younger members of the middle-classes and is channeled through activities, which are perceived as different from the usual routine of everyday life, as shown in greater detail in the next chapter. Not everybody is satisfied with the generally very structured and routine-dominated life that middle-class Germans lead and feel impeded in exploring different possibilities, and disillusioned through the failure of converting their individual dreams into reality (Coupland, 1991 and Illies, 2000). Many try to break out of this drab routine through unusual activities such as extreme sports, romantic adventures and, most importantly for this thesis, traveling or even moving to a different country.

Katharina, for example, her parents' home being situated close to the Dutch border, was used to crossing national boundaries from a very early age. Already when at school, she was very interested in travelling and took every occasion to use the school's exchange program to spend time in France. After her matriculation in 1994, she spent one year as an au pair in Paris, the first big city she ever moved to. Later she studied in Sussex, England. Katja too, whilst at high school, participated regularly in an exchange program with a town in France, which accounts for her good skills in French. After matriculating, she did not have definite plans for the future and so she went as an au pair to Princeton in the United States for seven months. Some years later she did two internships abroad, one in San Francisco and another in the UK. Markus took one year off in 1993 in order to travel through Western and Southern Africa, consciously avoiding South Africa, which was officially still ruled by the apartheid government. Peter, after having served the compulsory year in the German army, felt that he needed a break from doing his duties and went travelling for several months, visiting different parts of Europe and South East Asia.

Peter eventually left Germany because he felt he needed a change in his life that he experienced as too structured and dominated by his work at a bank. Whilst being a banker supplied him with a regular income that provided for a comfortable lifestyle, Peter felt that 'this could not be it.' To him, working regular hours at a bank until the age of 65 appeared far too similar to a life sentence in prison. Even though others might find a regular income and working hours appealing, Peter decided for a less lucrative profession with more excitement.

He now works as a tour guide in South Africa employed by a German company and receives an erratic income, depending on when he is appointed to a new group of tourists. However, for Peter an irregular income is acceptable in combination with moving to South Africa, which means a change of scenery and lifestyle.

Rita claims that she has always been interested in different cultures and often tried to engage with people from different countries before she came to South Africa. As a teenager, she had pen friends from several parts the world; later she was an active member of Amnesty International. After Rita's matriculation, she trained to be a nursery school teacher, a profession she could fall back on in case her study plans failed. On completion of the training, she enrolled at the University of Trier for geography, graduating with a Diploma. She never landed a job as a geographer; instead she did the odd 'nine-to-five', never considering going back to nursery school teaching. This changed in 1996, when a friend told her about a vacancy at the German School in Cape Town, for which she successfully applied. The moment she had the chance to get out of Germany and engage with people in their home country, she did not hesitate to leave although she had never been to South Africa before. It is clear to her now that her vision of what awaited her in South Africa was romanticized when she decided to move there, but maintains that it was nevertheless a good choice to break away from her dull life in Germany.

Exceptions to this pattern of moving away from Germany in order to 'expand one's horizon' and escape monotony are the two informants who grew up in the former GDR. Eva and Markus never grew bored with Germany, but they do not seem to have come to terms with the Germany they were propelled into after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. Markus, for example, had to interrupt his military service at that time because of the breakdown of the GDR. Whilst this was a welcome interruption, it already symbolized the powerful influence the 'new' Germany was taking on his life. Both Markus and Eva show dislike of the 'Wessis'' (West Germans) lifestyles. When I spoke to Markus about youth organizations in the GDR and involuntarily displayed my ignorance about them, he deemed me a "typical Wessi". Being a Wessi entails certain attitudes, which Germans from the Eastern part ascribe to West Germans. Those include being complacent with their own lifestyle while being ignorant and uninterested in others. Eva complains that West Germans are superficial and lack the depth and sense of community that she experienced in the GDR.

Reasons for Choosing Cape Town

The question why Cape Town was chosen as the informants' place of residence was usually answered with greater clarity and seen by them as the more obvious question to be asked than the one about leaving Germany, even though in some cases the reasons overlap.

Immediate reasons for coming to Cape Town have been studies, internships and jobs, but none of the informants had to go to Cape Town in particular and stay there to fulfil the task or aim connected to those activities. Neither is Cape Town the only place where internships are offered, nor is its reputation in tertiary education equal to the likes of Oxford or Harvard. The only obvious advantage for career purposes gained from spending time in Cape Town is the possibility of improving one's English language skills, an advantage not confined to South Africa.

Tobias came to Cape Town in 2002, planning to study one year within the framework of an exchange program. The previous year he travelled with his German girlfriend to Cape Town and found it to his liking, chiefly because of the Mediterranean climate, which allows for a lot of outdoor activity such as surfing. Wiebke was made aware of the possibility of spending time in Cape Town by a study colleague in Germany, who originated from South Africa. She encouraged Wiebke to spend one year of her studies there, due to its reputation as a beautiful and 'laid-back' city. Wiebke found this idea appealing and moved to Cape Town in 1995, studying at the Cape Technicon. After the year abroad, Wiebke moved back to Germany and finished her studies in 1997. Having enjoyed Cape Town, she went back for six months to do an internship. Katja came to Cape Town for the first time in 2000, when she produced a music video for a German band. She combined work with holiday and stayed for three more weeks. Katja liked Cape Town immediately; she enjoyed what she describes as a relaxed lifestyle, the relative ease of making new acquaintances and the heterogeneous population. As she says: "I have always been fascinated by differences." After Konstanze graduated in 2000, she came to South Africa for the first time intending to do an internship with an event organizer based in Cape Town. Konstanze's decision to come to South Africa was informed by the fact that the internship could be done in English and that Cape Town's Mediterranean climate provides for a rather pleasant backdrop.

The weather is a factor that is greatly appreciated by all the informants. To enjoy nine months of sunshine instead of three, which is the length of an average German summer, is considered a priceless luxury. Another reason is the natural beauty of the Western Cape, the mountains, sea, flora and fauna. Yet another reason is the fascination of culture, the fact that Cape Town is a racially and culturally heterogeneous city is perceived as adding interest.

As became clear, the reported reasons why the informants chose Cape Town initially such as love, or other reasons, which can often be equated to those that attract tourists to Cape Town, are plausible enough to explain their moving to Cape Town. As residents, however, the respondents now enjoy different aspects about life in Cape Town, which can be described as an acquired taste, and which contribute to reasons for staying, rather than explaining why they came initially.

Reasons for Staying

At this stage of their lives, all the respondents are convinced that they will stay in Cape Town for some time to come. In other words they do not feel any urge to return to Germany. Few had decided how long they would stay when they first arrived in South Africa, and if their stay was meant to be of a particular time span, it had been extended or the informants came back at a later stage. Only Konstanze described the arrival in South Africa as an 'eye opener': "The moment I arrived in Cape Town I felt at home, as if I had never been away." However, when being asked to elaborate on this somewhat diffuse reason, the answer remained opaque. While Konstanze was doing her internship, it was already clear to her that she would go back to Germany only in order to apply for permanent residence in South Africa.

Often, the prospect was to return to Germany after whatever task they had come to perform was completed. Most of the respondents have completed their original plans, but they are still - or again – in Cape Town. Some have South African life partners, all of them have grown to enjoy Cape Town for reasons distinct from a mere tourist's perspective.

Two informants, who are amongst those, who came to Cape Town because of their relationships, discovered their liking for South Africa only after they had already arrived. Eva, for example, commuted between Cape Town and Berlin for several years in order to visit her boyfriend, later husband. Feeling connected to city life rather than to nature, the natural beauty of Cape Town that is much valued by all the other informants, initially left her indifferent. To her, moving to Cape Town came as a package with her South African husband. Only later Eva learned to truly appreciate South Africa and found special interest in the local art forms. When she graduated in 1997, her MA thesis entailed a comparison between South African and East German resistance art. Katharina, too, came to Cape Town because of her life partner and would probably not have chosen to move there if she had not met her. Meanwhile, she does enjoy several aspects of her life in South Africa, especially experiencing

a different cultural reality, which is not surprising, as it could have been anticipated from her choice to study 'Culture, Race and Difference'.

All informants enjoy the pace of life in Cape Town, which they consider "relaxed", as opposed to the generally tightly scheduled life in Germany. Life in Cape Town is often deemed to be relaxed and slow, but what is generally referred to, is the white population's lifestyle. The larger part of Cape Town's generally black and coloured working-class is often overlooked, which also hints at the informants' mental and social maps. Although none of them exclude coloured or black people from their social circle – Konstanze's boyfriend is coloured, for example – most of their friends and acquaintances are white and live in areas previously set aside for the white population. This can be explained with the higher probability of finding friends or 'soul mates' amongst people of a similar financial and intellectual level and in South Africa, due to apartheid's legacy, class difference is often still convergent with different hues. On the other hand, the informants live in suburbs known for having a heterogeneous population, harbouring inhabitants from all over the world and from any race group. Getting to know people of different nationalities and cultural settings is experienced as enriching. Every respondent has friends within the non-white population and many have acquaintances from different parts of the world. This "willingness to engage with the other" (Hannerz, 1990: 239) is one marker of cosmopolitanism, a term that can be applied to most, if not all respondents and does not only surface in the interactions with people but also in preference for food, music and other goods as will be shown in greater detail in the fourth chapter. Germany, with its relatively homogenous population that consists largely of white Germans and Turkish guest workers, the latter usually working class and often resident in ethnic enclaves, cannot provide a similar feel.

Another advantage seen by the informants is the possibility of practising a profession that suits their individual tastes, without limitations *a priori*. Wiebke, who as a Yoga teacher took a completely different career path than she studied for, subscribes to the view that in South Africa a vision can be transformed into reality more easily than in Germany. Konstanze even likened contemporary South Africa to the image that the United States used to convey as the 'land of unlimited possibilities'. According to her "you just have to have a good idea, some money and vigour, then you can become whatever you want". The emphasis should surely be on money, as the larger part of Cape Town's population would agree and the informants or their parents do have money.

The informants have a positive outlook about South Africa's future and are proud to live in this country. As Tobias observed, "in South Africa people are in a better mood than in

Germany. In Germany everybody is looking for something to complain about, in Cape Town people enjoy what they have".

For members of the middle-class in South Africa some luxuries are more easily accessible than in Germany. One of those luxuries is the option of acquiring affordable residential property. Notably, most of the respondents have bought a house in South Africa, which some still consider an almost unreal privilege. Konstanze is still disbelieving: "Me a house owner, I mean, honestly..." Some bought their property with money they brought from Germany; others saved up enough money to buy property while in Cape Town. The relative ease of buying property, as it is – depending on the area - generally more affordable than in Europe and entails less complicated bureaucratic proceedings than in Germany, adds to the feel of a 'relaxed' lifestyle, contrary to Germany where " buying a house means buying a coffin" as Wiebke put it.

Another luxury, of which all the respondents, except Peter, make use, is to employ a domestic worker, not full time, but at least once a week. This was initially perceived as strange, as they would not have thought of doing this in Germany. Now it is generally greatly appreciated. Eva was at first reluctant, as she thought it decadent to pay somebody for cleaning up her own mess, but she too is used to it by now. Konstanze thinks that she and her domestic worker have a good relationship as she supports her with more than the salary, but also with clothes and food.

Apart from all these specific factors, which make life in Cape Town so attractive, it also has to be taken into consideration that the informants, especially Eva, Markus and Wiebke, have already been in Cape Town for a prolonged period of time. All have established wide circles of friends and acquaintances, which they value and are reluctant to give up. Many have established homes in which they feel comfortable and have found satisfactory professions.

Markus who came to Cape Town because of a relationship is currently single, but is otherwise more embedded in social networks in Cape Town than in Germany. Wiebke feels 'at home' in Cape Town and the fact that she has just bought a house in the suburb of Observatory makes her feel settled. She wants to keep the option of going back to Germany, just in case something goes wrong with her life in Cape Town, but at the moment feels very content and can't see how returning to Germany could enhance her life. Eva has no intention of returning to Germany, as her husband and children live in South Africa. Eva is still in contact with some friends in Berlin and her parents, but she is not longing to live in Germany again and says: "I left Germany behind me." Katharina does not plan to move back to

Germany, mainly because of her girlfriend. But 'home' to her is an outdated concept anyway; Katharina claims that she makes herself at home wherever she lives. Place of residence to her does not necessarily have to be Cape Town, but it certainly won't be the German countryside, where she grew up. So far, Peter is content with the way he is leading his life as a tour guide, but at the same time he is aware that one day he might find it tiresome to be almost constantly on the move. Tobias, having finished his undergraduate studies in Munich, is currently enrolled for post-graduate work in development studies at the University of Cape Town. The fact that he had been to Cape Town and enjoyed his stay was influential in his decision to study there for one year. Meanwhile, because he likes living in Cape Town so much, Tobias has extended his initial plan to study abroad from one to three years. In terms of immigration laws, he is supposed to leave South Africa after completing his studies, but at the moment is thinking of finding a way of staying longer in Cape Town than his studies demand.

Moving away from Cape Town for the respondents would mean starting everything anew, including finding a new home, friends and jobs. Nobody is keen to be confronted with those inconveniences, neither are the respondents. Adding to the feeling of loss in case of moving back to Germany are certain assets that have been instrumental in their decision of choosing Cape Town and other assets they have learned to appreciate while staying there, aspects of life in Cape Town that they did not consider when they arrived for the first time. A feeling of ease, due to the often unhurried lifestyle of Cape Town's middle-class residents and many privileges they would not be able to enjoy in Germany, add to the impression of having achieved a good quality of life.

Settlers, Migrants, Denizens or Long Term Tourists?

The question arises whether it is possible to speak of the respondents as having settled in South Africa or whether it is just a phase they are passing through. This affects how to label them. Up to now they are all entangled in social networks both in Germany and South Africa, no 'bridges have been burned', and they have not encapsulated themselves in ethnic enclaves. The informants themselves do not think of their stay in Cape Town as confined to a limited period of time. So far, they have not planned to move back to Germany, but they did not give up their citizenship either. Therefore the options of returning to Germany, staying in South Africa, or moving somewhere else seem equally possible.

Most of the respondents have shown their willingness to travel and to change places of residence even prior to their arrival in South Africa. One reason is certainly their age: they are still young enough to restart a professional career, should they move away from South Africa,

and they have the physical and mental condition to cope with the stress and strain involved with moving. Being members of the middle-class, they have the financial means required. And all of them still have at least one parent who is, as a rule, still of greater affluence than the children. A financial cushion to fall back on is therefore available.

To fit the informants into one of the categories currently used by scholars of migration does not seem easy. It has been questioned whether there is such thing as a 'German diaspora' (Hoerder, 2002). The term diaspora has formerly been strongly connected with and defined with reference to Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion (Clifford, 1994:303). According to a 'checkpoint list' devised by Safran (1991), a group of foreigners in a receiving country has to fulfil six criteria in order to qualify as a diaspora. Other Germans in Cape Town fulfil Safran's criteria to varying degrees; the study population, however, does not seem to qualify. Dispersal to at least two locations in the world - Safran's first item - is probably the only criterion that can be agreed on. As already mentioned in the introduction, there are two major locations, North America and Eastern Europe. Additionally there are various settlements of dispersed Germans all over the world.

The second point in Safran's list is "collective mythology of homeland", which is clearly not applicable in the German context. It has to be taken into account that dispersed populations usually consist of several segments, which can differ from each other in many aspects (Butler, 2001: 204). Several variables influence myth, vision or other concepts of people in exile. Amongst those is the time of departure, which is particularly obvious in the case of Germany, as within the last century there have been several pivotal moments that have shifted mindsets and influenced the predominant *Zeitgeist*. There is definitely a difference in the mythology of their home country of German emigrants who left the country before, during or after the Second World War. Schmidt-Lauber delivered the example of German Namibians, who share a standardized version of Germany, including its lush vegetation and an elaborate writing culture (2000: 248). The respondents of this study have rather different concepts in mind when thinking of Germany. It is the country where they grew up, and their association is with their family and friends. They share the view that life in Germany is very regulated, leaving little space for individual experience. The other criteria established by Safran are all connected to a similar sense of sameness, of a static identity, that does not apply to the respondents in this study, if to any.

The informants' lifestyle of having contact to both people in Germany and in South Africa implies the use of the term 'transnationals', formally applied by e.g. Roger Rouse to describe the multiple connectedness of migrants to both home country and receiving society.

As explained by Rouse (1991), owing to growing access to technology, such as telephone and Internet, it is nowadays possible to stay in touch and, moreover, maintain close relationships with kin and friends, who live far away. Especially amongst middle class members, access to the Internet and the skill to make use of it the norm rather than the exception. All participants in this study make extensive use of the Internet, owing to the swift flow of communication and its cheapness. The telephone is more often used when communicating with family members, and the expatriates are generally the recipients of the calls, as the costs from Germany to South Africa are much lower than the other way around. This sort of contact is seen as desirable and necessary, partly as duty (family) and partly to keep long-standing friendships working.

Beyond this long-distance communication, contact with Germans is often perceived as a weakness, implying 'toughness' if one successfully managed not to mingle with other Germans, to be independent of German networks and not to make use of the German language. Asked about their social circles in Cape Town, the informants named mostly South Africans, sometimes Germans. This goes so far that one informant, Katharina, in South Africa three years, was at first reluctant to speak to me in German, despite the fact that it is the mother tongue of both of us ("It's so weird to speak German again."). Indeed, Katharina's surroundings are predominantly English speaking, her South African girlfriend's mother tongue is English, and her colleagues at work speak English. Nevertheless every Sunday she receives a phone call from her German parents and she makes use of the Internet in order to keep up-to date with German politics This implies that the statement of no longer being able any more to express herself in German must be seen as the wilful performance of some sort of identity, targeted as a life's objective. On the one hand, it shows how far Katharina advanced with blending into her (not so new) surroundings; on the other hand, she was making clear to me that I had not yet reached that stage.

The informants, except for Tobias and Katja, who arrived in Cape Town only two years ago, travel regularly to Germany. Most claim to visit Germany once a year, an estimate that differs from reality in most cases. In 2003, Konstanze had been to Germany twice; the first time, because her grandaunt was very ill, the second time, because she had to promote her new business in Germany, which relies on German-speaking customers. As she says "For once I would like to travel to Germany just for pleasure." Markus, who can travel almost free of charge with the airline he is working for, has been to Germany three times in 2003. Peter 'had to go', because his sister got married; on other occasions his company flies him to Germany in order to renew his work permit.

From these examples it transpires that travelling to Germany is mostly connected to some sort of family duty or for business purposes. Everybody combines duties on a trip to Germany with pleasure. Not only do they attend family functions or network for their careers; they also meet friends and other family members without any formal obligation attached. This indicates that the focus on trips 'home' is clearly on rekindling relationships with friends or family; the fact that those persons are based in Germany is secondary.

All informants of this study travel to Germany so frequently that the issue of being homesick does not arise, nor is their absence long enough to construct any idealized version of their home country. This contrasts sharply with the shape travelling takes within other segments of the German diaspora. In the case of Schmidt-Lauber's Namibian Germans, travelling to Germany has been equated with a pilgrimage, ritualised and celebrated (Schmidt-Lauber, 2000: 251).

The concept of a denizen, as that of a highly specialized transmigrant worker who came to a particular place in order to apply his rare skills and leaves after the task has been performed, seems equally different from the informants' situations. Whilst eight of the nine have enjoyed tertiary education, none of them have acquired skills that would make them indispensable in South Africa.

The informants of this study thus do not fit neatly into any established categories of diaspora or transnationals, if the above-mentioned models of the two concepts have to be accepted as valid. Neither do they constitute a group, nor are they mere transients with the ultimate aim to return to their home country. They individually chose to move to Cape Town, and feel content and settled at their new destination. The respondents have moved into their new country of residence with enthusiasm and without regret. They have dealt and coped with the strain and the costs involved in moving. Some of them have been so determined to come to South Africa that they applied illegal strategies to be granted residency, a fact that will upset the stereotypical image of the 'good German'. At this stage of their lives, all say that they want to stay in Cape Town permanently.

Certainly there are some diasporic elements in the informants' lives, such as their connections with friends and families in Germany. But due to their mobility and the use of modern technology, their exchange with people in Germany can be described as constant. Maybe for members of the middle-class the world has really become a 'village', thus rendering a categorization into the above-mentioned schemes impossible. Concepts of

diaspora usually lean towards themes of isolation and deprivation, sentiments not usually felt by the informants of this study.

Because of the informants being both 'here and there', I am hesitant to call them dispersed or transnational, but they do show aspects of both. Since the validity and effectiveness of national boundaries has decreased, I would tend to say that the informants of this study have merely moved. They have moved to a far-away location and outside the boundaries of their nation-state, but still within reach of their place of birth.

Chapter 3

Issues of Identity: Where they come from, who they are and who they do not want to be

Even though my fieldwork has not included a large number of informants, information about their identity shaped by upbringing, education and socialization in Germany has been plentiful. The situation in the home country is at least as illuminating about their current reality as is the social set-up in the receiving society and reveals why they are in Cape Town now, and even more so, why they are not in Germany. That most of the informants' parents, Katharina's being the exception, lead a distinct middle-class lifestyle, is already obvious from their professions: Markus is the son of medical doctors, so is Tobias. Peter's father used to work as a financial consultant, Rita's parents are both teachers and many others' parents are state employed with an income facilitating a comfortable lifestyle.

I argue that this observation cannot be ascribed solely to coincidence. As became obvious during fieldwork, the status of middle-class and its implicit consequences had to be looked at in detail. In the previous chapter it was mentioned that the informants' middle-class background has greatly influenced how they manage their lives in their particular ways through financial and social comfort. However, it failed to provide a sufficient level of satisfaction. In this chapter I try to illustrate this seemingly contradictory statement by addressing issues of their identity as young German adults.

Frankental coined the term "comfortable contradiction" in conjunction with her work on middle-class Israeli migrants in Cape Town. The term indicates the financial comfort supplied by their middle-class status on the one side and experienced 'guilt' of Jewish Israeli migrants at leaving a hard-won homeland (1998: 216 f.). In the context of this study, this term is applicable to the German respondents too, but not at their point of dispersal, rather in their home country.

Middle-class in Anthropology

'Middle-class' is a problematic term in social analysis and in anthropology. Few authors have focused on members of the middle-class. Mainstream anthropological analysis tends to lend itself towards a studying 'down'; that is to look at the pre-industrial, the poor and the problematic sectors of society. Within the realm of postmodernist scholarship, this has been extensively criticized, yet remains the more important field of study in anthropology.

Sherry Ortner noted that anthropologists have classically attempted to study the "untouched and pre-modern" instead of themselves, who are mostly members of the middle-classes (Ortner, 1998: 433). Ortner's comment also links up with my limited success in finding literature on this topic, which is both contemporary and connected to anthropological research. As most publishing anthropologists belong to the white middle-class, work on this topic remains scarce. It has been claimed that if anthropologists chose a domestic rather than an exotic field site, it was "until quite recently more of an unwelcome economic and practical necessity than a moral virtue" (Löfgren, 1987: 74).

Even though some publications on middle-class issues have gained wide recognition and have been deemed important, they remain almost singular events amongst anthropological publications. Amongst recent publications, Sherry Ortner's work stands out. She started her several works on middle-class by doing research amongst her former high-school classmates (e.g. 2002). Most relevant for this thesis is her work on the children of her classmates (1998).

Doing 'anthropology at home' (e.g. Jackson, 1987), or domestic research, seems to be a recurring attempt that has never quite found its way into mainstream scholarship or remained there for a prolonged period. Strathern used the term auto-anthropology for "anthropology carried out in the social context which produced it" (1987: 17). Auto-anthropology has been subject to controversial appraisal, which centres on the author's reflexivity. Authors who write about their own surroundings argue that they have the advantage of an 'insider's point of view'. Behar has termed her work, in which she positioned herself as an insider, as 'vulnerable writing', in which the reader receives information about both the author and the subject (1997). Others argue that insiders lack the necessary distance from familiar surroundings (Strathern, 1987: 17).

Besides the discussion about reflexivity, the fact that writings on Western middle-class society remain relatively scarce can be also be attributed to the generally higher prestige that is still attached to work concerning foreign and exotic topics than to domestic research (Shankman and Ehlers, 2000: 289).

A second problem of dealing with the middle-class is that writers have hardly ever focused on issues of their own consciousness or identity. Authors, who have written on members of the middle-class, mostly come from a background in history or politics. While the former have done so mostly in regard to the industrial revolution in England and the emergence of the middle-class, the latter mostly refer to their political power and influence. Neither approach is very useful for a thesis which deals with relatively young people who live

in the here and now. Burris, who wrote on the new German middle class, opened his essay with the comment that "Few topics in political sociology have received as much attention as the nature and politics of the new middle-class." (Burris, 1995: 15). Maybe this has happened in the political sciences, but certainly not in anthropology.

The scarcity of literature on the identity of middle-class members is probably also an indicator of the members' lack of consciousness of their own identity. The "very ubiquity of the professional middle-class" (Ehrenreich, 1990: 5) in the Western world makes it difficult to derive a particular ideology or consciousness from this economic status. Within Western society, middle-class is considered the norm rather than the exception and is not connected to any sort of class struggle or feeling of elitism. Within the middle classes, perhaps to compensate for mediocrity and uniformity, certain age cohorts tend to form 'imagined communities', which are seen as special and distinct from others.

The Boomers' offspring

Every age cohort identifies with particular aspects that have been influential in their lives and especially their early years. Groups that define themselves as generations, or individuals who identify with the ideas members of a particular generation share, often feel greater affinity with this kind of connectedness than, for example, from being citizens of a nation-state.

Relevant for this thesis is membership of the 'post-boomer generations' in Western society. In the last ten or so years, in many West-European countries and in the United States, those age cohorts have received much attention in popular writings. Ortner, who has published several pieces on the US American middle-class, wrote in 1998 on young adults who, in terms of age and *Weltanschauung* qualify as members of the "13th Generation" (Howe and Strauss, 1993), more commonly known as "Generation X" (Coupland, 1991).
The first to describe the lifestyle of a post-boomer generation was the American author Douglas Coupland, who coined the term 'Generation X' in his novel of the same title (1991). The characters in Coupland's book are described as having had a 'picture book childhood', that is, being raised in a financially sound environment, participating in an intact family network and being able to achieve a high standard of education.

They entered (if they ever did) professional life in the late 1990s and all belong to a generation with very little awareness of themselves and their surroundings (Illies, 2000: 16), which ties in with the apparent lack of meaning of the times they lived in.

A carefree setting bordering on utopia in terms of financial and social affluence has its downside as well; it is boring (Ehrenreich, 1990: 19). Katja remembers herself as a happy and free child, growing up at her parents' house, which is surrounded by large grounds and is in close proximity to nature. Even though she describes her childhood as joyful, she remembers that even as a child she always wanted to travel and had the romantic vision of joining a traveling circus. From a young age she considered herself to be "different from the others", as she planned to move somewhere else and not to do a 'nine-to-five' office job. "To sit s*piessig*[2] in an office, pretty skirt and hair, that's not me".

Coupland uses the term "historical underdosing" to describe the feeling of living in times when all is set and nothing seems to happen (Coupland, 1991:9). "The problem of problemlessness" (Ehrenreich, 1990:19) triggers the desire to find challenge and excitement rather than content. Xers face a dilemma as they find themselves in a contradictory reality: they try to put distance between themselves and their childhood, indicating independence and maturity. At the same time they feel nostalgic towards their past and anxious about the possibility of losing the connection. Consequently, as young adults, they are characterized through a lack of orientation about the direction their lives must take. On the one hand they don't want to walk in their parents' well-trodden paths and seem to make every effort to counteract the boredom they attribute to their parents' lives. This is evoked by performing actions perceived as unusual, dangerous, antisocial or simply 'weird' (Coupland, 1991). The Xers demand from themselves to 'do the unexpected', to find new ways and to be a kind of lifestyle pioneer.

On the other hand, as Ortner observes, despite having all the prerequisites to succeed in life and follow their individual plans, many fear that they may not have the chance to imitate their parents' lives and live up to their standards, because of a less stable economic situation (1998: 418). Lots of Xers end up (for a while) in "McJobs" (Coupland, 1991: 6), jobs with low prestige and remuneration for which they are actually overqualified (Ortner, 1998: 428). The underlying pressure that Xers have to act against is the fact that middle-class status cannot be passed from parents to children by default. Parents can support their children financially for a long time in order to facilitate a high standard of living, but eventually the children will have to find their own income to keep up the good life (ibid).

Often being deemed 'whiners' or 'slackers', members of Generation X have to deal with problems which members of the working class, for example, would probably regard as

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[2] '*Spiessig*' is an adjective not readily translatable into English, as it consists of a wide range of attributes. Clearly used in a derogatory context, those include being conservative, provincial, narrow minded, leading a regulated life, having a nine-to-five job, to name but a few.

the tantrums of spoiled brats. Still, this 'whining' is real and has to be treated as such, as it is the articulation of several issues this generation has to deal with.

"Talking about my Generation"

As indicated above, identity formation of the boomer generation's offspring is not confined to the United States. In France this age cohort has been named 'génération Mitterand' and in Germany recently as 'Generation Golf'('Golf' stands for the car, not the sport) (Illies, 2000), whose members will hereafter be referred to as 'Golfers'. Somewhat later in its formation than the Xers, Golfers share a wide variety of characteristics with their US-American vanguard.

The age cohort to which the informants of this study belong are the children of the generation of the post-war era that benefited most from the enormous economic growth known as the *Wirtschaftswunder*. They are now aged 25 to 35, as are the informants of this study. In Germany, the offspring of the boomer generation have until recently been neglected in analysis. Currently, signs of a growing awareness of this generation can be seen. The '80s, "the most boring decade of the century" (Illies, 2000: 15), in which the now young adults grew up, are back in fashion: music bands, hairstyles and clothing fashion from this era have experienced a revival, movies dealing with the '80s are flooding even mainstream cinema theaters. All of a sudden nostalgia abounds, which certainly has to do with having been children in a time of greater affluence. "The generation that was not even aware of being a generation" (ibid: 16) seems to have finally found an identity, both through loss (financial) and gain (experience, confrontation with 'reality').

Prior to Illies, Bönt tried to capture the lifestyle of his generation in his fictional book *Icks* (1999), an ambivalent title, as it is at the same time the Berlin vernacular for 'I', and the phonetic spelling of the letter 'X', echoing the title of Coupland's well-known novel. The content of the two books is similar, but where Coupland's characters show 'gallows humour', *Icks* is rather depressing. Maybe due to the melancholy tone of his writing, Bönt's work never reached the popularity of Illies' *Generation Golf*.

In *Generation Golf* (2000) Illies makes an attempt to classify and analyse his own age group in a rather frivolous and entertaining way. Describing them as spoiled, bored, with an emphasis on individual fulfilment and reluctant to be associated with a larger group, llies depiction of the Golfers is similar in many aspects to Coupland's Xers, just a little tamer. Topics in Illies' books are often strategies of how to disrupt an ordered life that is only really attractive in one's memory. The fear of committing oneself permanently to the parents'

lifestyle, but also not having the knowledge of a better alternative, permeates all Illies' writing. Change is a recurring theme: anecdotes of people considering change, wanting to change, or actually changing their lives (Illies, 2003).

As already apparent from the title, Illies focused heavily on material culture and popular media as means for identifying this generation. Major components of Illies' memories of his childhood are toys and television programs, which invoke on the one side a feeling of nostalgia about a life that was protected and regulated, but on the other side embarrassment about the level of naivety and ignorance that prevailed. In contrast to their parents' generation, politics and different ideologies were generally not influential in the Golfers' upbringings. According to Illies, Golfers always lacked interest in politics: gossip about politicians' private lives, such as the quantity of shoes that Imelda Marcos possessed, or whether current German chancellor Gerhard Schröder dyes his hair or not, rather than interest in political analysis prevails (2000: 122). This was most likely enhanced through a political leadership that was consistent for many years, particularly the presence of the ex-chancellor Helmut Kohl, who remained in power for 16 years. Political and relative economic stability contribute to the above-mentioned near-utopian circumstances, which can lead to a lack of interest in local politics.

In this respect, the informants in this study do not comply with this characterization of Golfers. Or do not wish to comply. Rita claims to be interested in politics, although she has failed to vote in any German elections since living in Cape Town. Katharina, who studied politics, keeps up to date with news by the means of online newspapers. Katja says that she is not at all materialistic and could not get excited and nostalgic over any item reminding her of Germany and her home in Cape Town is indeed devoid of such artefacts. Yet, when she visited my home, she immersed herself in German tabloids that another guest had brought and happily devoured the traditional German food provided on that occasion and left the rather exotic couscous untouched. This leads me to conclude that the informants try to differ from the mainstream German lifestyle of their age cohort, yet their connection to cultural aspects of their home country is too entrenched to be completely abandoned.

What certainly holds true for the participants, is – or was – their lack of direction when young about what to do with their lives. After finishing high school, the most urgent objective for all was to move away from their parents' home, at the same time swapping rural for urban life, or, even better, life in Germany for life abroad. Katharina, Katja, Eva and Peter all found a reason to leave Germany as soon as possible. Katharina, Katja and Eva worked as au pairs, while Peter just decided to travel. Wiebke chose to study tourism more because of the

likelihood of working abroad than out of a passion for the subject, and parts of her training took part in the UK and South Africa, thus providing her with the possibility of living outside of Germany for a while.

But even most of those who did not leave Germany immediately did not follow a straight career path. The only one who did, Peter, regretted having done so and not having tried different options in order to find his real passion. His training as a banker provided him with the financial means to lead a comfortable life, but the foreboding of having to spend the rest of his working life in a bank reminded him too much of a "life sentence in prison" to be palatable.

Others regret having spent too much time looking for the kind of job that would really suit them or debating what kind of study they wanted to pursue. Markus tried various places, jobs and courses of study. Before doing his honours degree in history he studied a variety of different subjects, amongst those were medicine, religious studies, German, Russian, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. The studies were disrupted by different jobs, such as working at a post office, as a nurse, in a publishing house, shop assistant and others. Somewhere along the line he also took a year off for travelling. Markus now works in a call centre for a European airline. Even though he never explicitly articulated regret about having tried out many options and pursuing only few, his embarrassment seeps through when listing all his attempts at finding direction.

Wiebke too, made a detour on her career path. After her matriculation she started her training at a school of hotel management in Hameln, the closest larger town to where she grew up. Part of the training was an internship, which Wiebke decided to do in London. On her return to Germany, she began European Business Studies at the university of Osnabrueck. Despite her training and her studies in tourism, Wiebke now works full-time as a Yoga teacher in Cape Town.

Rita studied geography, but according to her, without passion and mainly because of the status of an academic title rather than out of career considerations. In terms of career, she has the inkling that she wasted her time with geography, as she neither particularly enjoyed the subject nor did she ever work in that field.

It becomes obvious from the plethora of attempts to find one's passion or direction, such as indulging in many semesters of study by changing subjects and spending more time than necessary for training, and going abroad for additional internships, that all require funding. The fund that middle-class children can always rely on is their parents' money. Several times Markus interrupted his studies by working in different professions, allowing

financial independence for short spells, which can be seen as an attempt not to depend on his parents' money.

The fact that it is always possible to fall back onto a safe financial cushion allows for changing one's mind halfway along the line. Due to their parents' relative affluence, it has been possible for most of the participants to try out many options. As in the case of Katharina, it is also possible to get subsidies or bursaries from the state, or even to get paid for travel. But most informants used family wealth in their attempt to move to South Africa, usually during the first phase of settling down or to pay study fees and accommodation, as is the case with Tobias. And again, even though none of the informants plan to go back to Germany in the near future, family wealth can serve as insurance for the possibility to return to Germany, should their attempts at settling elsewhere fail. For the majority of the informants, therefore, being members of the middle-class has greatly facilitated their individual plans, both in Germany and South Africa.

Although middle-class issues seem important when analysing the offspring of boomer generations, the above-mentioned authors do not explicitly refer to this aspect. Like Coupland, Illies does not bother to situate his writing within a class context or to problematize stratified society. But as he is writing about attending *Gymnasium* and University, of buying cars and acquiring real estate, the class context is obvious. He also neglected a significant segment of the same age group: Germans raised in the former GDR grew up under very different circumstances.

Interestingly, Illies' partner in life, Jana Hensel, who stems from the former GDR, has recently written a book on the same generation, but about the eastern part of Germany. According to her, at the time of the fall of the Berlin wall, those children of 12 – 15 years were still too young to understand the implication, but too old to be able to ignore what was happening (Hensel, 2003: 160). Contrary to those who grew up in the West, adolescents in the eastern part of Germany could not afford to concentrate on consumerism and popular media. Of the two informants in this study from the eastern part of Germany, only Eva expressed nostalgia about goods from the former GDR, which are no longer available.

Children from the GDR were catapulted into a whole new system, in which they had to learn to succeed as individuals, something they had to do without parental back-up, as most of their parents never managed to cope with the new Germany (ibid). Consequently, young Germans from the former GDR should be well accustomed to adaptation. My fieldwork included only two informants from the eastern part of Germany, but interviewing and observing them supported this idea.

Markus named the reunification of East and West Germany as one of the reasons that did not necessarily make him leave Germany in order to move to Cape Town, but did make the decision to leave easier as he disapproves of many attitudes of West Germans. Eva too, was not keen to live in a country that is no longer the one she grew up in. She did not want to assimilate to a lifestyle that, to her, seems superficial and centred around consumerism. According to her, people from West Germany worry only about their own concerns and do not share a sense of *Gemeinschaft*, something she claims to have experienced in the former GDR.

The informants from the Western part of Germany have also expressed discomfort at living in their home country, although their motivation for the discomfort differs.

Dissatisfaction with German Identity

All the informants in this study express dissatisfaction with their national identity, for some to a degree that makes them refuse to accept an identity based on geographical origin. Unease about Germanness is caused by several factors. One of them is an image of Germans that younger Germans perceive as unattractive and, when applied to themselves, as incorrect. Germans, just as members of any other nation, are often associated by non-Germans with particular characteristics. Whether those characteristics are charming, irksome or even insulting, most informants have expressed irritation at being labeled a 'typical German', a description that seems to be applied to them by others in all sorts of contexts, as described below.

Germany's infamous role in the middle of the last century plays a fundamental role in German consciousness and whatever the individual stance, indifference is rare.

Attitudes towards National Socialism

The 3rd Reich is a weighty factor in shaping German consciousness, and one that applies to Germans from both the eastern and the western parts. Germany's role in the World Wars and the elimination of 6.000.000 Jews under the National Socialist regime causes unease if not deep embarrassment and shame about their own national identity. This being a pivotal factor in German everyday life, post-war Germans have developed different attitudes to this era and different strategies of coping with guilt.

In an interview conducted in 1984, the German writer Günter Grass mentioned the guilt that Germans ought to deal with for several generations to come (Willauer, 1984: 25). He expressed concern about insufficient education about the 3rd Reich at German schools, an

utterance that contrasts directly with the experience of those who attended school in Germany in the 1980s. According to Eva and Markus, both from the former GDR (German Democratic Republic), the topic of National Socialism often featured at school, mainly applied as a propagandistic tool against the former FRG (Federal Republic of Germany). As far as I remember history lessons at school in the Western part of Germany, National Socialism was the only topic in German history we ever dealt with and my memory seems to be compatible with that of my FRG contemporaries. As Illies (2000) put it: "We have dealt so often with the years of 1933 to 1945 and its ramifications, that unfortunately we still don't know what happened afterwards" (or before, I would add).

Although awareness of the 3rd Reich was fed to 'us' constantly at school, none of the informants take Germany's role lightly. All acknowledge the gravity of the consequences of National Socialism in Germany, but some express irritation or weariness when talking about it. Maybe this can be explained as feeling over-saturated by this problematic topic. Konstanze, for example, does not accept the obligatory sense of guilt: "I'm getting tired of this [topic]. I cannot be held responsible for what people did in Germany 60 years ago. We have to get on with our lives, instead of thinking constantly of what kind of monsters we have been." Tobias, the youngest of the interviewees, doesn't seem to have reflected on National Socialism, as he takes a politically correct, yet impassionate stance. Rita again has a different standpoint: she feels ashamed of her forefathers' sins and obviously feels guilty too: "As a German, it is especially important to be aware of the past and to set an example, so we won't commit the same sins again."

Accusations of being supportive of the ideologies of the 3rd Reich are relatively rare, although they happen. Peter does not seem to be very fazed when being called a Nazi: "I can't take this as a personal insult. Whoever calls me a Nazi, just wants to hurtle the worst insult at me they can think of, it has nothing to do with what I said or did to them." "Being a German involves to put up with those accusations from time to time, there is nothing one can do but to get accustomed to it," said Wiebke, 36, the oldest of the respondents. Wiebke seems to treat prejudices of this sort as an interesting challenge rather than taking offence. Her Afrikaans-speaking boyfriend Jakobus sometimes calls Wiebke "Nazi", which is supposed to be a mocking endearment. After an initial, unsuccessful attempt to change his usage of this term, she surrendered, realizing that it might not be the nickname she would have chosen for herself, but that it is devoid of meaning to her boyfriend.

Jakobus feels differences between the two of them, which he claims he cannot ignore. One of them is that he finds Wiebke to be a very liberated woman in contrast to his previous

(Afrikaans) girlfriends, and he ascribes this to her German upbringing. Obviously those differences are not so influential as to create animosity, but he had to admit: "Hey, I love Wiebke and I don't generally mind you guys, but Germans suck." Exactly why they do so, he could not elaborate on but gave the commonplace stereotypical hints about them being over-correct, punctual and having no sense of humour.

'Popular' Stereotypes

Prejudices of this kind also appear in popular local media. In the January 2003 edition of the South African lifestyle magazine 'SL', a mock-interview of the typical German tourist features as a small article. Even though it is meant to be satire, the prejudices informing this characterization apply to the perception of Germans by both the local populace and many local Germans. Germans portrayed as typical, are – in addition to physical features such as being blond and blue-eyed – assumed to be discernible by the way they look and behave. This includes being hopelessly overdressed, for whatever purpose, but without taste or creativity. They are known for their bad English (or at least a heavy accent) and carnal lust for the not-so-fair-skinned population. Germans are supposed to be obsessed with punctuality and spontaneity is practically unknown. In short, what comes across from this mock-interview is that Germans are very 'uncool' to have around.

As he told me, his South African colleagues often deem Peter, who co-operates with a South African agency in Cape Town in order to perform his tour guide duties for a German company, a 'typical German'. This description usually refers to his work ethic, as he is perceived as accurate, punctual and reliable. As those are attributes with a positive connotation, Peter does not mind the label 'German' in this particular context, but doubts the accuracy of linking this to a national identity: "I guess this is more due to my training as a banker than me being German."

The following example might be about German tourists, but it recently caused some sort of (cock)fight between German and Italian politicians. Former Italian state secretary Stefano Stefani described German tourists in Italy as "stereotypical blondes with hyper nationalist pride, who noisily invade our beaches". This statement did cost Stefani his political post, but seems to meet many peoples' opinions about Germans and is most likely founded on either personal experiences or prejudices heard.

Katja is principally eager to point out stereotypical German behaviour and the way she differs from other Germans. "I have always tried to connect with people from elsewhere.

Germans don't know what it means to be spontaneous. People abroad never perceive me as a German, because I don't act like one. But that is just me."

The ubiquity of these widespread negative images often is good reason for the informants to keep a low profile and try to blend in. Being abroad seems to offer the possibility to camouflage national identity by techniques of avoiding fellow countrymen and mimicking the behaviour of locals. It appears, however, that Germans themselves often overemphasize the relevance of a negative German image. Already in 1984, the opinion researcher Noelle-Neumann stated in an interview that Germans live with an unusually high amount of wrong assumptions about themselves, one of those being that they are not liked by members of other countries (Willauer, 1984: 66). There certainly are prejudices, as demonstrated above, but the weight Germans give them often seems exaggerated.

I do understand that most of 'us' are not at ease with being German, a statement that is not just grounded in my own personal experiences and sentiments, but also based on the opinions of the informants of this study. Wiebke finds that "Germans are strange, they never want to mingle with other Germans." Katharina even goes so far as to call it a "typical German" attitude. But apparently not typical for all Germans, otherwise there would be no clientele for all the German institutions in Cape Town.

Katharina, who works part-time as a waitress in Cape Town's CBD, often serves German guests. Mostly she is reluctant to reveal herself to fellow country people and prefers to leave older German tourists to struggle with the English language when placing their orders, rather than assisting them in German. Katharina doesn't feel comfortable when doing this, as she obviously feels some connection with other Germans, but at the same time feels uncomfortable about engaging in national networking. When Katja travelled to the USA for the first time, she was surprised that she was not rejected for being a German. Even today in Cape Town, she is still astonished by the generally friendly attitude of South Africans towards Germans.

Most of the informants try to become 'invisible' as Germans and to blend in with the local, which requires independence from German networks. The statement by Rita "I did not come to South Africa to meet other Germans", is a common attitude amongst voluntary young, mostly single, middle-class migrants and I have heard Dutch, Norwegian, Swiss and US-American versions of this statement as well. Yet, as fieldwork revealed, the German reluctance to socialize with other fellow country people is very pronounced and has to be seen as part of the identity of Germany's third post-war generation.

This 'reluctance to identify' is not confined to institutions only. It already surfaced when I was trying to recruit German informants during my fieldwork. I mostly relied on hearsay about the whereabouts of suitable persons, as there are no places in Cape Town where they are bound to 'hang out', as highlighted above. In my initial desperation to find suitable respondents, I advertised in several newsletters on the Internet that I was looking for German informants of a certain profile. The yield was rather modest; only one suitable person sent me a reply, another was very keen on talking about her life in Cape Town but, at 67, was too old to be included. Wiebke, the one person I eventually interviewed, only replied to my request because she had been a student in Cape Town herself and felt sympathetic towards other students abroad.

Even when having been identified as potential informants and having agreed to meet for an interview, some would change their minds and either cancel a scheduled interview or not reply my phone calls or emails. Apparently lethargy or unwillingness of informants is an inevitable part of all research processes, but I think it was enhanced in this case through the informants' stance towards their own national origin.

Sometimes I would overhear Germans in a bar or in a shop and try to approach them with the standard question: "Excuse me please, are you German?" Answers varied from "Why?" and "Yeah, one just can't hide the accent" to "Yes, unfortunately". When being asked whether they would be available for an interview, many replied "Yes, but I'm a very bad German" or in some other way which indicated that they did not think of themselves as being 'typical' Germans. Only one participant of this study, Markus, insisted that he did not have a problem with the German image, the reason for this being the fact that he originates from the former GDR. Markus found South Africans generally very interested when learning that he stems from the eastern part, which according to him lends him an exotic flair and therefore "special status" to set him off against other Germans.

Profoundly Confounded

The identity of the boomer generation's offspring in Western society can be described as based on contradictory conditions, creating some level of confusion in the informants' lives. They have grown up in a financially and socially sheltered microcosm created by their parents and – ultimately – the German nation-state. Now being adults, nostalgia and childhood memories correlate with their current reality and at the same time create comfort and the fear of not being able to reproduce a middle-class lifestyle. This longing for near utopian circumstances contradicts their other fear: to reproduce the lifestyle they enjoyed as

children, as they don' t want to end up as mere replicas of their parents. This role model is almost seen as a trap, as a predetermined path of how to live life, which cannot even promise the reproduction of the middle-class lifestyle perceived as boring.

This example of a comfortable contradiction, of being members of the financially comfortable middle-class and at the same time feeling irritation with the current situation, seems to be applicable to most post-boomer generations in the Western world. This phenomenon is extraordinary in the context of Germany because of both its history and the commonplace image of Germans. The informants of this study found neither of the two applicable to themselves, they neither want to deal with the feeling of guilt connected to National Socialism, nor do they consider the stereotypical idea of German identity applicable to themselves. The negative perceptions of German identity add to an altogether unpleasant sense of being German. Against this background, it is not surprising that the informants' gaze has always, even if not consciously, been directed abroad in order to explore other options.

The combination of frustration and insecurity due to waning national wealth in combination with a partly self-imagined undesirable German image provides the framework for the particularity of Germany's 'post boomer generation. Of course not everyone has to deal with the same problems and those problems may be more or less pronounced in each individual case, as can be judged from the informants' lives. Bases for this confusion are partly patterns, which repeat themselves amongst every member of the so-called Generation Golf. Nevertheless, it is not only discursive elements that determine their lives, as problems and dilemmas are handled with individual strategies leading to different levels of success. Their 'personalities' clearly play an important role (e.g. Ortner, 2002: 12).

Chapter 4.
Managing Identity in Everyday Life

"Today it is international integration that determines universality, while national culture has an air of provincialism." (Konrad, 1984: 209, from Hannerz; 1990: 237). This citation puts in a nutshell a large part of the content of this chapter. The perception of national = provincial is a variable that strongly influenced these actors' lives and initially caused them to leave the countryside and later Germany.

The informants have adapted to their new surroundings, which becomes apparent through their behaviour in everyday life. Exploring these performances included testing the informants' attitudes to locals and other Germans in South Africa in terms of connections to individuals as well as to wider networks and institutions. Due to the number of German-speakers in Cape Town, most social actions could be performed within an ethnic enclave, but because of their linguistic skills the informants are not necessarily confined to those networks. Migrants have to adapt to their new environment in some way, whether they choose local role models or 'proximal hosts', as described by Mittelberg and Waters (1992) who suggest that new arrivals' identities are shaped by an existing cohort of the same national origin..

As described above, the migrants were born and raised in Germany and came to Cape Town as young or youngish adults with a package of material goods, skills and behavioural patterns acquired mainly in their home country. A central aim of this study was to explore the relationship between the informants equipped with those assets and their new environment, whether they help to build up/maintain attachment to both home country and receiving society, and if so, how they do so. In this case, to subscribe to a particular mind set surfaces in interaction with others. Additionally, choice of the area of residence and material culture both indicate the respondents' responses to Cape Town's population and to their own place within it.

From Rural to Urban Space

The respondents of this study have, in terms of spatiality, negotiated two different realms. The one, in most cases, involved moving from rural to urban spaces, while the other maybe more drastic and unusual act, was the choice to leave Germany and relocate in Cape Town.

All except Eva grew up in rural areas or in small towns and after they finished school and left their parents' homes, immediately moved to larger cities. Eva was born and raised in

East Berlin, the capital of the former GDR, where she received all her education from primary school to university, where she studied fine arts. But she remains the exception. The other eight informants first moved to a city within Germany. Katharina immediately combined moving to a city with moving to a different country, in her case Paris, France. Back in Germany, she moved to a small university town to begin with her studies. After one year in this small town, Katharina decided to move to Berlin, as she did not enjoy the confines of small-town life after having had a taste of city life. In Berlin, a large cosmopolitan city, capital and centre of German politics, with a huge population that provides for anonymity if required and a gay and lesbian subculture to socialize in, Katharina claims that she felt 'at home' for the first time. Katja started her studies first in Tübingen, a small university town, which she found "far too close to home". She then moved on to Munich. Katja would have preferred Berlin, because of its image as the new vibrant and cosmopolitan capital of Germany, but landed up in Munich, which turned out to be "not too bad" despite its image as being pretty but boring.

Later, all respondents moved elsewhere in the world and eventually came to Cape Town. The reason given for originally moving to larger cities was to receive tertiary education, and except for Tobias, all have concluded their academic careers and begun their professional life and could consequently move back to the countryside where they grew up. But meanwhile none of the informants find provincial life palatable any more and do not long to move back to rural areas, either in Germany or in South Africa. Wiebke and Peter both stated that they experienced the confines of provincial life as claustrophobic. They enjoy the anonymity of larger cities, something they would look for in vain in the villages they came from. Konstanze considers rural populations to be narrow-minded and had found it difficult to be the child of a single mother in an environment in which the nuclear family model is emphasized. This ties in with Katharina and Martin, who, as lesbian and gay persons, don't expect much tolerance from the rural population. Small-town and rural life is perceived as conservative and monotonous and as such hindering the development of a modern or unconventional and individual lifestyle.

Now the countryside is seen as a short-term holiday destination rather than a possible place of residence, both in Germany and South Africa. Occasional visits to parents' or other relatives' homes are usually confined to one or two days. After having fulfilled those duties and having enjoyed being pampered, city life is welcomed again as refreshing and liberating.

In South Africa, visits to the countryside happen for a change of setting. Markus, who is interested in indigenous flora and fauna, goes on frequent outings to the South African

countryside. Rita enjoys camping in nature and regularly joins friends on trips to national parks. Beautiful landscape and exotic scenery provide an "African feel", says Peter, which the modern and cosmopolitan Cape Town cannot deliver. But at the same time rural space is not considered fit for residence.

To the respondents, city life means the possibility to explore a more complex and stimulating lifestyle, through which they could find out more about their own interests and capacities. Cities contain a wider variety of lifestyles to select from and it is possible to either pursue certain options or discard them in favour of more tempting ones. Katharina claims that she discovered many new aspects of herself in Paris, which would never have been important in the countryside. One of these aspects is that she feels attracted to women. Not a problem in a metropolis like Paris, this would be a constant stigma in the conservative German countryside where neighbours watch one's private life closely and alternative lifestyles are often still considered aberrations.

Through their wide array of different inhabitants and their connectedness with the local as well as places all over the world, cities display an assortment of possible lifestyles and everyday practices (Hannerz, 1996: 128). "Cities are windows on the world" (ibid: 142) and therefore they make it possible to 'sample difference' and to decide which window to open and which option to pursue.

The informants' choice to leave Germany has to be interpreted as moving one step further away from the countryside, even though they did not claim it to be their original intention. In retrospect, being abroad can be seen as a chance to further enrich one's life with aspects of different cultures; not merely to glimpse through a window, but actually to participate in new experiences. Consciously connecting with and learning from the 'other' has to be seen as a state of mind, influenced through the actors' willingness to experiment, rather than being a necessity. According to Hannerz (1990: 240), cosmopolitans do not absorb or assimilate to another lifestyle; they choose aspects that suit their own. The participants of this study select those aspects wherever they can and whichever they find suitable, but sometimes have to accept a 'package deal'. To them, life in Cape Town has many advantages, but also drawbacks, which they cannot eradicate but have to accept, such as the high crime level, a less secure social system and a general pace of life that is sometimes considered too slow but on other occasions cherished as 'relaxed'. Examples of the perceived drawbacks will be shown in greater detail below.

The informants either chose their current place of residence or 'ended up' there because of their life partners; within Cape Town some suburbs were considered more

attractive for settling than others. Suburbs in Cape Town, as in all cities, vary immensely in terms of property prices, centrality, safety, and – of course – their inhabitants.

Cosmopolitan Lifestyle

Residential Choices

Cape Town is often referred to as a multicultural city, this aspect even being marketed as a tourist attraction. Within Cape Town due to past apartheid divisions and class differentiation, certain parts of the town are predominantly populated by specific segments of the population, as in all large cities. Equally, probably all cities are nowadays populated by people of different cultural and geographical origins, and often certain areas of cities are inhabited by specific groups. In Cape Town, however, due to the historical racial segregation by law, the variation of and within the suburbs in terms of race and class are particularly pronounced.

The advantages of living in the more prestigious and expensive parts of Cape Town, such as the Atlantic seaboard and some of the Southern suburbs, are recognized by the respondents, but those areas are unaffordable to most. Some even frown upon the wealthy suburbs because they symbolize an opulent lifestyle that seems inappropriate in a city where the majority of the populace lives in underdeveloped areas. Katja, for example, first lived in Camps Bay, which she initially enjoyed because of its proximity to the sea, beautiful scenery and the atmosphere of lavishness. Soon those assets lost appeal and were replaced with a desire for "authenticity", "real people" and "real life". For six months, she lived in Observatory, which fulfilled her idea of living in an African city, because of its many visibly African inhabitants as opposed to the predominantly white residents of Camps Bay. She now lives in the suburb of Woodstock, in close proximity to Observatory, which is a similarly 'mixed' residential area. Markus used to live in Greenpoint, which he chose because of its proximity to the city centre. He left because he found Greenpoint lacking in character compared to other parts of Cape Town. His current area of residence, Lower Wynberg, is diverse in terms of both race and class, and the cottage he bought was built in the Victorian era, which, for people with a liking for historical flair, contributes to feeling comfortable.

Looking at the informants' current places of residence, it emerges that they generally live in parts of Cape Town, which are no longer readily ascribed to a specific group defined by race as they were during the apartheid era. Under the apartheid government, these parts of Cape Town were classified 'white'. The white population in those areas is still over-represented or even prevails, but is now interspersed with people of various hues and

numerous nationalities. The choice of moving into these areas is certainly informed by the relatively low property prices, which make it easy to acquire or rent property. Sometimes the informants merely 'ended up' in those areas because they were told about rental opportunities by friends or acquaintances and now share living. That is the case with Tobias who shares a house in central Cape Town with two South Africans, a Swede, another German and an exchange student from the United States - a good example of Cape Town's cosmopolitan character. He had heard about this shared house from a friend in Germany, who had studied in Cape Town and enjoyed living in this house.

But more often than not the respondents moved into the kinds of areas they have chosen because they like them. They like the old structures of the buildings, which often date back to 19th century and lend their homes historical flair and character. They also enjoy the central position of those older suburbs, which makes them far more attractive as a place of residence than, for example the Northern suburbs, where property is also affordable, but which is suggestive of rural life due to their remoteness from the city centre.

The respondents all report that they enjoy the feel of living in 'mixed' areas, where they have the opportunity to learn about new systems of meaning and thereby face cultural challenges they are generally eager to deal with. Neither Katharina nor her girlfriend Melanie has a regular income and they move house quite frequently. When I first met them, they lived in Observatory, after that in the City Bowl, now they live in the Muslim-dominated Bo-Kaap, all those areas being known for their mixed populations. Wiebke, Eva, Konstanze all moved to Observatory out of choice. Observatory is a part of Cape Town with a busy nightlife and attracts residents and others. Nightlife offers a wild mix: clubs, where it is possible to dance to African or Latin music, bars that have a predominantly gay/lesbian clientele, restaurants serving food from the Far East and Latin America, establishments for low and high budgets. This mixture creates a habitat for a wide assortment of people. Observatory's proximity to the University of Cape Town attracts plenty of students who find cheap accommodation in often run-down houses. As Observatory became more fashionable, parts of this suburb had been gentrified and caught the fancy of more affluent people, often working in creative occupations such as artists and photographers, or people in academic positions. This mix is enhanced through people who are conspicuous through their attire, such as bikers, gender-benders, backpacking tourists, residents of 'New Age' communes and intellectual folk. I yet have to encounter a gender-bending biker, but otherwise there is lots of overlap between all those groups, which makes it difficult to categorize residents and guests in Observatory and contributes to the feeling that 'anything goes' and everybody is welcome. Wiebke also likes

the alternative and spiritual lifestyle that abounds in the area and is regularly displayed during the 'Holistic Lifestyle' Fair and the 'Obz Festival', both held in the suburb annually.

Life in Observatory, so it seems, is cosmopolitan lifestyle 'made easy' and as such made part of everyday life. A cosmopolitan attitude and attire almost seems compulsive, and is certainly more common than in the other suburbs inhabited by the informants, though even those are still far more exotic and culturally challenging than the relatively homogeneous Germany.

Material Culture

Just as interesting as their areas of residence is the inside of the informants' homes. Choosing to acquire particular objects and displaying them in one's personal environment can be as revealing as performed actions.

It has been argued that in recent discussions around material culture the meaning of items and individual actions performed with those items have been conflated as if material objects had a life of their own (Campbell, 1996). The acquisition and display of those items would have to be an "action in the true sense", that is, out of deliberation rather than habit (ibid: 103). But apart from the difficulty involved with determining a 'true sense' in an action, it has been noted elsewhere, that no item exists without discourse (Thomas, 1998: 99). To a large degree, objects such as art, food, "define who and what we are, both to ourselves and to others" (Palmer, 1998: 176). Objects often carry a notion of national identity and of course those items are the most relevant for this thesis.

As a rule, the informants' homes are not readily identified as inhabited by Germans in particular, even though some have brought back several items from established homes in their home country. The shipping has always been paid out of private funds, which is a costly undertaking and was therefore only done by two. Peter and Rita, the two informants who were employed by German companies from the beginning of their stay in South Africa, did not bring any items to South Africa, except for clothes, photographs and other easily transportable objects to which they feel emotional attachment. Konstanze has shipped several personal items from Germany to Cape Town. Amongst those objects are Scandinavian furniture, masks from Sri Lanka and books in the German language. In South Africa she acquired an Italian coffee machine, more furniture and African artefacts. Markus too, brought furniture and books from Germany to South Africa. The others have all started 'from scratch', and, like Peter and Rita, only brought items such as photographs of family members or friends. Eva has several objects in her house, such as a German vintage beer tray and an old-fashioned coffee

machine, which would indicate connectedness to her home country, if she had bought them. But it was her South African husband who accumulated those items, as he thought she would enjoy them. Wiebke, Katja, Rita and Peter made the choice of not bringing anything from Germany to their new homes, because of the costs and inconvenience involved. At the same time they wanted to take the chance to start a new household with items from the local repertoire, which indicates that they strive to adapt to a local lifestyle instead of rebuilding their German surroundings.

Apart from recent arrivals such as Katja and Katharina who are still in the process of establishing a home, all other respondents' homes are fitted with many electrical appliances. Konstanze's state-of-the-art coffee maker is rather exceptional, but all the others own cell phones, television sets, sound systems and all sorts of modern kitchen equipment or share these items with housemates. While these things reveal much about the informants' class status, namely middle-class, they are devoid of any particular connectedness to Germany.

Food is an exception. Peter, Konstanze and Tobias regularly buy *Nutella*, a German made chocolate bread-spread at a well-known specialist German food shop in Cape Town. The same shop supplies sausages and other meat delicacies too. This shop is mostly frequented by the respondents for special occasions and not used for everyday supplies due to the rather steep prices. All respondents, even Katja who usually seems most resistant to anything German, surrender to the temptation of bits of nostalgia in culinary form and many German food articles are available in regular food stores too.

As South Africa is no longer banned from any economic connections as it was during the apartheid years, its markets have opened up to imports from all over the world. Due to the increased global flow in general and Cape Town's multicultural setting in particular, most supermarkets stock food from many different countries. A recent culinary trend seems to be food from the Far East. Prior to this, food from Europe, such as Italian pasta, French cheeses and Danish biscuits to name but a few were the novelties on the shelves. German-made or German-style food, such as coffee, bread and anything one can do with animal protein are appreciated by both locals and Germans. Accordingly those items can be seen as 'local' and cannot be used as indicators for any level of national connectedness.

If it can be agreed that material culture is pivotal to the formation of identity, it must be concluded that the informants' identity is situational. They make use of objects from both their new and old environments. Objects with a connotation of their home country are usually edible and often connected to childhood memories. Nostalgic feelings also play a role with photographs of friends or family members in Germany. This feeling of connectedness to

Germany relates to longing for family comfort and solidarity rather than wishing to maintain a connection with their home country.

Acquiring items from South Africa and elsewhere in the world, suggest openness to aspects of different lifestyles. Without themselves subscribing to completely new sets of meaning, the respondents selected what they considered adequate and desirable for themselves, very much in Hannerz' sense of cosmopolitanism. Adequate items can be an Italian coffee machine that produces coffee of better quality than ordinary ones, wall decorations such as masks that are decorative at the same time as they are supposed to be talismans, or simply 'ethnic' artefacts, which are considered attractive and therefore add to a sense of well being. Since all informants show interest in cultural difference, it can be deduced that they all find African artefacts interesting. However, due to varying tastes, not everybody would use them for decorative purposes.

Networks of Work and Leisure

Diasporic communities are often organized within the receiving society through extensive networks of friendship, family, work and other "filiative forms" (Appadurai, 1991: 192) based on national identity. Family is of minor importance for the respondents in this thesis, since most arrived in South Africa alone and had no relatives amongst the existing German population. However, those with South African partners deal with the partners' families and are therefore automatically embedded in a local network. More important for this thesis are the two domains of work and leisure, which are not given, but have to be established in the new setting. For these respondents there is some convergence between the networks within and outside the workspace. The main difference consists of inevitable connections to colleagues at work and deliberate, chosen networks outside of professional life.

The Work Environment

Work relationships emerge through the particular skills required to perform certain tasks and usually the employee's nationality is of minor importance amongst middle-class migrants. Yet a shortage of employees with particular skills can lead to international exchanges of labour, for short spells or permanently. The informants of this study do not qualify as what have been called 'skilled transients' or 'denizens', meaning privileged foreigners with rare skills, who remain in the country of destination for a short while (see Vertovec and Cohen, 1999: xv). Nevertheless, their being German comes with a package of

'passively' acquired, 'cultural' skills which could theoretically be put to use in the informants' careers, depending on the chosen work.

Language Proficiency

Whilst each respondent has trained in different fields and studied different subjects, one of their most valued skills when abroad is their proficiency in German and many put this qualification to use in their professions. Eva, who is the only German in the South African marketing company she works for, is the only informant who has not benefited in professional life in Cape Town from her mother tongue. Katharina is working as a waitress at the moment, where she can occasionally make use of German language, but aspires to work at an NGO, where German language is not instrumental. Even though none of the informants have been sent to Cape Town by corporations based in Germany, the other seven have all been able to put their linguistic skills to use in their professional everyday life. Sometimes the language skill is crucial to the execution of tasks and sometimes it merely helps for networking.

Markus was always able to make use of his linguistic skills when looking for work. During his studies, he worked unofficially in several jobs, as a student visa in South Africa at that time did not allow foreign students to work. Those jobs included translations from English into German, teaching German in private lessons and working in a souvenir shop at a shopping centre, where his proficiency in the German language was greatly appreciated because of the number of German customers. For two years now, Markus has been working for a large corporation based in Switzerland. Due to the predominantly German speaking clientele, proficiency in the German language is considered a bonus and certainly aided in landing the job. Konstanze worked until recently for a stills production company, where she was tasked with assignments from German companies. Recently she started her own business together with another German expatriate that she met during her time as an intern. Their new project is concerned with wellness-tourism for the German-speaking market. To Rita, being a German speaker was important from the beginning: she first came to Cape Town because of a vacancy at the German school, now she works in a call centre for a German airline. As a Yoga teacher, Wiebke does not especially rely on German speaking clientele, but nevertheless has several German students in her class, who heard about her through other German-speakers. Peter works as a tour guide for German tourists. Translations are constantly required in this profession, as many German tourists lack sufficient knowledge of English.

Whilst language skill has been helpful in the above-mentioned examples, other aspects of Germanness at the workplace have rarely been described as beneficial.

Germanness at the Workplace

Apart from language skills, some informants' performances at work have been described by their colleagues 'as typically' German. Eva, for example, has been told that she works in a very focused and efficient way, which has been interpreted as the 'German way' by her superior. Fortunately for Eva, her 'way' is highly valued. At Markus' work place, the German speaking employees in general are said to be disciplined workers, but intolerant of noise created by the non-German colleagues. Whether their Germanness is evaluated as positive or negative by others, the respondents themselves differ when interpreting their own work style. Eva, whose 'German way' has been deemed as beneficial for her performance at work, recognizes the reason for her efficiency not as rooted in her cultural capital, but in her personality: "This is the way *I* work, not the way all Germans work. Many of my friends in Germany do not work as focused as I do."

There are some very pragmatic aspects about being German that have been useful in professional life – for example maintaining contact with German companies and knowing who to contact in order to facilitate business deals. Katja, for example, who at the moment works as a DJ, has until recently produced music videos for German Hip-Hop groups. In addition to the right contacts with production studios in Germany, this requires knowledge of music trends in Germany. For Konstanze's businesses, stills production and wellness tourism, connections to corporations based in Germany are equally vital, as she has to convince key persons within these corporations to task her with assignments.

Social Activity Outside the Work Space

The respondents' personal networks outside of work relationships don't expressly exclude or include Germans. Their co-nationals are allowed to feature within their private circles as long as they fulfil certain criteria. As Katja put it: "I don't mind my friends being German, as long as they don't behave like Germans." What she considered German behaviour is convergent with the commonplace stereotypes listed above.

Markus has only one German friend in Cape Town, someone he has known for a long time and whom he describes as very close. When Markus moved from Greenpoint to Wynberg, the friend even followed him into this area of Cape Town. Konstanze's German work colleague is also a friend and she often hosts interns from Germany, who are 'friends of friends'. Eva knows one other German, but thinks of him as her South African husband's friend rather than hers.

Thus fieldwork revealed that the informants do not strive for contact with other Germans, neither as an organized 'community' nor within their individual social circles. Even though most state that they do not consciously seek other Germans as friends, the possibility is recognized. Indeed, it is acceptable to befriend other Germans, but only those who share certain attributes of one's life: being of a certain age, sharing interest in similar activities or working in a similar professional field. All informants, when questioned about their social circles in Cape Town, named at least one other German expatriate: one of Tobias' housemates is a German, Konstanze met her friend Sylvia four years ago in a bar, Markus has simply known his German friend Almut 'for ages'. All close contacts to other Germans have emerged more or less coincidentally; none came to pass out of a specific need to befriend another German.

German Institutions

For these German residents in Cape Town, the city does not offer only new cultural set-ups. There is a large, settled group of German-speakers in Cape Town that could provide the informants with a familiar surrounding abroad especially through the existence of German institutions.

Every German speaker in Cape Town acknowledges his or her 'Germanness' in some way or another and uses and interprets national identity in different ways. Some need the company of other Germans – a 'proximal host society' (Mittelberg and Waters, 1992) - to feel comfortable abroad. This need is realised through social circles in which Germans prevail and attendance at places dominated by Germans.

German-speakers in Cape Town have created several institutions in which German culture and language play a pivotal role and which fulfil certain needs of Germans in diaspora. These institutions range from churches and schools to shops, clubs and restaurants. From hanging out in several of those institutions, I found that the category of Germans that I was studying used them to varying degrees.

The *German Club*, situated in the City Bowl of Cape Town, is a venue that consists of a bar and several rooms to host events of different kinds. The bar, apart from advertisements of German beer, is not readily associated with any kind of national identity: the staff is English speaking and a television screen, usually tuned to the sport channel, shows many events and not only soccer matches, the German national sport. The bar is frequented with people between the ages of ca. 20 and 70. Interestingly, the younger the visitor, the more unlikely it is that he or she is German. When German was spoken, it was mostly by men of

advanced age, invariably interspersed with many English and some Afrikaans words, which suggests that the *German Club* is also frequented by German Namibians. On a visit to a special event, a salsa-party that had been advertised with flyers and posters, I saw some people who fit into the research sample's age group, but they were not Germans and not in abundance either. This relative invisibility does not necessarily reveal much about attitudes of young Germans towards the German club. Nightlife in Cape Town is booming and competition strong, and the charm of the German club, which reminds me of a tennis-club in Germany that I reluctantly visited as a child, probably resonates for only a few of the relevant age cohort. Nevertheless, the lack of clientele of the age group of this study is striking.

There are other German institutions in Cape Town too. For example, I know of two churches in Cape Town that hold their services in German. Having attended several services of a Catholic church, I saw my assumption confirmed, namely, that Germans eligible for this study make no use of this facility. This does not come as a surprise, as neither church nor indeed, religion, featured as an important element in any of the informants' lives. Only one informant, Markus, stated that he visits the Protestant German-medium church on Christmas eve.

Cape Town also has a German bookshop, which stocks a wide range of books and magazines in German. In addition to covering the needs of travellers by selling guidebooks, novels and travel reports, there are also books and magazines on offer, published by the owner of the bookshop, which might attract a local clientele. Although all the informants know about the existence of this shop, it is not frequently used. Reasons for this are the generally high prices of media in German (they are often available free on the Internet) and the informants also expressed a lack of interest in German authors. The shop obviously has a clientele since it has been in business for many years. The respondents' patronage, however, would not suffice to guarantee its survival.

Another location where German language and clientele prevail is "Raith", a deli-like shop in the 'Gardens Centre' Shopping Mall, called. The Gardens Centre, as its name suggests, is situated in the suburb of Gardens, one of the three main areas in Cape Town with high concentrations of German residents (the other two being the Atlantic Seaboard and the Somerset West – Strand area). At Raith, it is possible to buy all sorts of culinary items strongly associated with German cuisine, such as *Kassler*, *Eisbein*, different sorts of sausages, jellied meats and so on. On the less meaty side, baking ingredients and German bread are on display, amongst cheeses and *Nutella*. The respondents are well aware of the existence of this shop and use it; some regularly, others just occasionally.

Institutions which are based on national identity can be seen as spaces where it is possible to maintain or re-discover traditions, no matter whether they had meaning in the home country or not. They facilitate maintaining a myth about the homeland, re-creating it according to collective ideas about being German. At the same time it is often possible to eradicate negative or limiting aspects of Germany and 'Germanness', which determine life in the home country. In her description of German institutions in Namibia, Schmidt-Lauber detects on the one hand, a "presence of the past, a canned wilhelminian Germany at the end of the 20th century" while on the other, a "'German spirit' in an 'un-German environment'" (Schmidt-Lauber, 2000: 245). Perhaps these phenomena are consequences of the period of German colonization of 'German South-West Africa'. In the Cape Town context, this pattern does not seem immediately applicable.

The informants are generally not nostalgic about Germany. Their gaze is not directed to their national origin, but towards their current setting and their future, which at the moment they imagine to be in Cape Town. All of the respondents are aware of the existence of German institutions in Cape Town, but only erratically made use of them. To the question, why, for instance, the German Club has never been visited, resentment or indifference towards this kind of institution was expressed. When asked about the German Club, Katja answered that she doesn't want to meet "those people", even though she has never been there nor knows anybody who frequents it. On a mellower note she stated that at German institutions, she doesn't expect to meet anybody to connect with: "They are not my kind of people." Konstanze, who worked until recently in the advertising business, and could potentially make use of the Club for networking purposes, despises the idea of joining as a member or even going there as a visitor. "I have nothing in common with those people. They are snobbish, racist and over-insured." This vehement exclamation was made in conjunction with her telling me about her experience of the German Club. Reportedly one of the members of the Club made a derogatory, racist statement about one of Konstanze's black friends when she went there together with a group of Germans and South Africans to watch a soccer match.

Katharina, too, who is aware of the existence of German institutions, doesn't even feel tempted to try them. "Of course I miss certain things from Germany. But those places can't offer them to me either." And furthermore: "I don't feel like I'm a member of a group. The groups that I belong to are anonymous, the members don't need to know each other." She referred to being a lesbian and being part of the gay and lesbian community and she also gave the example of going to a concert and experiencing a group feeling with the other concertgoers.

Only Markus claimed to make use of the service of a German church on Christmas and Wiebke uses the annual bazaar of the German school to buy second-hand books in German language, but those two examples are rather exceptional.

As indicated, the exception to this attitude relates to food. Hardly anybody could resist the temptation of German food for a prolonged period. Konstanze almost apologetically admitted that she visits the German deli at least once a week and even Tobias, who usually seems quite untouched and indifferent to the idea of German institutions in Cape Town, gets his regular supply of German sausages from Raith.

Cosmopolitans amongst themselves

Tourists often come to South Africa for similar reasons that initially attracted the study population too, therefore common interest could be assumed. Still, as long as they are not the respondents' friends, tourists are generally avoided. That alone cannot be seen as a specific German attitude; it is rather influenced by the desire to be seen as different from tourists, or, in the best case, not to be seen at all but to blend in with the 'local'. This behaviour is part of the cosmopolitan attitude described by Hannerz (1990: 242). Cosmopolitans try to participate wherever they are and to make the communication between both host and guest reciprocal, contrary to tourists, who gaze (ibid). Katja, for example, is very keen not to be confused with German tourists, who according to her, often make fools of themselves by displaying ignorance and arrogance. She also assumes that they come to Cape Town for different reasons than she did, namely scenery and nature as opposed to people and culture. Katja stated that wherever she goes, she always tries to "assimilate quickly" and be fully integrated in the receiving society, contrary to tourists, who merely consume. Wiebke also claimed that she doesn't want to stick out as a German, because "in Rome you do as the Romans do".

Hannerz described competence in different cultures as a kind of mastery, which can be achieved to varying degrees. This competence is also displayed to others in order to prove the advanced state of assimilation that has been managed. "Some would eat cockroaches to prove the point, others need only eat escargots" (ibid: 420). Or caterpillars: Rita told me that one of the reasons she likes traveling to the northern part of South Africa is because she enjoys eating *mopane* worms[3], a local delicacy. Even though one doesn't have to go so far, all have shown their willingness to acquire local habits and skills in some way. Markus, probably more than all the other informants, has adapted to the lifestyle of South Africa's gay white middle-class. His English scarcely has a German accent, while his spoken German is always

[3] Larvae of the moth *Imbrasia belina*

scattered with several English idioms. Markus likes to entertain at home and cook for his friends and leads a distinctly health-conscious lifestyle, which includes healthy food and a lot of exercise at the gym. Rather diurnal than nocturnal, he spends a lot of time on the beach, but claims that he hardly ever goes out at night. Interested in home improvement and gardening, he builds his own furniture and grows indigenous plants in his floriferous garden The fact that he has learned to speak Xhosa shows willingness to mingle with the Xhosa-speaking population too.

Most of the others have tried to accomplish more exotic tasks. Katja is an expert in Kwaito music, Peter thinks of himself as a connoisseur of African art, and Eva made a documentary movie about the Muslim-dominated suburb of Salt River.

In their relationships too, the respondents are not afraid of difference. One of Markus' former boyfriends, Myer, is a South African Jew. While this combination has precarious potential, it never served as material for conflict. On the contrary, they showed mutual interest in each other's traditions and attempted to learn the other's language. Konstanze's boyfriend Lorenzo comes from the former so-called coloured township of Mitchell's Plain, where his family is still located. His family, especially his mother, sometimes shows concern about his relationship with a German, which was expressed in a question about whether he forgot about his roots.

The respondents have all acquired some level of competence in dealing with selected parts of the receiving society and they are often eager to display this aptitude. Knowledge, skills, things and food from cultures other than German have been acquired and gained importance in their lives. They try to assimilate, and this attempt is not a requirement of the host-society as in the case of the USA (Clifford, 1994: 307).

Even though the independence from other Germans is often emphasized, in some situations, especially in times of crises, or more mildly put, discontent, attributes perceived as German are idealized in contrast to South Africa.

I visited Konstanze in her new house in the suburb of Observatory where, as a safety precaution, she had alterations done to the walls surrounding her property. The contracted builders were relatives of her boyfriend, who originates from the former 'coloured' township of Mitchell's Plain. To the question whether she was happy with the newly erected construction, she replied that she wasn't content with the quality of the work done, because the walls were not perfectly aligned and added, "This is one of the things that wouldn't happen in Germany". A few months before that, when we met for the first time for an interview, she vehemently expressed her dislike about the 'typical German' habit of being

overcritical and obsessed with perfection. Katja, who has an equally radical view on German behaviour and claims not to know other Germans in Cape Town, went through a short phase in which she felt misunderstood by South Africans at large. Recently she visited me together with a German intern whom she met in Cape Town and expressed her delight about the opportunity of talking to somebody in German again.

Clearly, as long as life abroad proceeds in a smooth and uncomplicated way, it is easy to appreciate the newly gathered experiences and be enthusiastic about a different lifestyle.

At a party at my home, to which the informants were invited, a crisis-like situation emerged. Two young men from my neighbourhood acted as 'gatecrashers', took the opportunity of foolishly unlocked doors to mingle with the party guests and find out about easy targets for theft, which indeed proved to be easy, as some German guests and I were so naïve as to attempt to integrate the locals. However, the easiest target turned out to be me, as five minutes after the 'neighbours'' arrival my cell phone was missing and so were the gatecrashers. Probably in an attempt to come back for more, the thieves returned to the party a short while later, having to respond to accusations of theft and misuse of other people's trust. Not being remotely remorseful, they neither confessed the theft, nor, consequently, showed willingness to return the phone. As Hannerz noted, cosmopolitans depend on locals in order to access diversity (1990). In this scenario, in which cosmopolitans' efforts to 'engage with the other' failed miserably, the individual reactions were quite different. I, in some sort of temper, called the police (who arrived two hours later). Markus, probably sensing that the party was beyond its peak, disappeared. Rita seemed transfixed by what was going on and continued quietly sipping her wine. Katja, in a true spirit of 'acting South African', tried to reconcile thief and victim by excusing the Germans, the guests in South Africa, to the alleged thieves by saying they find it hard to adapt to local strategies, and by telling me that a cell phone is not a great loss to me, as I would be able to replace it.

Overall, the respondents consider themselves to be different from most other Germans. They are not and do not want to be part of the majority of German-speakers in Cape Town, who do move within an ethnic enclave and do make use of the numerous institutions. Difference is perceived to be between wealthier Germans in different parts of town, who do not seem to be interested in the local context, and the informants who are interested. The distinction between 'us' and 'them' in the case of the study group is not always consistent. 'Us' is mostly not based on shared citizenship, but on an overlap of interest, work and lifestyle. Sometimes Germans, in a general and vague way based on language and common origin, are referred to as 'us', especially when speaking about German history. But mostly

other Germans are 'them', this title being informed through assumed difference in attitudes, class and age.

Reluctant Germans

Germans who have dwelt at the Cape for some time, have interacted primarily with each other or other German-speakers, as becomes apparent from the existence of German institutions. The informants of this study do not feel the need to make use of most of those institutions and some have made the conscious choice not to let them feature in their lives. To consciously search for organized communal activity implies a desire to connect with people who do speak the same mother tongue and wish to be connected through a distinct shared culture. The informants claim not to have his desire, and their claim is supported, in the main, by their behaviour.

The respondents have had to adapt when coming to Cape Town, no matter whether they chose to surround themselves with German-speakers or locals, as the one appeared as strange to them as the other. They have chosen the latter for the reasons outlined in this study.

The informants claim that 'being German' has ceased to be important in their daily lives and have replaced it with a kind of identity, that, if not to be described as South African, must be seen as cosmopolitan. Most of them have South African life-partners, their social circles consist largely of South Africans, they listen to South African music, take interest in South African politics, grow indigenous plants in their gardens, learn how to make bobotie, etc. Culture different from Western middle-class is regarded as distinct from their own, but clearly not considered inferior; it merely poses alternative patterns to the lifestyle the respondents have more often than not participated in.

Chapter 5. Findings and conclusion

This study is another example of how globalisation has increased its impact on the world's population. Increase in mobility and an unprecedented exchange of information has been extensively described and analysed by many authors, many of those considering dispersed communities. Nowadays, there are migrants who have changed their country of residence for very different reasons than those of their predecessors. They have moved to a different country because they like it, or in search for identity. This contrasts sharply with most other diaspora studies, in which different reported motivations, mostly born out of dire circumstances, are given as the trigger for moving.

The middle-class Germans of this study have made an effort to grow into a cultural system that differs immensely from their own and some have adapted to behaviours and strategies which are distinct from Western norms. Certainly this behaviour is not confined to Germans alone, but present within the younger population of most Western countries. Accordingly, this finding challenges the notion that the workings of the phenomenon of globalisation forces the world population to develop in a unilinear direction and is subject to what has been deemed "MacDonaldization", a process of homogenisation according to norms of Western culture.

The research question described the aim of this thesis as twofold. Firstly, I attempted to explore the extent to which the respondents could be categorized based on their connectedness and their reasons for coming to Cape Town. The second task I set myself was to explore how German middle-class expatriates of a certain age cohort put their German identity to use in the receiving society and how their national identity has been negotiated both consciously and unconsciously.

In order to address the first part, I briefly summarized findings about the informants' motivations for moving and their connectedness to both home country and receiving society. The motivation for moving is composed of a mixture of push- and pull-factors, which are already indicative of the respondents' middle-class status. The push-factors in Germany are usually boredom and a felt stagnation in one's personal development. In some cases partnership with a South African attracted the informants to Cape Town, already showing their willingness to engage with people from a different cultural background. Other reasons are natural and cultural interest in a setting that is initially perceived as exotic. It can be seen as an indicator for both increased mobility and a lack of attachment to a home territory that nowadays people migrate because of such mundane reasons as the weather. But the

informants' appreciation of their new surrounding has changed, making their motivations distinct from tourists' motivations to spend time in South Africa. They enjoy a lifestyle that they perceive as relaxed and uncomplicated in contrast to Germany.

Based on the criteria of other scholars of 'diaspora, I had to conclude that the informants cannot be classified as being in diaspora in the classic sense, as they merely accomplish some diasporic aspects. They do not fulfil the usual criteria such as longing for the home country, maintaining a shared, idealized vision of Germany, or extensive networking amongst the proximal hosts in Cape Town. A sense of nostalgia about their home country is present, but confined to material goods, which nowadays can mostly be acquired in Cape Town as well. All feel emotional attachment to their families and friends in Germany, some of whom come to Cape Town regularly for holiday purposes. And, as noted, some of the informants visit Germany several times a year. Because of this frequent exchange, the informants are hardly in danger of being homesick. The informants' extensive networks in both Germany and South Africa show a multiple connectedness, which implies the use of the term transnational. Since modern and affordable ways of communication, especially through the Internet, have become accessible to most middle-class people, the geographical distance between Germany and South Africa has largely been rendered insignificant for the informants. The intention not to return to their home country, apart from the occasional holiday, makes them distinct from "transnational migrants", who circulate between host and home country. The informants have moved and they want to stay, and the fact that they crossed a border is of minor significance. It has been argued that national boundaries cease to be of importance; I would like to apply this idea when describing the informants' current situation.

However flexible national boundaries have become, national identity is an important variable in the informants' lives, which leads to the second task of this thesis. The question about their performance of being Germans in Cape Town can be answered with the interplay of two main factors. One factor is the aim to enrich one's life by traveling to foreign places and to add selected local practices to the construct of the own personality. The other factor informing everyday life is a national identity, which the informants don't want to apply to themselves. Instead they aim to be highly individual and different from other Germans. Nevertheless, being German is *de facto* an immensely important variable in both their professional and private lives, even if not always perceived as such. Their German families and friends are of great importance in the informants' daily interactions, not on a 'face-to-face' basis but through media. And last but not least, though paradoxical, their being German

is manipulated through their eagerness to conceal their national origin and modify their identity, which directly links to the identity of the post boomer generation of Germany. This generation deals with similar problems to those of other Western countries, being caught in a contradiction of wanting to uphold a particular lifestyle and at the same time being eager to change it. Adding to confusion about national identity is, in the German scenario, a lack of confidence in their own national and cultural identity. Being middle-class, the informants have had exposure to education concerning Germany's role in the World Wars. The inherited baggage especially from World War II and the ideology of National Socialism, defies the option of national pride. Even those who claim to have come to terms with an inhumane national past and even those who reject any responsibility for, or ownership of this era do not display positive identification with their home country. The image attached to Germans, and moreover the image that Germans assume members of other countries to hold of them, is not perceived as agreeable. The informants themselves apply this image to most other Germans, thereby intending to emphasize their difference from 'typical' Germans. Being away from Germany offers these young Germans a chance to camouflage their German identity with an attitude that implies that they are at 'home in the world'.

In this case study, moving from Germany to Cape Town is the articulation of a cosmopolitan attitude. To varying degrees, the informants' attitudes apply to Hannerz' concept of cosmopolitanism. They take part in a "world culture" (1990), which implies openness towards people of different culture and eagerness to learn about alternative lifestyles. Being away from culturally homogenous Germany opens up many possibilities of acquiring new cultural skills. The chance of learning from others is often emphasized, and in their eagerness to do so, the informants have gone to lengths to equip themselves with exotic assets. Celebrating Germanness has no space in this effort; the ubiquity of Germans, especially tourists, in Cape Town is acknowledged rather as a menace, and the various German institutions are registered on the informants' mental maps, but usually not used. Contact with other Germans in Cape Town, unless it existed prior to their arrival, is not consciously sought. Networking with other Germans in Cape Town happens on a more pragmatic level than through ideology or cultural awareness, as it does in business networking, where the German language can play a crucial role.

The much emphasized felt loss of national identity in diaspora has been described as a painful experience. In the context of the group in question, loss of national identity seems to be a prerequisite for a successful transition into the desired cosmopolitan lifestyle. Therefore national identity has to be seen not as 'lost', but rather 'shaken off', a deliberate action, and

not inevitably connected with a lower quality of life. The image of Germans held up by the respondents, combined with the general trend towards individualism, informs this attitude to their current setting.

Some informants have made a point of showing how 'africanized' they are. It almost seems as if they attempted to marinade long enough in brine with assumed South African flavour, hoping that it might, after a while, seep in and upgrade 'bland German food' with a hefty dose of curry and biltong.

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