



Transnational Lives

Expatriates in Indonesia

Anne-Meike Fechter

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ASHGATE

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>		<i>vii</i>
Chapter 1	Expatriates: Who Are They?	1
Chapter 2	Transnational Lives and Their Boundaries	17
Chapter 3	Expatriate Wives	37
Chapter 4	Space, Embodiment and the Gaze	59
Chapter 5	Boundaries of the Body	83
Chapter 6	Performing Expatriate Identities	103
Chapter 7	Young Expatriates, Alternative Lifestyles?	127
Chapter 8	A Peculiar Tribe	147
<i>References</i>		<i>169</i>
<i>Index</i>		<i>181</i>

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Preface

My interest in expatriates was first aroused during a semester spent teaching German language at a Teachers' Training College in the city of Yogyakarta in Java, as I became an expatriate myself. One afternoon I was sitting on the veranda of an elegant house inhabited by a British family, looking onto a garden with a swimming pool and large mango trees, which was sheltered by concrete walls. A maid was serving tea, while a nanny was looking after the family's little daughter. The husband told me about the aggressive political party rallies he had witnessed earlier that year, which he had found frightening. He said that beneath the calm exterior of the Javanese was a potential for violence that could come to the fore when they were pushed over a limit – it was called 'running amok'. I was struck as much by his explanation of Indonesians' behaviour as by the quasi-colonial scenario: the spacious villa, the presence of household staff, the air of luxury compared with the rather modest dwellings outside.

This situation is quite typical of how many visitors to Indonesia encounter the expatriate world, and their first reactions, like mine, are often a mixture of intrigue, disbelief and a ready acceptance of its advantages. During my teaching stint, after having visited other expatriates' homes in Jakarta, I had the distinct feeling that their way of living was strange and peculiar, and worth examining more closely. At first, I was unable to pinpoint what exactly made for this peculiarity. During my subsequent fieldwork in Jakarta, I thought that a key aspect of it was living in an 'expatriate bubble', and while writing up my ethnographic material I realised that what had struck me was the pervasive importance of boundaries. Wherever expatriates were, whatever they did, boundaries seemed the key to understanding their lives. These were boundaries between the orderly insides of their houses and the chaotic streets, between Western food served at home and street vendors' fare outside, and between the cocooned Western expatriate communities and a sprawling third-world city which surrounded them.

The main theme of this book is therefore how expatriates' lives are marked by boundaries, and specifically how their construction and transgression characterises expatriates' relations with Indonesia. This becomes apparent in the domains of race and gender, the body, the use of space, and their social lives. The centrality of these categories is not necessarily reflected in existing research on transnationalism; on the contrary, my discovery of the prevalence of boundaries contrasts with prominent discourses of 'global flows' which dominate transnationalist literature. I argue that expatriates' transnational lives are marked by boundaries as much as by flows. These notions are not conceptualised as opposites, but as interdependent. I suggest that in the context of privileged migration, the role of boundaries has not been sufficiently explored. This study thus hopes to make a contribution in several ways, namely to support the emerging focus on privileged migration, and the perspective

of 'transnationalism from above'; to supplant, and challenge existing theories of globalisation through detailed ethnographic material; to bring both a historical and gendered perspective to the study of skilled migration, as well as an emphasis on the embodied and everyday experiences of mobile professionals.

Given that the term 'expatriates' is vague and rather value-laden, I discuss it in more detail in Chapter 1, and describe how some of informants use the term themselves. This chapter includes a brief overview of the methods used in my research and introduces its location, the city of Jakarta. Chapter 2 situates expatriates within the conceptual framework of transnationalism and migration studies, it suggests that studying privileged migration produces new theoretical as well as ethnographic perspectives, and points to its historical and gendered dimensions. Bearing these dimensions in mind, Chapter 3 explores the situation of expatriate wives, arguing that the limiting aspects of transnational lives become especially apparent with respect to women. This is partly due to their ambiguous position as the dominated members of the dominating expatriate class in relation to Indonesian society. The chapter shows how women's lives are in many ways more restricted than they were in their home countries, and are marked by a change of identity and lack of agency. Nevertheless, their situation also affords them certain opportunities for personal development that were not available to them at home.

Chapters 4 and 5 foreground the role of the space, the body, and embodied experiences of expatriates' lives. These chapters demonstrate the various ways in which expatriates negotiate their relations with their Indonesian environments, and how they construct a spatial and social 'Western bubble'. Spatial boundaries appear in expatriates' housing practices and their movements through Jakarta. Central to their experiences is their 'Whiteness', as they are unsettled by being the object of the gaze of the Indonesian 'Other'. Chapter 5 looks at how expatriates through bodily practices, such as food consumption, reject or appropriate elements of Indonesia, for example through employing technologies of transforming Indonesian food into Western dishes.

Chapter 6 examines boundaries of ethnicity and nationality, which not only separate expatriates from Indonesian society, but divide the expatriate community itself. National identities become a significant resource for representations of self and Other. A large part of expatriates' activities, as apparent in women's associations, are organised along national lines. At the same time, some expatriates attempt to transgress these boundaries, and engage with Indonesian culture, for instance through the 'Indonesian Heritage Society'. Despite tendencies towards internationally-oriented ways of socialising, national identifications still remain strong. Chapter 7 addresses the question whether expatriates are bound to exist within a 'bubble', or whether there are alternative forms of living in Indonesia as a foreigner. The chapter focuses on young global professionals, who distance themselves from the older generation of 'family expatriates'. I suggest, however, that these young professionals similarly perform Western lifestyles which exclude much of Indonesia. The concluding chapter draws together these issues through tracing different boundary-related metaphors and their use by expatriates. Complementing the prevailing focus on the migration of non-privileged people, and critiquing the discourse of flows, the book thus offers a more comprehensive analysis of transnational processes.

Chapter 1

Expatriates: Who Are They?

Had people with such exotic customs, such irrational beliefs, such complex social organizations, and such tremendous power, been of any other skin colour they would have been studied in great depth and detail by anthropologists from all over the world. Unfortunately, however, most of the world's anthropologists are white, and it is a rare anthropologist indeed who studies somebody of his own colour (Crocombe 1968:76, quoted in Erik Cohen 1977:5).

Although anthropologists have in the meantime begun to study people of their own colour, expatriates have remained curiously absent from academic accounts. An early overview article by Cohen (1977), entitled 'Expatriate communities', seems to have been largely forgotten. This relative academic invisibility contrasts with their prominence in the popular imagination, even though this often takes the form of caricatures and clichés. Undoubtedly, the existence of such clichés, which are entertained by those at home as well as expatriates themselves, is linked to the assumed 'exotic customs' and 'irrational beliefs' alluded to above. They typically portray expatriates as egotistical, domineering, ignorant and greedy; as neurotic about hygiene while living a life of luxury, whiling away their days by the pool or at Coffee Mornings, and knowing local people only as their servants. The aim of this study is to move beyond such stereotypes, and establish 'expatriates' as a valid and relevant ethnographic object.

The term 'expatriate' is a loose one and has multiple meanings; I do not attempt to systematically review them here, but discuss only those that are relevant in the present context. The word 'expatriate' consists of the Latin *ex* ('out') and *patria* ('native country'), describing 'a person who lives outside their native country'. The origin of the current use seems to be the mid-18th century, in the form of the medieval Latin term *expatriat-*, 'gone out from one's country' (The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1999). In spite of this rather broad meaning, the majority of contemporary migrants who leave their countries to live elsewhere are typically not referred to as expatriates. Instead, the term is conventionally reserved for Westerners who have lived abroad for varying lengths of time, especially artists, colonials, and generally those with a mission of one kind or another (Cohen 1977:6).

The term 'expatriate' has gained prominence for example in relation to the 'Lost Generation' of American writers living in Paris after World War I, which included Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein (Earnest 1968). A quote from Hemingway's novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, suggests the tropes of moral decline which were associated with these expatriates' existences: '*You're an expatriate. You've lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have*

ruined you. You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed by sex. You spend all your time talking, not working. You are an expatriate, see? (Hemingway 1926, Chapter 12). A related, but more pertinent use for the present context appears with regard to colonialism. In fact, the words ‘colonial’ and ‘expatriate’ are regularly employed in conjunction with each other in accounts of late colonial life (Morrison 1993). These include the British gentlemen who, after prolonged exposure to the tropical climates of South or South East Asia, suffer from world-weariness, alienation and alcoholism, as they are portrayed in the novels and short stories of Anthony Burgess, Joseph Conrad and Somerset Maugham. This association (and sometimes continuity) between past colonials and contemporary expatriates also surfaces in popular discourse: leisurely sipping one’s gin and tonic at sunset has become as much an iconic image of expatriate life in the tropics today as it may have been of British colonial officers in India. I will discuss the significance of the links between the two groups in the next chapter.

A more current, technical meaning of the term ‘expatriates’ is employed within the field of international human resource management (Selmer 1995, Morley, Heraty and Collings 2006). In this context, an expatriate is someone who takes up an international assignment for their current employer. As the person remains within the company, these moves are also referred to as ‘intra-company transfers’. Although they are frequently called ‘business expatriates’, these kind of transfers may occur in the public as well as in the private sector. This traditional model of expatriation stipulates that the employee is given financial incentives to move, and is compensated for the costs and inconveniences incurred by the relocation. Although there is growing evidence that these packages, which were rather lavish in the past, are being reduced, many remain fairly generous. Such packages may consist of a moving allowance, airfare, housing costs, a car and driver, medical insurance, home leave, and children’s school fees. They also include a higher salary to accommodate the cost of maintaining a lifestyle abroad similar to the one they had at home, as is necessitated by the increased prices of imported Western foods sold in developing countries. The literature on these corporate expatriates is specifically concerned with the different stages of the ‘expatriate cycle’: that is their selection, assignment and repatriation, remuneration and evaluation of their success or failure.

It has been suggested that this conventional model of expatriation is changing, and that it is already being complemented or replaced by other forms of mobile working, such as short-term and ‘commuter’ assignments, which do not require the employee to move abroad, but rather involve frequent travel (Doyle and Nathan 2001:5). Given that an expatriate employee is considered to be three to four times more expensive than a domestic one (Harris, www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/news/manfocus/downloads/expatriates.doc, accessed August 2006), many firms are increasingly looking to reduce the costs of overseas assignments, or avoid them altogether. One way of doing so is to ‘localise’, that is, to recruit qualified local nationals rather than sending Western employees. Another significant trend is the emergence of a younger generation of professionals, who are more interested in working internationally than some of the ‘traditional’ expatriates, and who are therefore prepared to take up posts abroad with a reduced expatriate package, or none at all.

Apart from this narrowly defined sense, the term ‘expatriates’ frequently appears in media representations, for example with regard to British nationals who move to southern Spain, France or Italy on a temporary or permanent basis. These include elderly people who could be considered ‘retirement’ or ‘leisure’ migrants, but also those who leave their jobs and sell their property in the UK in pursuit of a better quality of life abroad, a warmer climate and lower living costs. These kind of expatriates have gained a relatively high profile in the popular imagination in the UK, partly through several television series following their relocation and settlement abroad, their appearance in novels such as Peter Mayle’s *A Year in Provence* or JG Ballard’s *Cocaine Nights*, and in news features, for example about access to healthcare for elderly UK citizens in Spain. They are also slowly coming into the focus of social sciences, which I will discuss in the following chapter.

As will become apparent from this limited selection of examples, the meaning of the term ‘expatriate’ is variously accompanied by associations of luxury, leisure or moral decline abroad, in historical as well as contemporary contexts. I suggest, however, that its value-laden nature is of heuristic benefit insofar as its usage – or avoidance – by my informants is itself telling of some of the political and social issues in which the term is enmeshed. Thus, before explaining my own use of the term, and introducing my informants in greater detail, I discuss below aspects of how Western residents in Indonesia relate to the term, and how this speaks of their identifications vis-à-vis other foreigners, Indonesians, and people in their home countries.

Among my informants, all of whom were Euro-American residents in Indonesia, those who most readily described themselves as ‘expatriates’ were those corporate expatriates in the strictly-defined sense mentioned above. Some of them not only accepted the term, but embraced it with relish. This was in recognition of its technical meaning regarding their employment status, but also, I suggest, because this status to some extent justified their comparatively luxurious existences. As surveys indicate, the annual living cost for an expatriate and spouse in Jakarta was estimated to be US\$102,184 in 1995 (PT Price Waterhouse Sutanto 1995), while the gross national income per capita in Indonesia in 2000 was still only US\$590 (<http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPPProfile.asp?PTYPE=CP&CCODE=IDN>, accessed August 2006). The often stark contrast between Westerners’ lifestyles and that of many Indonesians generates a sense of considerable guilt and unease among Westerners. Being classified as an expatriate by company policy, however, may allow them to relinquish a sense of responsibility for these differentials. Being labelled an ‘expatriate’ signifies their embeddedness in the mechanisms of global capitalism, which they have no individual control over, and they hence cannot be held accountable for the resulting inequalities.

The basis for such reasoning is what could be called a ‘hardship ideology’, which also underpins the ‘expatriate package’ described earlier. One element of this is the concept of expatriation as a state of deprivation, including the idea of a ‘hardship’ post. It is, or used to be, the assumption underlying corporate expatriation schemes that a relocation abroad is in many ways a time of scarcity – that is, as measured against the kind of life that the employee would be able to lead at home, and for which he has to be compensated. This is especially true of postings to locations

where the re-creation of a Western standard of living is difficult, as measured for example through quality of housing, regularity of power supply, availability of healthcare, provision of international schools and amenities such as Western consumer goods and foods. Such contracts are classified as 'hardship posts'. Adopting this kind of thinking allows corporate expatriates to consider themselves as deserving recipients of generous packages, irrespective of the average standard of living in the host country. This ideology often appears in conjunction with the concept of the 'expat expert', the idea that corporate expatriates, per definition, are more skilled and qualified for the job they have been assigned than members of the local workforce, and are therefore deserving of their much higher salaries than locals receive. Independent of how accurate such rationalisations are, they provide a further justification for expatriates' privileged position, and often underlie corporate expatriates' self-perceptions.

Other arenas where this kind of ideology is maintained are the commercial websites which provide expatriates with products such as grocery items, overseas editions of newspapers, removal support, insurance, financial services and advice books. One website for example offers a range of foods from UK-based supermarkets, which can be ordered over the Internet and delivered to people's homes worldwide. Other websites, which are often run by former expatriates, provide moral support and information, and sell self-help manuals, such as Robin Pascoe's *Homeward Bound: A Guide to Repatriation* (2000a). These websites are distinct from general e-commerce enterprises in that they are specifically geared towards expatriates. The items for sale are usually easily obtainable in their home countries, but difficult or impossible to source in Jakarta. These companies thus indirectly reinforce the idea of expatriation as deprivation, which is central for the identity of many corporate expatriates.

In contrast to those foreigners for whom the acceptance of an expatriate identity offers relief for their social conscience, for others the term represents certain characteristics from which they are keen to distance themselves. Among them are those working in the development sector, including permanent staff, trainees, and consultants. The group of development workers is extremely diverse in terms of their motivations, job profiles, and income, and while there are quite a few people who receive local-level wages, there are also those who receive salaries and benefits not dissimilar to a corporate expatriate package. It appears that in recent years, the professionalisation of development work has led to the emergence of a type of 'development manager', a highly qualified individual who works in the capital of a developing country, and whose lifestyle is in many ways indistinguishable from that of corporate expatriates. Chambers refers to this phenomenon as the 'capital trap' (Chambers 2005), signalling the emergence of an unwelcome distance between development professionals and the people of the country they are working in. Despite some manifest commonalities with corporate expatriates, however, many development workers are reluctant to refer to themselves as expatriates. This is arguably due to its negative connotations, such as greed, ignorance, and a personal lack of interest in the host society, characteristics with which they do not want to be identified. It also relates to the fact that development workers may still consider their mission and motivation

as fundamentally different from those in the corporate sector, emphasising humanistic rather than profit-oriented motives.

Another group, which partly overlaps with those of development workers, is a younger generation of foreigners who are not necessarily posted to Jakarta by corporations, but who have taken up a job there on their own initiative. They may receive globally competitive salaries and have comfortable lifestyles, but would not necessarily describe themselves as expatriates. I suggest that this group is loath to be associated with older expatriates and the ‘culture’ they represent in terms of their compatriot-orientated social lives, community organisations, and generally with what they perceive as an old-fashioned, traditional expatriate lifestyle.

Even among the ‘family expatriates’, however, there are those with relatively high incomes, who acknowledge their privileged position, but are at pains to emphasise their genuine engagement with Indonesia, their different outlook and motivation for being there. For example, at one social gathering of expatriate women in Jakarta, a well-dressed, middle-aged French woman, Monique, distributed leaflets promoting her business, a gallery and furniture shop, which were clearly designed to cater to expatriate tastes. She was adamant, however, about not being regarded as an expatriate. She explained to me: *‘I am not an expatriate, because we want to live here, we have our business here and we are thinking of adopting an Indonesian child’*. She was thus emphasising her long-term commitment and what she saw as a caring attitude towards the country and its people, contrasting with the supposedly egotistical and exploitative motivations of her compatriots. While she was closely involved with the ‘expatriate community’ and in fact depended on them for her business, she found it even more necessary to dissociate herself from them, however unconvincing this claim may have seemed to a detached observer.

Such concern to demonstrate their greater involvement with, and knowledge of Indonesian society also underpins the position of many non-corporate foreign residents who live outside the capital, who also tend to be dismissive of ‘expatriates’. These include for example small-scale entrepreneurs, teachers, artists, and those working for small NGOs. In their understanding, the term ‘expatriate’ indicates luxurious lifestyles, a lack of language skills, arrogance, ignorance, and possibly racist attitudes. In contrast, they aim for a better level of integration into Indonesian society, building genuine relationships with Indonesians, while they have comfortable but moderate lifestyles that are not that far removed from local ones. It is questionable, though, to what extent they are able to escape or counteract the inequalities of wealth and power that exist between them and many Indonesians.

While all of these people are uneasy with the term, there are also those who almost defiantly describe themselves as expatriates in spite of a sense that the ‘expatriate community’ proper may not consider them as such, due partly to their comparatively low socio-economic status, and especially if they have an Indonesian spouse. One such group are Western women married to Indonesian men, some of whom work as so-called ‘local hires’ with small salaries. Their lives can be very different from those of corporate expatriates, depending on the income and social status of their husbands. This was the case, for example, with Julie, an American woman with an Indonesian husband, who worked for a foreign company on a local salary. She said: *‘Of course I am an expatriate, because I live and work outside*

my home country, right? I might not earn as much as the others, but that does not make me less of an expatriate. The ‘others’ she referred to were fellow Americans, corporate expatriates, who sometimes appeared hesitant to grant her full membership status in the expatriate community, as Julie knew from experience. By applying the term ‘expatriate’ for herself, she stated her claim to belong to this community.

Finally, there are individuals who have the requisite professional positions and income levels, but whose ethnicity can lead to their exclusion from certain national expatriate communities. For example, Endah, an Indonesian national, had lived in Germany for more than twenty years while she was married to a German. She had been working as a manager in the textile sector in Germany and had been posted by her company to oversee its operations in Jakarta. Although she was divorced now, she explained: *‘I feel like a foreigner here in Indonesia – I am an expatriate! I have been sent to work here. And my family in Sumatra think I am too Westernised, and do not really accept me any more.’* She occasionally attended events organised by the German women’s association, but expressed her resentment at the fact that her ethnicity and nationality seemed to prevent her full acceptance, in spite of how closely she felt related to Germany herself.

Expatriates – the Making of an Object?

As these examples demonstrate, the term ‘expatriate’ is socially contested, politically and morally charged, ambiguous, and is linked to particular notions of ethnicity and class. Given this, it does not seem to be particularly suited to use for one’s informants in an ethnographic study. One reason for doing so anyway is that terms which carry fewer connotations and may be sufficiently neutral, such as ‘Western temporary resident in Jakarta’, are not especially convenient. A more pertinent reason to employ the term is its prominence in discourse among foreigners, whether through positive identification or emphatic dissociation. Also, the word ‘expatriate’ is recognised across the spectrum of different foreign nationalities. Although it may be used with greater ease by native English speakers, others are similarly familiar with it, even if they encounter the term only during their stay abroad. Furthermore, it is commonly used to describe groups such as the ‘American expatriate community’, or ‘expatriate community organisations’ in Jakarta.

A risk in using this term is that it may conceptualise expatriates as a bounded, homogeneous group. The aim here is to utilise the term ‘expatriates’ as an analytical tool that avoids shoehorning Western foreigners into a single category, and instead explores the range of their attitudes, practices and experiences of life in Indonesia. In fact, the differences between them according to age or gender contribute to a fuller, more complex picture of what it can mean to be an expatriate. One way of talking about ‘expatriates’ as a diverse group whose members yet have significant connections, is through using Strathern’s notion of ‘partial connections’ (Strathern 1991). The concept allows for the discussion of a heterogeneous group of people, or places, without having to assume that they share a fixed set of ‘group characteristics’. Instead, Strathern suggests, the researcher can explore, and produce, meaningful connections between them.

Strathern gives as an example the village of Elmton in Essex, one of her fieldwork sites: 'I cannot even begin to compare the Essex village with the pit settlements of Durham or the suburbs of Manchester, in order to think about Britain in connection (say) with North America' (1991:24). One can make connections, however, and Strathern emphasises that although 'I cannot compare [them] ... I must also do more than simply juxtapose them in my mind' (Strathern 1991:24). One possibility is to adopt the figure of the journey which, Strathern suggests, 'might work as an imaginative device through which to think about connections if we could dispense with its attendant presumption of integration taking place within a single entity' (Strathern 1991:25). The concept of partial connections can also be put to use for the case of expatriates. In concrete terms, this means that when I discuss 'expatriates', this does not imply that all issues hold for all of the Western foreign residents in Jakarta. I suggest, though, that the attitudes and practices described are significant for a considerable portion of this group. The following chapters are structured in a way so as to make these partial connections more explicit.

Expatriates in Indonesia

My informants comprised a particular segment of foreigners in Indonesia: that is, European and American temporary residents in Jakarta. It is worth noting that the majority of the 58,070 foreign temporary residents in Jakarta registered in 1995 (Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia 1995: 45–46) were Asian (34,779), compared with 11,787 Europeans and 7,579 Americans. Most of my informants were white, with some exceptions such as British Asians. I decided to focus on 'white Westerners' rather than Asian expatriates from Singapore, Malaysia, or India, because the experiences of living in Jakarta as an Asian foreigner are likely to differ significantly from those of Europeans and Americans due to their race or ethnicity. Although Australians represent a considerable foreign population in Jakarta (3,731 in 1995) and may be considered as 'Westerners', I did not include them here because their previous knowledge of, and expectations about Indonesia set them apart from many Euro-Americans. Australians tend to be more familiar with Indonesian culture and society because of geographic proximity and the presence of Indonesian migrants in Australia itself, as well as through media exposure, Indonesian language teaching in schools, and possibly their own tourist experiences. The experience of Australian expatriates is also particular insofar as travelling home for them is cheaper and less time-consuming, and can therefore be done more frequently. This is not to suggest that their experience of Indonesia is entirely unique, but nevertheless so distinct as to exclude it here.

A feature shared by most of my informants was their status as temporary residents; they typically stay for a period between 6 months and 3 years, sometimes extending to 5 years, but rarely longer. In 1995 there were less than 600 Euro-American permanent residents in Jakarta, whereas the number of temporary ones was close to 20,000. The group of temporary residents comprises posted expatriates in the private and public sector. They typically work in areas with considerable foreign investment, such as the oil and gas industries, mining and logging, trading, manufacturing, banking,

management consulting, and the hospitality industry, but also in development, education, and cultural institutions. Apart from posted expatriates, there are also those who have come of their own initiative, such as journalists, small entrepreneurs, artists, volunteers, academic researchers, people working for local NGOs, teachers at international and English language schools, students and interns.

Importantly, the transient nature of their stay partly reflects their relations with Indonesian society. Many of the permanent residents are likely to be married to Indonesians, as this is one of the limited number of ways of obtaining permanent resident status, and also because they are most likely to have an interest in gaining permanent residency compared to corporate expatriates. Furthermore, living in Jakarta with an Indonesian partner fundamentally shapes their involvement with Indonesian society, as they become part of their partner's family, and as their resident status may affect their earning power, since they may be classified as 'local hires' who are paid lower salaries by foreign companies or institutions.

Apart from their whiteness and temporary status, one of the most defining characteristics shared by my informants was their level of income. I have discussed above the concept of the 'expatriate package' as it is used in human resource management. The group that I discuss includes but is not limited to those who receive a corporate 'expatriate package'. This is based on the insight that not everybody who entertains a lifestyle typical of corporate expatriates can be classified as an 'intra-company-transfer' in the narrow sense of the term. This allows for the inclusion of people working in the public sector, for example in development, education, cultural institutions and diplomacy. These non-corporate expatriates also obtain a higher salary than at home, sometimes get benefits comparable to corporate ones, and are therefore similarly able to enjoy the proverbial expatriate lifestyle.

There is, of course, a range of income levels among Western foreigners in Jakarta, ranging from the top tier with rather luxurious lifestyles to those in comfortable but more modest circumstances, to those who can afford to sample Western goods and services only occasionally. I focus here mainly on the first group, and for the most part do not discuss those on a very limited budget, such as English teachers and students, who are referred to as *bule miskin* [poor white people] by Indonesians.

I have outlined above the perks and advantages that used to be part of an expatriate package, but even without one, salaries for expatriates remain comparatively high. Although it is difficult to obtain exact figures and while they vary according to sectors, position, and nationality, the salaries that my informants received could be about a hundred times as much as those of most ordinary Indonesians, given that, according to one estimate, more than 50% of Indonesians were living on less than US\$2 a day in the year 2000 (http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/country_profiles/eco_cou_360.pdf#search=%22world%20bank%20annual%20per%20capita%20income%20indonesia%22, accessed August 2006). In concrete terms, this meant that they could afford to rent houses or serviced apartments in one of the more genteel areas of Jakarta favoured by expatriates, employ domestic staff such as a maid, nanny, cook, gardener and security guard, buy imported foods from Western-style supermarkets, have their own car, sometimes with a driver, frequent Western-style bars and restaurants where a few cocktails or a Sunday brunch buffet would cost as

much as their driver's monthly salary or more, take regular holidays or weekend trips to regional destinations such as Bali or Singapore, and go on home leave at least once a year (see Mann 1997b). All of these features, that is, being white, Euro-American temporary resident who has come to Jakarta for work-related reasons and being sustained by relatively high income, are integral to what could be called a shared 'expatriate culture'. At the same time, the positionalities of individuals are fragmented, shaped by their gender, age, employment status and nationality, which generate very particular experiences of their lives as expatriates.

One of the main differentiating features is gender, as the majority of posted expatriates are male and many women enter Indonesia as 'trailing spouses'. Indeed, the visa issued to such women is officially termed *ikut swami* in Indonesian, meaning 'following the husband', which does not allow them to accept paid employment. This holds mainly for middle-aged married couples with children, where the husband tends to be the lead migrant. As a consequence, the everyday lives of expatriate wives are fundamentally distinct from those of their husbands, as I discuss in detail in Chapter 3. Although I did not specifically set out to do so, in the course of my research many of my conversations and interviews among this group of expatriates were conducted with women. This was due to the fact that most wives were not in paid employment, and therefore had more time available than their husbands to participate in my research. A considerable part of my research time was therefore spent interacting with expatriate wives rather than their husbands or children. This only held for the group of 'family expatriates', though, and among the younger generation, my informants consisted equally of men and women. My predominant interaction with women in this age group does not imply, however, that my insights only pertain to female expatriates, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

As far as age is concerned, I tried to balance my research between different age groups. That there are limits is due to the demographic profile of expatriates. Although I had contact with the children of my informants, and interviewed several others in the context of international schools, I do not discuss them in detail here. I also talked to some of the foreigners who were over 60 years old, who were often not posted, but had carved out existences for themselves in Indonesia, and mostly resided outside of the capital, for example in Yogyakarta. I suggest, though, that a key factor dividing adult Western expatriates is a generational difference, as they roughly fall into two groups, those that could be called 'family expatriates' and 'young professionals' respectively. Family expatriates consist of mainly corporate, mostly male expatriates and their accompanying wives and children, and are typically aged between 35 and 59 years old. They do not necessarily enjoy living abroad and regard their stay in Indonesia as a necessary stage in the husband's career path, send their children to the appropriate national expatriate schools and tend to socialise within their national expatriate communities.

In contrast, the generation of young professionals are between the ages of 25 and 40 and are mostly unattached, or in a non-cohabiting relationship. While some of them have been posted, many have actively sought employment abroad, and come to Indonesia of their own initiative. Some of them benefit from expatriate packages, but almost all of them receive globally competitive salaries. They see themselves as

professionals with an international outlook in terms of their career, place of residence, and social networks. They have mobile lives, and what they consider ‘cosmopolitan’ tastes in terms of lifestyle, housing and socialising. Among the young professionals, the gender situation is more balanced insofar as a considerable number of them are women, who moved to Jakarta as part of their own career rather than that of a spouse. For research purposes, this meant that they did not have any more time to participate in my research than their male colleagues, so I saw both women and men in their free time, during lunch breaks, evenings or weekends.

Returning to the issue of partial connections, it thus appears useful to take up Strathern’s suggestions and think through the connections between these different kinds of expatriates without conceptualising them as integrated in one single entity. I will therefore highlight their commonalities as well as the partial connections between them throughout the following chapters. I maintain, though, that the key arguments pertaining to their transnational lives apply to many, if not all, expatriate men and women, both family expatriates and young professionals, irrespective of their nationalities. At the same time, I highlight issues and experiences that are specific to particular groups: Chapter 3 therefore focuses on the situation of expatriate wives, while Chapter 7 explores in more detail the group of young professionals. The spatial and bodily practices that are at the centre of Chapters 4 and 5 relate to my informants as a whole, whereas performances of national identity as discussed in Chapter 6 are especially pertinent for family expatriates.

Nationality

As outlined above, the foci of this study are European and American expatriates rather than Asian ones. Among my informants were Americans, Canadians, British, Germans, Dutch, Belgians, French, Italians and other nationals. On an individual basis, I interacted with a broad range of people, while, in terms of groups, I concentrated my research on American, British, and German national organisations, as well as international ones, such as the Indonesian Heritage Society and the Forum for Executive Women. As much of the life of family expatriates was organised along national lines, my own nationality as a German mattered more than had I expected. At the beginning, I visited, for example, the American, British, and German women’s associations, but in the course of my research, it turned out that connections developed more easily with the German community than with others. Overall, it seemed most difficult to gain access to American communities, though this was different with individuals. The emphasis on national differences among my informants also meant that members of the German women’s group seemed unsure about my involvement with other national women’s groups, which I never concealed, but sometimes downplayed. In contrast, young professionals rather prided themselves on their international outlook and social networks.

As these expatriates reside in Indonesia, the question arises as to how Indonesians figure in this study. As will become evident, they remain, in one sense, marginal: although I conducted interviews with Indonesian-born men and women, especially with regard to their interaction with expatriates, I eventually decided not to include

them here. Instead, I chose to represent Indonesia and Indonesians in the form and to the extent that they feature in expatriates' lives. If they appear to be largely absent in the text, this reflects their absence from expatriates' lives. At the same time, this absence is more complicated, as one of the main arguments of this study concerns how expatriates' worlds are shaped by how they position themselves vis-à-vis their host society.

More particularly, Indonesian nationals, apart from domestic staff, do not play major roles for expatriates. The social life of the latter mainly takes place within the expatriate sector, and there tend to be few social contacts, let alone friendships, with Indonesians. This is partly due to expatriates' lack of language skills, as few are able to speak the Indonesian language, *Bahasa Indonesia*, beyond the limited vocabulary required to manage everyday household affairs. There are some exceptions, such as the interactions, which take place in English, that expatriates have with their Indonesian (often ethnic Chinese) business partners or colleagues, with whom they play golf or visit exclusive business clubs. They also interact with their office staff, and indeed with young Indonesian women, with whom some have relationships or affairs. There are occasional social functions attended by expatriates which include, or are hosted by, Indonesians, such as those related to the husband's work or the neighbourhood in which they reside. Many expatriates find the conventional Indonesian style of entertaining stilted and uncomfortable, and are often surprised that after formal speeches and a buffet, most guests leave to go home, so that these events are not conducive to making new contacts either.

While personal interactions are scarce, Indonesians are certainly the object of discussion among expatriates, though not as individuals, but as a collective, imagined Other. For example, at expatriate women's meetings, a considerable part of the conversations focuses on how members view Indonesians. In such discourses, Javanese typically appear as being polite, but 'false', lazy and slow learners; while the ethnic Chinese are considered greedy; Indonesian motorists reckless and selfish; and the general populace careless in the way they litter the streets of the capital. There are numerous recounts of interactions with, and complaints about their staff, shopkeepers, servicemen and taxi drivers, as well as more general remarks on the state of the government and Indonesia as a country.

In addition to these discursive appearances, I am interested in the way in which Indonesia and the presence of Indonesians indirectly and implicitly shape expatriates' lifestyles, their movement, bodily practices, and social lives, as I discuss in the following chapters. In this sense, the Indonesian environment plays a crucial role for expatriates, as they identify themselves in relation to it, even if this often takes the form of distancing and opposition. One could therefore argue that while Indonesians seem to be largely absent as individuals, they matter all the more as an Other, whose background presence nevertheless shapes expatriates' activities and lives profoundly. In the same way, Indonesia as a location is integral to the performance of an identity as an 'expatriate-in-Indonesia', which I discuss in Chapter 6. While this study reproduces the background role that individual Indonesians and their views have for expatriates, it places their relations with Indonesia at the centre of discussions, and aims to explore in what ways Indonesia fundamentally shapes their lives.

Location

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I spent about three months in Yogyakarta in central Java. During my stay in Yogyakarta, I visited Jakarta frequently to establish contacts with expatriates there. After an initial orientation period, I decided to concentrate on expatriate communities in Jakarta, as I found their lifestyles to be much more conspicuous than those of expatriates in Yogyakarta. My fieldwork was thus mainly conducted in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, which is located on the North-western tip of the island of Java. A site of human settlement since prehistoric times, there is evidence of a port town, Sunda Kelapa, in the 12th century, which was re-named Jayakarta in the 16th century, then Batavia under the Dutch colonial regime, eventually becoming Jakarta in 1943. Its population has grown from 27,086 residents in 1673 to 435,000 in 1930 (Abeyasekere 1987) to 16.5 million, including greater Jakarta, in 2006 (Brinkhoff, *The Principal Agglomerations of the World*, <http://www.Citypopulation.de>, 2006-01-28, accessed August 2006). The now sprawling city is the focus of Indonesia's economic and political activities, and the destination of many labour migrants from throughout Java and the wider Indonesian archipelago. It is characterised by great economic and social inequalities, which are embodied in the contrast between the modern high-rise architecture of the Central Business District, and the poor, sometimes slum-like housing in other areas of Jakarta. It is often described as a city of contrasts, and it is into this setting that expatriates are inserted.

One of the reasons why Jakarta is an especially suitable place for the study of expatriates is due to the so-called 'Asian boom' of the 1990s: a period of rapid economic growth. As noted above, in the year 1995 Jakarta was home to almost 20,000 temporary residents from Europe and the United States (Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia 1995:45–46). Many of these were corporate expatriates and their families, as a number of European and American corporations established offices there in this period. At the same time, Jakarta is also the basis for the country headquarters of numerous international aid and development organisations, adding substantial numbers of development personnel to the Western population. The relatively high number of Americans and Europeans in Jakarta dropped significantly after the political upheavals of May 1998, the subsequent demise of the government of President Suharto, and the devastation of the Indonesian economy after the monetary crisis that affected most Southeast Asian countries. At this time, many foreign companies closed their offices in Indonesia and recalled their employees, although many of them later returned. One consequence of the sheer numbers of Americans, British, or Germans in Jakarta is that it enables them to congregate in their respective national communities, thus contributing to the rich texture of expatriate social lives that I will discuss.

Jakarta is also a fitting field site because its features as a city are integral to expatriates' lifestyles. Most importantly, whether Western expatriates are posted to European or American metropolises outside their own country, or to developing countries, fundamentally shapes their way of living. The expatriate lives that I will describe thus arise in interrelation with the particular circumstances of a crowded, polluted, third-world city. The fact that Indonesian society is highly stratified, and that

apart from the existence of a wealthy elite and a growing middle class, the majority of Jakarta's population lives on very low incomes (the gross national income per capita in Indonesia is \$US1,140, according to the World Bank (http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/idn_aag.pdf, accessed August 2006), means that Western expatriates are able to afford a comparatively luxurious lifestyle, especially given their high salaries and benefit packages. Although Jakarta used to be classified as a 'hardship post' for the purposes of expatriate remuneration, it has in recent years acquired many of the amenities which enable a 'luxurious life in the tropics' as some expatriates may have envisaged it. Their comfortable lives are also made possible by, and sustain, an infrastructure which includes Western-style supermarkets, malls, restaurants and hotels, which is not necessarily available to expatriates who live in the provinces.

Furthermore, the particular urban environment of Jakarta, with its intense traffic, heat, noise, air pollution, and lack of pedestrian areas, convenient public transport and green spaces engenders a specific set of spatial practices. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, the urban context on the one hand forces expatriates into close spatial proximity with Indonesians, but at the same time offers possibilities, through secluded housing, provision of air-conditioned spaces and use of chauffeur-driven cars to escape this environment, and minimize contact with Indonesian people. In this sense, the setting of Jakarta is not incidental, but intrinsically related to the way expatriates live there.

Fieldwork

My most important research methods were participant observation, interviews and informal conversations, complemented by a questionnaire, material gathered from newspapers, expatriate publications, and the Internet. The possibilities for participant observation were shaped by the fact that doing research in Jakarta constituted a form of 'urban anthropology'. Although the houses of many of my informants were clustered in two or three areas of the city, and most of their organised social activities took place either in central or south Jakarta, the size of Jakarta still meant that the relevant places and venues were rather spread out, and getting to them required considerable travel through the city. Although I occasionally came across acquaintances by chance in shopping malls or restaurants, I usually had to make appointments or attend events in order to spend time with them. Much of my participant observation was therefore linked to community activities such as coffee mornings, committee meetings, charity activities, newcomers' gatherings, and all kinds of informal social activities, such as barbecues, shopping and sightseeing trips, evenings out and weekends away. The urban setting and the traffic situation in Jakarta, however, also opened up possibilities. Since people often spent a lot of time travelling between home, work, social venues or shopping areas, I was able to accompany them en route, either in their private cars or while sharing a taxi. When travelling to suburban areas, this could mean staying together for an hour or more each way. Even within Jakarta, it could take 45 minutes and more to get from central to south Jakarta, especially during rush hour. This provided opportunities for

conversation, especially when several people were sharing a ride, the driving being taken care of by a driver.

Both my initial form of making contact with my informants, as well as subsequent meetings, often took place in the context of expatriate community organisations, such as national women's associations or the Indonesian Heritage Society. Alongside these rather structured ways of meeting people, I also made contact with younger professionals working in the development sector at a language school in Yogyakarta, where they attended language classes before beginning their work in Jakarta. Once they had settled there, I came to know some of their friends and colleagues. Young expatriates were to a much lesser extent part of the communities and organisations than the older generation was, and socialised instead on individual bases and through informal networks. In addition to participant observation and informal discussions, I conducted 46 in-depth semi-structured interviews with members of the older and younger generation, which usually took place in people's homes, in cafés and restaurants, or at their workplace. I use these interviews in addition to my fieldnotes, and they are the main source of my informants' views quoted throughout the text.

My own accommodation, compared with those of my informants, was rather modest, being a house in an Indonesian neighbourhood in central Jakarta, where I rented a room alongside several young Indonesian women, who worked in offices in the nearby business district. The fact that I was not staying in the household of one of my informants limited my opportunities for participant observation in some ways, but extended them in others. It allowed me, for example, to interact with expatriates of different nationalities and ages, as well as with Indonesians. As expatriate communities were quite small, and some national organisations jealously guarded their social territories, I was able to get involved with different groups at the same time, without necessarily seeming disloyal to any.

More importantly, though, my spatial separation from my informants meant that they were not aware of my housing situation, which helped to downplay the obvious differences in our available incomes. This disparity was one of the major factors that set me apart from them, and in general I found it useful not to draw attention to it. Some of the family expatriates assumed that I was provided housing and a domestic help by a university grant, others preferred not to ask about these things, and some would occasionally pay the entrance fee to a particular community event for me, or pay for a dinner or taxi ride. One reason why I did not emphasise my circumstances was that there was a discourse, especially among expatriate wives, of things that were considered 'not possible': for example, living in a house without air conditioning, taking public transport or eating at roadside stalls, which I was familiar with, but which may have alienated us further had I chosen to emphasise them. In this sense, the fact that I was 'studying up' partly shaped the relations I had with my informants.

In addition to material gathered through participant observation, I draw on debates held on an Internet discussion forum on a website entitled 'Living in Indonesia', which was dedicated to expatriates, which I observed during and after my fieldwork. I became more directly involved with this website through voluntary work in the form of updating its community organisations listing. This provided me with valuable information regarding the activities of the forum, its contributors, and

expatriate community associations. While discursive data in general, and Internet forums in particular warrant careful interpretation (see Miller and Slater 2000, Hine 2000), I suggest that they provide key complementary data to material gained in other ways, especially in relation to discussions on ‘racism’. In relation to data gathered from the Internet, it has been argued that such forums not merely represent, but encourage the production of radical discourses, and therefore offer somewhat distorted perspectives (Zickmund 1997).

I do not assume that the opinions expressed in the ‘Living in Indonesia’ forum¹ are necessarily representative of the expatriate community. I do, however, regard some of these postings as intensified and magnified expressions of sentiments and beliefs that I encountered during fieldwork, but which people were reluctant to express as candidly in my presence. This concerns especially expatriates’ opinions of Indonesians, and racist or sexist attitudes in general. As the medium of the Internet influences the discourses conducted through it, information gained from it must be critically reflected on and related to its context. Close interaction with a small group of expatriates, including some readers and contributors to the forum, made it possible to probe and trace connections between views aired on the website and everyday life conversations with expatriates. I maintain that embedding these postings into non-virtual ethnographic contexts, while recognising their limitations, enables me to exploit their epistemological potential.

Summing up, I have described some of the uses of the term ‘expatriates’, including the notion of corporate expatriates, and have discussed several ways of how foreigners in Jakarta use the term themselves. Importantly, I do not suggest that they form a homogenous group, and draw instead on the notion of partial connections to capture the meaningful links between them, and the attitudes and practices that they share. My informants include European and American expatriates who have come to Jakarta for work-related reasons, who are employed in both the private and public sector, and who usually stay for periods between six months and three years. They include the older generation of ‘family expatriates’, as well as young mobile professionals. I have argued that Indonesians feature in this text in the way they do in expatriates’ lives, that is, less as individuals, but as a collective Other: not explicitly, but through discourses, and in the way they shape expatriates’ everyday practices. My fieldsite was the city of Jakarta, whose infrastructure enables Western-oriented lifestyles, while the city also exacerbates expatriates’ desire to distance themselves from a place they regard as poor, dirty and chaotic. Having broadly outlined who I refer to as ‘expatriates’ here, in the following chapter I attempt to situate them in the frameworks of transnational migration.

1 The ‘Living in Indonesia’ forum is a website specifically designed for expatriates living in Indonesia, www.expat.or.id [accessed August 2006]. Apart from practical information and advice, the website features an open discussion forum on ‘Living in Indonesia’, where discussants exchange views on a range of topics, including concerns of everyday life in Indonesia. I quote postings made by expatriates to this forum throughout this thesis. In the following, quotes taken from the forum will be identified by their sender’s name and/or Email address, and the date on which they were posted on the forum.

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Chapter 2

Transnational Lives and Their Boundaries

‘Plenty of expats live in the *‘expat bubble’*. They spend outrageous prices buying pre-packaged foods like they eat in their home countries. Some of them do not even learn to speak the language. *‘Expatriate Bubble’* expats usually live in apartment buildings... so noise is not a big problem. If you live in the *‘expat bubble’* you may be pretty safe on a day to day basis’ (posted on the Living in Indonesia forum by Linkh@bigfoot.com, 23/01/01).

This quote evokes the peculiar spaces that privileged migrants create and inhabit during their time abroad, which are expressed in metaphors like the ‘bubble’. In this chapter, I want to consider how the transnational lives of expatriates, and the significance that boundaries have for them, relate to debates on migration and transnationalism and situate them in historical and gendered contexts. While the term ‘expatriates’ possesses instant recognisability in popular discourses, it does not have much appeal as an analytic term. Although research on expatriates, and of privileged migrants in general, is arguably an emerging field, book-length studies or ethnographies are still rare. One notable exception is Erik Cohen’s early literature-based study, ‘Expatriate Communities’ (Cohen 1977), in which he draws together and analyses published material on various expatriate communities worldwide.

The fact that this study has neither been followed up, nor has been much quoted since, speaks for itself. The current literature on what could loosely be called ‘privileged migration’ consists of studies of retirement and leisure migration within Europe, especially of Britons to the Mediterranean (O’Reilly 2000, King 2000, Oliver 2006). Leisure migration to non-European countries, with some exceptions (Knowles 2005), has been much less explored. Research on the international labour migration of highly skilled Europeans is, in contrast, much more established. Apart from the extensive literature within Human Resource Management on corporate expatriates, much of the work on European skilled migrants is situated within the discipline of human geography (Findlay, Li, Jowett and Skeldon 1996, Beaverstock 2001, 2002, 2005, Willis, Yeoh and Fakhri 2002) and often concerns ‘global cities’ (Sassen 1991) such as Singapore, Hong Kong or New York. More recently, a number of studies have been conducted on Europeans moving within Europe, in particular by Favell (2003, 2004), Kennedy (2004), Moore (2005), Scott (2004) and Wagner (1998). Most pertinently, there are hardly any ethnographies of highly skilled Europeans and Americans living and working in non-European countries; the few exceptions include Amit-Talai (1998), Fechter (2005), Fechter and Coles (2007), Hindman (2002, 2007) and Walsh (2006a,b, 2007).

One reason why this group has received little academic attention, especially in anthropology, may be that privileged migrants represent a case of ‘studying up’ (Nader 1972, Gusterson 1997). Laura Nader, in her article ‘Up the anthropologist: perspectives gained from studying up’, asks:

whether the entirety of fieldwork does not depend upon a certain power relationship in favour of the anthropologist, and whether indeed such dominant-subordinate relationships may not be affecting the kinds of theories we are weaving. What if, in reinventing anthropology, anthropologists were to study the colonisers rather than the colonised, the culture of power rather than the culture of the powerless, the culture of affluence than the culture of poverty? (Nader 1972:289).

While some of the issues Nader raised were addressed by Clifford and Marcus (1986) with regard to the power of representation in ethnographic writing, by and large there has been no fundamental change in anthropologists’ fondness for ‘studying down’. Nader argues that, in a complementary fashion, an understanding of the ‘ghetto’ is only fully achieved through also scrutinising the wealthy strata of society. Her suggestion to study the ‘colonisers rather than the colonised’ (1972:289) seems particularly apposite, insofar expatriates are enmeshed with the nationals of developing countries in a globalising market economy, where the affluent existences of the former are predicated on the cheap labour of the latter. Expatriates could thus be regarded as neo-colonisers. Although it might therefore seem particularly appropriate here to study the ‘colonisers’, the general reluctance of anthropologists to study up may have been a deterrent.

Researching ‘expatriates’ in developing countries may also be uncomfortable for Western anthropologists because they could, for the duration of their fieldwork, be considered as expatriates themselves. My own positionality was interesting in this respect, as I was ready to identify myself as an expatriate, especially as part of my efforts to establish rapport with my informants. Maybe paradoxically, my sense was that they often did not consider me as a ‘proper’ expatriate for a variety of reasons. While my whiteness made me undeniably part of the group of Westerners in Jakarta, my lack of income as a research student and my academic motivation set me apart from my informants. As many expatriates had moved to Jakarta rather reluctantly, they found it puzzling that I had come of my own initiative. This absence of outside pressure therefore seemed to make me less of an expatriate in their eyes.

In comparison, anthropologists who study tourism have been less suspected of possible affinities as anthropologists seem to successfully reject the notion that they might resemble tourists. The relationship between anthropologists and expatriates is more fraught, however, insofar as most researchers who have worked in developing countries are familiar with the lifeworld of the local Western expatriates, know some personally and have occasionally benefited from their hospitality after prolonged times in the field. At the same time, most anthropologists emphatically dissociate themselves from them, as they appear to lack everything that anthropologists stand for, such as speaking the local language, being knowledgeable of local cultures and having close contact with the local people. Malinowski for example disparagingly describes the Whites he encountered at his fieldsite on the Trobriand Islands as ‘men

who had lived for years in the place with constant opportunities of observing the natives and communicating with them, and who yet hardly knew one thing about them really well', though he does mention some friends of him as notable exceptions (Malinowski 1922:5–6).

Anthropologists' dissociation from expatriates and even contempt towards them extends to considering them as a legitimate ethnographic subject in the context of a particular country or region. I rarely gained the impression that studying expatriates who were living, albeit temporarily, in Southeast Asia, was viewed as a valid part of Southeast Asian Studies. This may be justified insofar expatriates' lives often take place apart from the mainstream of Southeast Asian societies. It is a reality, however, that expatriates live in those societies and thus undeniably constitute a part of the social landscape, even if their presence is seen to be entirely unrelated to the 'real' local cultures where the interests of regional anthropologists lie. Expatriates are, for the purposes of regional ethnography, not regarded as part of the society on which the anthropologist works, and one rarely finds local expatriates mentioned in their publications, although they must have often been part of the local scene and perhaps among the acquaintances of the fieldworker.

Finally, there is a striking contrast between the abundant literature on colonial expatriates, as mentioned in the previous chapter, and its scarcity with regard to contemporary corporate expatriates, although the former may in some ways be considered as predecessors of the latter. One possible reason could be that the past creates a comfortable distance between contemporary academics and colonial practices. Why would it be so popular to study past colonial lifestyles, while the related habits of contemporary expatriates appear merely as an instance of bad taste, an anachronistic embarrassment, rather than an area worthy of study? This question is even more pertinent as the descriptions and analyses of colonial expatriates often bear a close resemblance and relevance to those of corporate ones, an issue to which I shall return below.

All of these suggested reasons, alone or in combination with each other, may be held responsible for the comparative lack of academic interest in expatriates. I suggest, though, that their in-depth study not only fills an ethnographic gap, but also makes significant theoretical contributions. In the first instance, the relative scarcity of research on privileged migrants indicates that the conceptualisation of migration studies has been rather skewed towards non-privileged migrants. The aim of this study is therefore to produce a complementary perspective, and to make the case for developing a more comprehensive understanding of migration. It provides a critique of the concept of 'global flows' espoused by many theories of transnationalism, and specifically aims to dismantle the assumption that privileged migrants lead fluid and unbounded lives. I suggest that the opposite is the case, and argue that their lives are fundamentally characterised by the existence of boundaries. Studying expatriates thus explores a form of 'transnationalism from above' which has not yet received adequate attention. As the fine-grained ethnographic material on globally-mobile professionals provides a much-needed counterpoint to the generalising and often speculative literature on globalisation and its proponents, it may also challenge some of its key assumptions, especially with regard to the fluidity of 'global lives'.

Transnational Migration and the Discourse of Flows

As noted above, a significant tendency in the literature on transnationalism and globalisation is to celebrate the emergence of ‘global flows’. I first present some examples, followed by more critical arguments, and position my own research in relation to the latter. The celebratory discourse praises movement as inherently liberating, especially in relation to ‘culture’. James Clifford sets the tone as he declares that ‘there are no traditionally fixed, spatially and temporally bounded cultural worlds from which to depart and to which to return: all is situated and all is moving’ (1986:22). Ulf Hannerz describes the new state of the world as being composed of ‘cultural flows in space’ (1992:68). Rapport and Dawson, in their much-cited volume *Migrants of Identity*, discuss ‘the universal way in which human beings conceive of their lives in terms of a moving-between – between identities, relations, people, things, groups, societies, cultures, environments, as a dialectic between movement and fixity’ (1998:33). The present, it seems, is fluid, and universal tropes of movement seem to indicate the liquidising of culture.

Such enthusiasm is fuelled by the insight that globalisation consists of the movement of capital, goods and people as well as of ideologies and cultures, which challenges traditional concepts of culture as bounded (Appadurai 1996). While the fluidity of culture is not the main issue here, the ‘global movement’ which Rapport and Dawson refer to includes that of people, which has traditionally been dealt with in migration studies. In this context, the notion of transnational migration emerged, suggesting that in contrast to previous times, the movement of people is now characterised by the maintenance of multiple relations and affiliations across two or more countries. Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, the early theorists of transnationalism, argue that ‘the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations ... link together their societies of origin and settlement’ (1994:7). This definition allows them, they argue, ‘to analyse the “lived” and fluid experiences of individuals who act in ways that challenge our previous conflation of geographic space and social identity’ (1994:8).

These studies thus espouse a view of transnational processes which is not couched in terms of hardship and loss, but of possible emancipation and liberation. They are suffused with a celebratory sense of movement, of flows and boundaries being transcended. Transnational practices are seen as “‘counter-narratives of the nation” which continually evoke and erase their totalizing boundaries’ (Bhabha 1990:300). Such flows also play a key role, for example, in Appadurai’s theory of global scapes, which constitute the conditions ‘under which current global flows occur: they occur in and through the growing disjunctures between ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes’ (Appadurai 1990:301).

This emphasis on the apparently dominant presence of ‘flows’ has, however, come under critical scrutiny. One such critique has been formulated by Anna Tsing (2000), who attributes the enthusiasm for ‘flows’, especially in anthropology, to the history of the discipline:

the “old” anthropology ... describes cultures so grounded that they could not move out of place. This anthropology imprisons its objects in a cell; interconnection and movement

in the form of “global flows” are thus experienced as a form of liberation ... these flows fit most neatly inside the discipline when, in deference to past teachers and conventions, the boundedness of past cultures goes unchallenged; global flows can then take the discipline, and the world, into a freer future. This “freeing up” variety of globalism is both exhilarating and problematic (2000:339–340).

Anthropology’s current espousal of fluidity can thus partly be explained by a tradition of conceptualising cultures as bounded. A model emphasising flows between centre and periphery, Tsing warns, might result in ‘a globalist anthropology of movement [that] would reign at the centre’ (2000:346).

Furthermore, it has been suggested that such a preoccupation with flows easily disregards the fact that many people’s mobility is rather restricted. As van der Veer reminds us, ‘free movement of persons and commodities, a dogma of economic liberalism, was in many places restricted to the enlightened, Western coloniser’ (1997: 91). Similarly, Kearney notes a lack of critical awareness in Appadurai’s work: ‘somewhat theoretically detached from political economy, is Appadurai’s notion of the global spaces in which current cultural flows occur’ (Kearney 1995:553). A sustained critique of the discourse of flows based on its apparent obliviousness to persisting inequalities has been formulated by Smith and Guarnizo, who note that ‘authors celebrating the liberating character of transnational practices often represent transnationals as engaged in a dialectic of opposition and resistance to the hegemonic logic of multinational capital’ (Smith and Guarnizo 1998:5). Instead, they argue that ‘the dialectic of domination and resistance needs a more nuanced analysis than the celebratory vision allows’, and they aim to ‘bring back into focus the enduring asymmetries of domination, inequality, racism, sexism, class conflict, and uneven development in which transnational practices are embedded and which they sometimes even perpetuate’ (Smith and Guarnizo 1998:6).

Significantly, both the optimistic vision of transnationalism as liberating and subversive and its critiques have been formulated with the disenfranchised, non-privileged tier of movement in mind. This directly relates to the fact that much of migration research consistently privileges certain kinds of migration over others, focusing on the movement of low- or unskilled labour migrants from developing to Western industrialised countries. In an ever-increasing literature on migration, expatriates as skilled Western migrants do not feature very prominently, even though they could justifiably be regarded as exemplary cases of transnational migration, if we understand transnationalism as ‘multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation states’ (Vertovec 1999:447).

The fact that ‘skilled migration’ is a marked term further demonstrates that migration is commonly thought of as non-skilled. These tendencies notwithstanding, there is a growing segment of the field devoted to skilled migration (see Iredale 2001 for a categorisation). Within this area, however, a similar bias is evident insofar as priority is given to skilled migrants from developing countries, initially conceptualised as a ‘brain drain’, whereas European, American and Australian globally mobile professionals tend to be systematically neglected. This holds even though they broadly match the criteria set out by Castles for example: namely being ‘highly skilled workers, such as managers, financial experts and technicians [who]

migrate on temporary employment contracts' (Castles 2000:102). Apart from their race, nationality, and direction of movement, what distinguishes Western expatriates from the nationals of developing countries whom Castles presumably has in mind is their privileged position. Unlike their non-Western counterparts, the position of expatriates in their host society is not precarious, but rather comfortable; issues of citizenship and legal restrictions do not usually trouble them, and they do not expect to settle in any host country, but either return home or move on to another posting. Rather than rendering them as being of marginal academic interest, however, their rather untypical profile should direct attention towards the dimension of privileged migrants, whose comparatively small numbers contrast with their disproportionately significant role in global capitalism.

It is perhaps in recognition of this role that the theoretical approaches which do include expatriates are less likely to be situated in migration studies, but rather in the globalisation literature concerned with 'global cities', the 'information society' and other, often fuzzy, concepts. As Favell, Feldblum and Smith describe it, 'to put it in the parlance of global city theorists ... the virtual 'space of flows' on which new global networks of capital and trade are based, must also be peopled by mobile persons who, it is assumed, are embodied by the world's growing cadre of international highly skilled migrants' (Favell, Feldblum and Smith 2006:2). These are described as a 'transnational group of globetrotting, highly skilled, highly paid professional, managerial and entrepreneurial elites who circulate in a series of career or business moves from one city to another in response to global competition for skilled labour' (Willis, Yeoh and Fakhri 2003:209). Castells refers to them as a 'technocratic-financial-managerial elite' (2000:445), who inhabit a 'secluded space across the world along the connecting lines of the space of flows' which characterises the network society (2000:447). Sklair describes them as a 'transnational capitalist class', of which the executives and local affiliates of transnational corporations constitute one fraction (Sklair 2001:17). Friedman, in his theory on global class formation, locates them at the top of a global hierarchy, as members of a 'transnational elite' (Friedman 1999).

Furthermore, this group is often thought of as cosmopolitan. Hannerz, for example, describes those who frequently move globally and who 'want to immerse themselves in other cultures' as cosmopolitan *connoisseurs* (Hannerz 1996:105); they are affluent and open-minded, feel free to engage or disengage in local scenarios and add or delete parts of 'other cultures' from their personal repertoire at their choice. He calls them 'the new class', whose main characteristic is their 'decontextualised cultural capital' (1996:108). In a related fashion, Micklethwait and Woolridge identify these people as 'cosmocrats', who are 'defined by their attitudes and lifestyles rather than just their bank accounts' (2001:230). Both of these claims regarding the elite status and cosmopolitan attitudes of skilled migrants, have been questioned. Weiss, for example, argues that they are more accurately described as part of an emerging transnational middle class rather than a transnational elite (Weiss 2005, 2006).

Significantly, this group of mobile professionals, which is regarded as embodying globalisation and unboundedness, remains notoriously shapeless in the available literature since its members' lives are rarely described in empirical detail. As Favell, Feldblum and Smith state, 'there has been relatively little 'human level' research

on the diverse, yet prototypical avatars of globalisation in the skilled, educated or professional categories. More broadly, there remains a call for more micro-level, phenomenological studies of the everyday reality of ‘global mobility’, despite the avalanche of writings on globalisation in all its forms’ (Favell, Feldblum and Smith 2006:3). Similarly, Conradson and Latham point out that the popular narratives on globalisation provide little sense of the ‘everyday texture of the globalising places we inhabit’ (Conradson and Latham 2005:228). Smith and Guarnizo’s appeal that ‘the image of transnational migrants as deterritorialized, free-floating people ... deserves closer scrutiny’ (1998:11) applies as much to transnational elites as to those on grassroots level.

Such scrutiny is applied in Favell’s exceptional work on European privileged migrants, as he critically comments that these ‘internationally mobile “elites” are often pointed to as the embodiment of the new transnational world’ (2003:399). Specifically, he disagrees with the assumption that

free movement and migration for these elites is easy and inconsequential, as they move through the airport lounges and the hotel lobbies of international business life; that they are ‘invisible’ to their host nations, and do not challenge or upset the cultural order of things in the way that ethnic migrants are supposed to; that life for them in a foreign country is merely an extension of the life they would have back home (2003:402).

Based on his work on mobile professionals within the European Union, Favell challenges the notion that such professionals lead ‘borderless lives’, and argues that they do not represent ‘culturally interchangeable “citizens of the world”’ who are ‘unproblematically converging on a form of life which incarnates a privileged “global society”’ (Favell 2003:402). Instead, he finds that their lives are significantly affected by boundaries, for instance those determining access to housing markets or education, health and pension systems. He argues that it is the ‘sedimented structures of middle class social power that provide the most difficult obstacles to foreigners’ transnational lifestyles’ (Favell 2003:423). In a similar fashion, Willis, Yeoh and Fakhri observe that ‘while the ease of mobility for these groups may be greater than for their lower-skilled counterparts, they do not live in a “frictionless world”’ (2002:505). They argue that relocations, for example, can involve dislocations and discomfort, and ways of living and working have to be tailored to local environments.

The fact that borders and boundaries continue to matter in a globalising world has been discussed extensively in relation to non-privileged groups (Smith and Guarnizo 1998, Kearney 2004, Cunningham 2004). Their continuing relevance for these groups has been well-documented, for example in terms of immigration restrictions, border controls, and the plight of refugees and illegal migrants. The question arises, however, as to why boundaries should matter for privileged migrants as well. A tentative rationale is provided by Meyer and Geschiere in their observation that, given the interrelatedness of flows and boundaries, ‘people’s awareness of being involved in open-ended global flows seems to trigger ... determined efforts to affirm old and construct new boundaries’ (1999:2). Significantly, their speculation emphasises the active role of individuals in producing such boundaries. This view is not shared by Favell, who considers European professionals as victims rather than

creators of such boundaries: arguing that boundaries are imposed on them by a host society or nation state, for instance. He points out that: ‘it is not necessarily the case that so-called elite migrants have it easy as foreigners, or do not encounter barriers to their meaningful engagement with the place’ (Favell 2003:423). He also stresses how these professionals are subjected to ‘coercive and assimilatory’ norms of behaviour (Favell 2004:6). Going one step further, I suggest that expatriates could also be regarded as victims of boundaries, albeit of those which they themselves construct, maintain, and negotiate. The boundaries in question here are primarily those of race, nationality and gender.

I therefore argue that in the context of expatriates, boundaries rather than flows become the relevant concept. A related, broader point has been made by Barth in his seminal text on ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969), as he proposes that boundaries themselves should be the site of investigation, rather than the ‘cultural stuff’ enclosed by them. I follow Barth in asking what kind of boundaries expatriates construct, and explore the spaces that are created through the drawing of such boundaries, without reifying the ‘cultural stuff’ that might be placed within. This is complemented by paying close attention to how these boundaries are contested and transgressed. I thus aim to examine the boundaries that matter for expatriates in order to illuminate the nature of their transnational lives.

Notions of Boundaries

Meyer and Geschiere, in their edited volume entitled *Globalisation and Identity*, have noted critically that ‘the notion [of flux] can be easily equated with the disappearance of boundaries’ (Meyer and Geschiere 1999:5). Whether this equation is correct, they argue, is doubtful. Instead, they point to the apparent persistence of boundaries in the midst of global flows, and argue that global flows and boundaries are interdependent insofar as ‘global flows actually appear to entice the construction of new boundaries as much as the reaffirmation of old ones’ (Meyer and Geschiere 1999:5). In particular, they identify a tension between ‘globalisation and identity, between ‘flow’ and ‘closure’” (1999:2). Globalisation and transnationalism thus not only incorporate both flows and closures, but these concepts are inherently contingent on each other. Following both Meyer and Geschiere (1999) and Favell (2003), I argue that the case of corporate expatriates further undermines assumptions that they, as members of a ‘transnational elite’, exist in global spaces which are solely configured by flows.

One of the most influential treatments of boundaries is arguably Barth’s *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Barth 1969). Hannerz even believes that ‘the word ‘boundaries’ even came into more frequent use in anthropology’ after Barth’s publication (Hannerz 2000:7). Barth focuses on social boundaries between ethnic groups, emphasising that: ‘the boundaries to which we must give our attention are of course social boundaries, though they may have territorial counterparts’ (Barth 1969:15). He discusses the various ways in which groups erect and maintain these social boundaries, which are, however, also linked to culture. He argues that: ‘ethnic groups only persist as significant units if they imply marked difference in

behaviour, i.e. persisting cultural differences' (1969:16), which become relevant when encountering people of other cultures, for this is the time when 'boundary maintenance' has to be performed. Anthony Cohen (1999) points to the relational aspects of Barth's concept: 'Barth took two prior theoretical postulates – the bounded ethnic group, and the tactical management of ethnic identity – and brought them together, showing that both are dynamic and subject to modulation according to circumstances' (Cohen 1999:3).

Cohen, like Barth, is concerned with boundaries between communities. Cohen (1986) discusses the symbolic constitution of boundaries, in his case in a Shetland island community. Although he remains vague about their symbolic nature, he distinguishes between a 'public' and a 'private' mode in the presentation of difference. On the one hand, 'the community boundary incorporates and encloses difference and ... is thereby strengthened' (Cohen 1999:1). On the other hand, he admits that the 'symbolisation of the boundary from within is much more complex': 'the boundary as the community's public face is symbolically simple; but, as the object of internal discourse, it is symbolically complex' (Cohen 1986:13). Such an internal discourse is especially evident within expatriate communities, as I will discuss in Chapter 6.

More recently, Hannerz, in a paper on '*Flows, Boundaries and Hybrids: Keywords in Transnational Anthropology*' (2000), provides an example of the role boundaries are assigned if the world is seen as a 'global flow chart'. Hannerz invokes a notion of boundaries almost so that it can be abandoned; cultural boundaries are rather seen as 'channelling participation in social relationships' (Hannerz 2000:7). These days, he finds, boundaries are an example of 'now you see it, now you do not', and appear merely as 'a zigzag or a dotted line' (Hannerz 2000:8). At this point he has to abandon the metaphor; in his concept of global flows, boundaries become fluid and must finally dissolve. In contrast, I argue that in the context of expatriates' lives, such notions seem rather inaccurate, and exemplify the discourse of global flows that is ill-informed about the everyday realities of privileged migrants.

It is against these backgrounds that I position my use of the term 'boundaries'. Following Barth (1969), it becomes clear why the notion becomes relevant for the case of expatriates, as they encounter people with different cultures during their time abroad. In this situation, the questions arise which I am mainly concerned with here: how do people and cultures create, represent, negotiate and contest boundaries? as formulated by Pellow in the conclusion of her edited collection, '*Setting boundaries*' (Pellow 1996). The cases gathered in the book discuss the social conception and production of boundedness. Pellow describes boundaries as 'physical, social, conceptual, symbolic, permeable, negotiable, created, maintained, dismantled, unifying, separating, divisive, inclusive' (Pellow 1996:1). In what follows, I discuss some of these characteristics.

Boundaries are often thought of as permeable and negotiable, and as sites of mediation. As Cohen puts it, boundaries 'do not necessarily entail the distancing of a group from its neighbour or interlocutor but, rather, may connect them and may thereby provide opportunities for social engagement 'across' the boundary' (Cohen 1999:7). De Certeau expresses a similar idea: 'this is a paradox of the frontier: created by contacts, the points of differentiation between two bodies are also their common points. Conjunction and disjunction are inseparable in them' (De Certeau

1984:127). I suggest that expatriates recognise the permeability of boundaries, but this is often a cause for concern for them, rather than for celebration. Since they expend considerable energy on maintaining boundaries, leakages are unwelcome. Their attitudes towards boundaries are ambivalent, though, as they also seek to transcend them, even if in a rather controlled manner, as I discuss in relation to space, the body, and social groups.

This aspect relates to the creation, maintenance, and transgression of boundaries. Boundaries are not natural or essential, but are products of social practices; not given and static, but constructed and contested. I suggest that expatriates are engaged in complex processes of constructing different kinds of boundaries, and a major part of their lives revolves around their negotiation and reinforcement. Boundaries thus become a key metaphor which structures much of expatriates' transnational existences. Their energetic involvement in the creation of boundaries contrasts with Favell's case of European movers discussed above (Favell 2003, 2004), who appear to be the object of discriminatory and exclusionary practices in their host societies. For instance, Favell notes that they are persistently disadvantaged in terms of finding affordable accommodation in European metropolises, maintaining their pension rights, and the provision of continuity in their children's education. While this might occasionally be the case for the expatriates described here, the overwhelming impression gained from their lives is that of a voluntary separation from the host society.

It is perhaps necessary to qualify what kinds of boundaries I refer to here. Barth (1969), Anthony Cohen (1999) and Hannerz (2000) discuss mainly 'cultural' boundaries. In the case of expatriates, I consider a range of boundaries, relating to race and ethnicity as well as gender, nationality, age and class, since they all become relevant in individuals' negotiations between the self and the outside world, thus translating the notion of cultural boundaries into a more flexible and nuanced analysis. This also recognises the internal divisions of communities, and the fact that boundaries within a community can be more important than those with the outside. Furthermore, I do not assume that boundaries impact on people's lives in isolation, but intersect and interact with other boundaries. The field generated by these multiple intersections, contestations and contradictions provides a key context for expatriates lives.

A further difference between Cohen's (1999) notion of boundaries and the one I employ here concerns collective and individual identities. Cohen is mainly interested in the boundaries between communities, in particular 'the qualitative character of social and cultural boundaries, and ... how they are implicated in the formation, articulation, management and valorization of collective identities' (Cohen 1999:2). For the expatriate case, boundaries between communities as well as individuals become relevant. They include those between expatriates and Indonesians as well as between, and within, national expatriate communities. They become apparent with regard to individuals as they negotiate relations for example with their Indonesian environment, with people of the other sex, or other members of their expatriate community, and become especially relevant with respect to the body. One example is food practices, which are individual decisions on managing bodily boundaries, although they are also shaped by collective attitudes. Similarly, bodily experiences of

space, and the management of spatial boundaries, are also relevant on an individual level.

As a further dimension, Cohen speaks of ‘symbolic boundaries’, but does not define them in greater detail. The physical on the one side, and the social and symbolic on the other, have long been viewed as related, but separate dimensions. The relation between the physical and the conceptual is akin to that between the linguistic *signifier* and the *signified*. Cohen (1985, 1986) thinks of boundaries ‘symbolising’ differences between communities in this way. It is useful to recall why this conceptual dichotomy was introduced in the first place. In her book *Purity and Danger* (1966), Mary Douglas argued that the material and the symbolic have to be separated in order to de-naturalise these boundaries and make visible their symbolically constructed nature. More recently, though, this separation has been criticised. A focus on the arbitrariness of the symbolic has often resulted in a problematic reduction of the material as given, essential, and unaffected by social constructions. A next stage would thus be to ‘denaturalise’ the physical, in the sense of liberating it from the realm of the purely natural. These considerations underlie the focus on the embodied practices of expatriates that I adopt here.

It is also important to note, as pointed out by Meyer and Geschiere, that flows and boundaries are not oppositional, but complementary. They are conceptually dependent on each other, since the existence of boundaries is predicated on the presence of flows, and vice versa. It is important to keep in mind that contestations of boundaries are concerned with determining what lies on either side of the boundary, and that boundaries are inevitably defined by what they include or exclude. This intertwining of flows and boundaries becomes especially apparent in relation to identity. Notions of identities are always based on a notion of difference, the Other, or what lies beyond the boundaries. Hall has described this as the ‘necessity of the Other to the self’ (Hall 1991:48), the importance of difference for the definition of identity. This becomes especially relevant for expatriates’ identifications vis-à-vis expatriates of other nationalities and Indonesians.

Historical Perspectives: Colonial and Contemporary Expatriates

I have suggested above that the literature on expatriates, especially with respect to their everyday experiences and practices, is curiously scarce. This contrasts with the abundant work on colonial expatriates with its detailed descriptions of their day-to-day lives. It is striking, however, just how accurately these historical accounts seem to capture certain aspects of the lives of contemporary expatriates. As Erik Cohen points out, ‘in many respects there is considerable sociological similarity and sometimes even historical continuity between European colonial society and the expatriate communities in contemporary neo-colonial countries’ (Cohen 1977:8).

Colonial and expatriate practices thus resemble each other in a range of arenas, notably gender relations, the use of space and the nature of housing (Mrázek 2002, Glover 2004), the importance of the body for the reproduction of European selves (Stoler 1995), as well as social relations within the expatriate community and between expatriates and Indonesians (Stoler 2002, Knight 2001). What unites them,

I suggest, is the habit of boundary-making in relation to all these areas, the creation of a 'bubble' of Europeanness in the colony or host society. Studies of colonial contexts, such as Stoler's work on European colonials in Sumatra, provide ample evidence of such practices (Stoler 2002:22–40).

Although some of the discourses and practices of colonial expatriates appear identical to those of contemporary ones, it is not self-evident what these similarities entail. In the first instance, highlighting shared stereotypes such as those of expatriate women, or common practices such as recreating European lifestyles, risks downplaying the internal diversity that characterise the groups of colonial and corporate expatriates, as well as the differences between them. The parallels that I have pointed out above are therefore specific to certain communities, times and locales. As Erik Cohen notes, 'the lifestyle of the expatriates often resembles – consciously or unconsciously – that of the colonial officials. However, there are also some important differences between the social composition and the attitudes of white colonial society and those of the newer post-colonial expatriate communities' (Cohen 1977:8). Highlighting their similarities thus runs the risk of painting an unduly homogenous and static picture of both colonial and expatriate lives.

The danger of retrospectively homogenising colonial experiences and discourses is inherent in Leggett's persuasive analysis of corporate expatriates' understanding of the violent political upheaval surrounding the demise of the regime of President Suharto in 1998 (Leggett 2005). Based on his research in Jakarta, he argues that a 'colonial imagination' is central for both expatriates and Indonesians in making sense of contemporary processes of transnational capitalism. He seems to posit, however, a seemingly undifferentiated 'colonial imagination' as the lens through which contemporary expatriates and Indonesians view each other. Such argumentation is questionable insofar as it unifies a multitude of colonial beliefs, which differed not only depending on the particular colonisers and colonised, but also over time. The notion of a 'colonial imagination' thus becomes a de-historicised, undifferentiated concept: a convenient short-hand, which precludes rather than opens up critical examination (see also Stoler 2002:206).

With this caveat in mind and while acknowledging the internally diverse and historically varied nature of these groups, it is nevertheless possible to establish substantial and meaningful continuities between colonial and contemporary expatriate contexts. This does not necessarily presume that corporate expatriates are to be considered as the present-day equivalents of colonial expatriates, although there is certainly a case to be made for regarding corporate expatriates as neo-colonials given their involvement in, and their benefiting from, global capitalism which is arguably based on the exploitation of the developing countries that expatriates are posted to. As Erik Cohen reasons, 'expatriates do not have to be engaged directly and personally in the pursuit of the interests of their country to qualify as 'imperialist' representatives' (Cohen 1977:9). I do not pursue this broader argument here, but will instead explore the significance of the linkages as they arise in my discussions of particular issues, such as the body, space and community, throughout the book.

I suggest, however, that these historical similarities provide an invaluable perspective on modern-day expatriates, insofar as viewing expatriates through the prisms of both colonial history and contemporary transnationalism creates a kind

of stereo-vision that highlights the unique nature of expatriates' transnational lives. One could argue that a concern with boundary-making, enclaving, and the recreation of Western lifestyles are well-known phenomena among both colonial populations and contemporary expatriates. This apparent continuity further questions the transnationalist view of a cosmopolitan capitalist class unencumbered by borders and affiliations with particular national cultures. In this sense, a historical perspective, showing expatriates' links with the past, gives further credence to the argument that they are, in many ways, not post-modern inhabitants of a borderless world, and rather than embracing 'global flows', often try to contain them.

Gendered Dimensions

Adopting a historical perspective is also insightful regarding the relations between gender and empire and expatriation respectively. It has been suggested that the project of empire was fundamentally gendered (Callaway 1987, Strobel and Chaudhuri 1992, McClintock 1998, Stoler 1989, 1995, 1997a,b, 2002). Stoler argues that gender inequalities were fundamental to the structure of colonial racism and imperial authority (Stoler 1989:634). Similarly, McClintock maintains that: 'gender power was not the superficial patina of empire, an ephemeral gloss over the more decisive mechanics of class or race. Rather, gender dynamics were ... fundamental to the securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise' (McClintock 1998: 6-7). As I will discuss further in the next chapter, the intersections between race and gender fundamentally structure the position of expatriate women past and present. White colonial women held an ambiguous position as members of the powerful group of Westerners on the one hand, while being disadvantaged as women in largely patriarchal systems on the other. As Anne McClintock, in her book entitled *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* argues,

The rationed privileges of race all too often put white women in positions of decided – if borrowed – power, not only over colonised women but also over colonised men. As such, white women were not the hapless onlookers on empire but were ambiguously complicit both as colonisers and colonised, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting (McClintock 1998:6).

Although McClintock's verdict is aimed at colonial women, it seems curiously appropriate for the situation of expatriate women. I argue that the combination of powers given and denied, of possibilities for agency opened up and restricted also lies at the basis of expatriate women's existences in Indonesia. More specifically, the situation of many colonial women is captured by the concept of the 'incorporated wife', which was first discussed in Callan and Ardener's edited volume of the same title (Callan and Ardener 1984). It describes how the support work of a woman was considered an implicit part of the contract between her husband and his employer. The articles gathered in their collection include case studies on British Memsaahibs in colonial Malaya (Brownfoot 1984), as well as on wives of Shell employees (Tremayne 1984), suggesting that the model of the 'incorporated wife' pertains to the situation of colonial couples as well as to contemporary corporate ones.

One of the ways in which gender and expatriation are linked is through the implicit but vital work of women as accompanying spouses. Recent data (Hartl 2003:29) show that the overwhelming number of corporate posted expatriates are still male, although the proportion of dual-career households and posted women is slowly rising, especially in the public sector, and in the field of aid and development. Studies within human resource management have long recognised that the emotional and practical support of wives is crucial to the husbands' effectiveness on an overseas assignment, and that conversely, lack of family support is seen as one of the main reasons for expatriate failure or the abandonment of a posting (Black and Stephens 1989, Conway 1995). As I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter, the principle of the 'incorporated wife' which describes this support role is intrinsic to the functioning of many couples living abroad.

Further, a prominent feature of the relationship between women and empire is the vilification of colonial women, and the belief that they were the 'ruin of empire' (Knapman 1986). At various times and in different places a discourse emerged that cast colonial women in the worst possible light. Memsahibs in India were blamed for 'every sort of snobbery, self-indulgence, frivolity and indolence' (Knapman 1986:15). Australian women in Papua New Guinea were seen as: 'hypocritical, racist, all-powerful, sexually jealous' (Bulbeck 1992:238). Although Dutch women in the East Indies had a better reputation than British women, they were also criticized for their racism (Locher-Scholten 2000:121). These discourses often centred on two claims: that European women destroyed the supposedly cosy race relations between European men and local women, and that they were responsible for the demise of the empire. Leaving aside their historic accuracy, some of these images resurface in representations of expatriate women, for example in the 'Expatriate wife's prayer', a text circulated within expatriate communities. The middle section of the 'prayer' reads as follows:

Lord, grant us the strength to smile at our maids,
 even though our most treasured dress resembles a rag
 or they take bleach to clean our well admired Persian rug.
 Give us divine patience when we explain for the hundredth time
 The way we want things done and, Lord, if we lose patience and thump them,
 Have mercy on us for our flesh is weak.

Dear God, protect us from so called 'bargains' we don't need or can't afford.
 Lead us not into temptation for we know not what we do.
 Almighty Father, keep our husbands from looking at foreign women
 and comparing them to us. Save them from making fools of themselves at nightclubs.
 Above all, do not forgive their trespasses, for they know exactly what they do.

(Source: Anonymous, www.expat.or.id, accessed August 2006).

Even a superficial reading of this satirical text finds many of the accusations that were also levelled at colonial women. The line: '*Give us divine patience when we explain for the hundredth time the way we want things done*' suggests arrogance displayed towards domestic staff, and even viciousness in the jovial reference for thumping them. The reference to bargains '*we don't need or can't afford*' caricatures women's self-indulgence and frivolity, while presenting themselves as victims who

can't be held responsible for their actions. A major issue is sexual jealousy, as manifest in the line: *'keep our husbands from looking at foreign women and comparing them to us'*. These expatriate women appear unattractive as well as vindictive, as they plea not to forgive men, for *'they know exactly what they do'*.

A different, but related aspect is the role of domesticity and intimacy in the maintenance of colonial authority and construction of race (Clancy-Smith and Gouda 1998, Stoler 2002). Stoler's work is of particular relevance here, as some of her arguments regarding the Dutch East Indies strongly resonate with the situation of contemporary expatriates, especially her thesis that the domestic arena was central for the making and potential unmaking of the project of empire. Relations of political dominance were reiterated in 'kitchens, bedrooms, and nurseries' (Stoler 2001:829). Women thus become important especially in their role as wives and homemakers in the colonies. Stoler explores, for example, how upholding a strict regime of European hygiene was also meant to sharpen the distinction between coloniser and colonised, while re-producing the European bourgeoisie abroad, to the extent that 'adherence to strict conventions of cleanliness and cooking occupied an inordinate amount of time of colonial women and those who served them' (Stoler 2002:71). I will return to this issue in relation to expatriates' concepts of domestic hygiene in Chapter 5.

Related structures and practices are also integral to the world of corporate expatriates, although I do not particularly pursue the role of the domestic sphere here. Kurotani (2005) for example examines in detail the homemaking practices of Japanese corporate wives in the United States, and demonstrates how the reproduction of a Japanese model of gender relations, as well as Japanese culture more broadly, is achieved through painstaking adherence to Japanese practices of food preparation (Kurotani 2005:90). More generally, Kurotani notes that the role of domestic space in the context of globalisation has not received sufficient attention, even though the centrality of domestic work to female subordination in capitalist societies has long been recognised by feminist scholars (Kurotani 2005:15). Her case stresses the need to further study the domestic underbelly of globalisation (Hochschild 2000), and to make more visible the importance of the 'domestic-scape' for global movements, in addition to the more prominent ethno- or technoscapes outlined by Appadurai (1991).

Although the work done by women as accompanying spouses is in many ways central to reproducing the expatriate family abroad, much of the literature on skilled migration replicates the focus on expatriate male individuals in their work environment. Since the human geographers who initially took note of skilled Western migrants were particularly interested in their role in international labour markets (Findlay 1988, 1996, Findlay, Li, Jowett and Skeldon 1996, Salt 1988, Koser and Salt 1997, Iredale 2001), the emphasis placed on the work aspect of their lives also meant that, given the small number of women in this group, they were mainly concerned with male migrants. As Yeoh and Khoo state, 'recent literature on high-status international circulation has tended to neglect families in general and women in particular, treating the latter at best as "trailing spouses"' (Yeoh and Khoo 1998:161). The perspective which foregrounds male individuals remains evident in subsequent work, in particular Beaverstock's study of British business expatriates in the global financial centres of New York and Singapore (Beaverstock 2002, 2005).

He focuses on their work performances and workplace cultures, and considers other aspects, such as specific knowledge acquisition and cultural life experiences mainly with regard to the effects they have on their work. Similarly, both Moore (2005) in her work on German expatriate employees of a major bank in London, and Leggett (2005) in his study of corporate expatriates within a transnational office space in Jakarta reiterate the emphasis on the arena of work, which has characterised the literature on expatriates in human resource management.

This conspicuous lack of a gender focus in human geography has more recently been addressed by a range of studies, notably Halfacree and Boyle's volume on *Migration and Gender in the Developed World* (1999), as well as by Eleonore Kofman, who highlights the existence of skilled female migrants within Europe (Kofman 2000). In addition, Irene Hardill (1998, 2002) investigates specifically expatriate dual career-households, decision-making and the gendered dimensions of expatriation (1998, 2002). Irene Bruegel (1996, 1999) examines the more traditional question of the 'trailing wife', whereas Paul Boyle (2002) discusses the emerging group of 'transnational women'. Furthermore, Willis and Yeoh's work on British expatriates in Singapore and China resulted in a number of gender-focused publications (Willis and Yeoh 2002, Yeoh and Khoo 1998, Yeoh, Willis and Huang 2000). In a similar vein, the chapters that follow are not about 'men at work': instead, they include a range of aspects of both expatriate men's and women's lives in Jakarta, and purposely exclude directly work-related themes. This is not just to provide a complement to the existing literature, which sufficiently explores these topics, but also to recognise the necessity of developing a gendered perspective.

Such emphasis does not question the relevance of the world of expatriate work. As Leggett (2005) shows, the offices of multinational corporations constitute complex transnational spaces, which provide intriguing insights into the 'colonial imagination' of both expatriates and Indonesian nationals. Nevertheless, there was the sense among my male and female informants that expatriate working men's lives in Jakarta were in many ways less different from those they had in their home countries than for expatriate women. This was due to the fact that men's daily lives, even to a greater extent than at home, revolved around work, and much of their time was spent in the office. Their often increased responsibilities required longer working hours, time-consuming commutes as well as frequent travels in the region with long periods away from their families. While their work practices were certainly not left unchanged, their transnational office, job responsibilities and corporate environment provided them, to some extent, with a familiar framework.

In contrast, for expatriate wives who were not in paid employment, little stayed the same. Some had been home-makers and childcarers before, but performing these roles in Jakarta required different skills than in their home countries, such as managing domestic workers, and reproducing a Western lifestyle abroad. Most importantly, not only the changed practical circumstances, but also the assumption of the role of 'accompanying wife' proved a more disturbing change than anticipated. Many experienced becoming and being an 'expatriate wife' not only as difficult, but as undergoing an identity crisis. They were legally unable to work and yet even at home had a reduced role, because housework and childcare were often taken over

by their staff. Establishing life in a foreign country, and getting used to an expatriate lifestyle with its social constraints were seen as major transformations.

Also, as women pointed out, it was often their task to negotiate what they called the 'real Indonesia'. This included settling the family in and organising everyday life, such as hiring and supervising staff, dealing with building maintenance, finding their way around Jakarta and, not least, shopping for groceries, clothes, and furniture, and taking care of bills, which, in an unfamiliar environment, with limited language skills and knowledge of local regulations, could be demanding. Consequently, one reason for paying particular attention to women's lifeworlds is that they experience their Indonesian environment rather differently, and perhaps in an accentuated manner, to their husbands, thus rendering a different, more comprehensive picture of what it means to be an expatriate in Jakarta than could be gleaned from men's daily activities.

Insofar women had come as 'trailing spouses', their lives were in many ways rather restricted, as I will discuss in the next chapter. Stoler has argued with respect to colonial women that they 'confronted profoundly rigid restrictions on their domestic, economic and political options, more limiting than those of metropolitan Europe at the time and sharply contrasting the opportunities open to colonial men' (Stoler 1989:634). Similarly, one could argue that through the process of becoming expatriates, the relations between men and women are thrown back to those of a bygone era, insofar as even couples who had previously both worked often revert to a more traditional model where the husband is the breadwinner, while the wife has responsibility for home management, childcare and well-being of the expatriate family. The lives of expatriate wives are bounded in ways that their husbands are not: obtaining paid work is both legally and practically very difficult, they may experience the rather narrow expectations of gendered behaviour that are linked to being an 'incorporated wife' or a 'good housewife', and these are sometimes accentuated by the role models implicitly propagated within many expatriate women's associations.

A further reason why women's activities offer particular insights into expatriate life is that the work of 'culture', that is, re-creating national or regional cultures abroad, is often performed by women. This may occur within the home, for example in relation to the way children are raised, preparation of meals or home decoration, but also takes place in the context of women's associations. In fact, as I discuss in Chapter 6, a considerable part of expatriates' social lives is moulded through these organisations. Through these, women maintain social networks that contribute to relationships and activities that involve men, women and children alike, such as parents' engagements in the respective national schools, group weekends away, church community events, and larger social gatherings such as the German May Festival or the Jakarta Scottish Highland Games.

In addition, taking as a starting point Stoler's claim that empire-building and colonial life were sustained by colonials' 'quotidian technologies of self-affirmation' (Stoler 1995:113), I suggest that the everyday fabric of expatriate life provides key insights into how they relate to Indonesia and other expatriates, their identifications, anxieties, and forms of transnational lives. This also relates to an issue discussed above, namely that while there are many generalising accounts of globalisation, we

know comparatively little about the quotidian structure of supposedly globalised lives. Being attentive to expatriate women's routines thus provides some of the fine-grained material that fleshes out and challenges these theories.

Related to the relevance of the everyday are the bodily experiences and practices of expatriates. As I will discuss, the imperative in anthropology to consider the body as meaningful in its own right rather than as a mere symbol (Csordas 1994), has so far not had much resonance in migration studies (though see Wise and Chapman 2005). Exploring expatriates' everyday lives thus includes being attentive to embodied experiences such as moving through space, being visible as Whites, and food consumption, which are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Most importantly, I argue that even though much of my material relating to the everyday and the body was gained through participant observation of, and interviews with women, the resulting insights are, for the most part, not gender-specific. While I highlight gendered differences in their experiences, my principal argument regarding how expatriates' lives are characterised by boundaries, applies to both male and female expatriates.

In conclusion, this chapter has aimed to conceptually situate expatriates in the framework of transnational migration, with particular attention to historical and gendered perspectives, and has outlined the main argument relating to the role of boundaries in expatriates' lives. A brief overview of the literature suggests that research in the social sciences, specifically on Western professionals who move to developing countries, is scarce. One of the reasons for this may be a general reluctance to 'study up'. Complementing the tendency in migration studies to focus on poor migrants to Western industrialised countries, there is now a growing interest in skilled migration; within these debates, however, Western corporate expatriates are still not very prominent. Instead, they appear implicitly in works on globalisation and transnational capitalism, which describe them as 'professional transients' or as part of a 'transnational capitalist class'. They are often suffused with a rhetoric of flows, which assumes that these people, who are seen to embody a globalised world, lead frictionless, unbounded lives.

Such visions, which are typically unsubstantiated by empirical, micro-level data, have been criticised, notably by Favell (2003), who argues that these mobile professionals do encounter obstacles and more subtle discriminatory practices during their stay in their host societies. Concurring with his critique, I go beyond it and argue that the transnational lives of expatriates are characterised by the persistence of boundaries of race, gender and nationality, which they also actively create. I argue that boundaries constitute a key metaphor for the transnational lives of expatriates, in terms of their individual experiences as well as for their analysis. The concept of boundaries as employed here conceives them as constructed, contested, intersecting and permeable. They relate to a range of differences through which people distinguish themselves and others. Throughout the following chapters, I explore their efficacy through a range of social arenas, including the situation of women, the use of space, the body, the social space of expatriate communities, and generational differences. Some of these issues consistently reappear, such as those related to gender, ethnicity or race, while some, such as nationality and age, only become relevant at certain points.

Expatriates' concern with boundary-making can be placed in a historical context. There exist multiple similarities between contemporary expatriates and colonialists in relation to gender relations, the use of space, the body, the structure of expatriate communities. While one could argue that emphasising racial and national boundaries among populations living outside their home country is a well-established practice, which has not recently emerged in the wake of contemporary 'global flows', the very same practices assume new significance in the context of current theories of globalisation and transnationalism. If expatriates are part of a 'global elite' with supposedly fluid lifestyles, then the efforts they expend on the construction of boundaries call into doubt the adequacy of such visions.

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Chapter 3

Expatriate Wives

Sue, 48, British, is married to Jim, 53, an American working for an oil company. The couple do not have children. They came to Jakarta 15 months ago, but lived here on a previous assignment between 1988 and 1991. They have been moving around, following Jim's work, for over 15 years. Sue is an 'accompanying wife'. She gave up her job in the UK at the beginning of their expatriate life, and has not worked since. The couple stay in a serviced apartment on the 11th floor of the Hilton Hotel Complex in central Jakarta. Jim works long days in the office, while Sue is a very active member of the British Women's Association, playing Tennis, Mah Jong, and Bridge, and chairing the newcomer's support group. Sue says that she engages in these activities mainly to keep herself happy, and thus also to ensure marital harmony. She enjoys parties, but complains that there is less of an expatriate social life in Jakarta than there was during their previous stint here. The internet is very important for her; she keeps up to date with UK-related news, follows gossip columns, and exchanges daily emails with her sister in London. Sue is resigned to leading an itinerant life, but says she wants to make it as comfortable as possible for herself and her husband. They eventually plan to retire in the UK (Fieldnotes, May 2000).

Although women's experiences vary, Sue's situation as an accompanying wife is in many ways exemplary of that of expatriate wives in Jakarta. As indicated by the above sketch, I argue that their lives are limited in ways that their husbands' are not. Considering women as trailing spouses not only reveals a particular dimension of the boundaries that characterise expatriates' lives, but also sheds new light on the discussion of gender and privileged migration.

Gender and Privileged Migration

The relationship between research on transnational migration on the one hand, and gender analyses on the other, has been tenuous. While gendered perspectives on migration have been developed, Kearney (1995:560) notes the lack of a dedicated gender focus within migration research, an observation reiterated more recently by Kofman (2000) and Vertovec (2002), who observe that women have tended to be 'invisible' in literature on skilled migration. Similarly, Pessar and Mahler find the tendency to marginalize gender repeated in much of the research on transnational migration. They propose the framework of 'gendered geographies of power' to achieve a 'more nuanced transnational examination of how gender articulates with migration' (Pessar and Mahler 2003:815). This framework considers the social location of migrants, referring to their power positions within multiple interrelated hierarchies (Pessar and Mahler 2003:816).

A key issue concerning this nexus between gender and transnational migration which might benefit from such a framework is what limiting effects migration may have, in particular for women, and in what ways it may be liberating. In particular, this entails asking to what extent transnational migration can enable women to leave behind restrictive gender regimes that are in place in their home countries; and conversely how migration practices can perpetuate established gendered hierarchies. This enables us to consider how gender relations among male and female migrants may be transformed in the migration process (DeLaet 1999, Pessar and Mahler 2003, Willis and Yeoh 2002). I suggest that the study of the privileged tiers of transnational migration offers challenging insights into how mobility interacts with and reconfigures migrants' gender roles and relations.

The lack of a gendered perspective on privileged migrants has further facilitated the representation of the lives of transnational elites as fluid, moving with ease and without boundaries. If one takes into view the often female spouses of members of transnational elites, particularly among corporate expatriates, a rather different picture emerges. Contrary to the celebratory narratives of a borderless world, their experiences highlight the persistent relevance of boundaries in their everyday lives. In particular, it appears that privileged movement practices can help to reinstate gender roles and relations which were regarded as outdated by these women in their Western home countries. I argue that while the impact of transnational migration on gender relations remains diverse and ambiguous, a study of the privileged sector starkly highlights the perpetuation of restrictive and reactionary gender ideologies and hierarchies in spheres of transnational mobility.

This perspective is supported for example by the work of Willis, Yeoh and Huang (2000), who, in their study of expatriate women in China, found that transnational mobility did not radically transform gender ideologies, but often continued to narrow the range of roles women were able to play in migration processes (Willis, Yeoh and Huang 2000:4). In the same vein, Yeoh and Khoo note with regard to British expatriates in Singapore that while migration provides women with opportunities for agency, it also reaffirms patriarchal structures in their new homelands (Yeoh and Khoo 1998:156). Indeed it could be argued that despite the privileged social locations of these women these structures can perpetuate established hierarchies of gender that are rather restrictive. These insights challenge the notion of a 'transnational elite' leading mobile lives unconstrained by boundaries of gender, class, ethnicity or nationality. Adopting a gendered perspective on such forms of privileged migration, and taking women's experiences into account shows their transnational lives to be marked by the persistence of boundaries, and by the reproduction of gender roles and relations that women often find limiting.

While these women encounter its reactionary effects, it must be recognised that privileged migration influences men's and women's lives in multiple ways, which are not easily summarized as being either limiting or liberating. Thus, it is important to note that their transnational lives also afford women opportunities for the transgression of boundaries and increased agency. Crucially, though, these opportunities for agency and 'liberation' are often predicated on women's positions as Western women rather than women per se. More precisely, their transnational movements, in particular those to developing countries, situate Western women such that they are enabled to

take advantage of global economic and social imbalances. In focusing on privileged migration, I concur with Pessar and Mahler's emphasis on social locations, but explore the consequences arising from the comparatively empowered positions of Western expatriate women. This does not mean that limitations for these women are the same as for more disenfranchised women. Rather, the objective is to examine in what ways the seemingly privileged social positions of Western transnational women can be experienced as restrictive, and to what extent their 'liberating practices' are based on their privileged position as Westerners.

Some of the most significant limitations for expatriate women, I suggest, arise from the intersections of race and gender. In discussions of Orientalism, specifically in Southeast Asia, relations between race and gender are often conceptualised in the form of a masculine Occident and a feminine Orient. As Manderson and Jolly (1997) argue, 'the colonising subject is typically imagined as male – in masculinist tropes of penetration of dark interiors or the virile extension of male members into foreign places' (1997:7). Similarly, they point out, in Said's *Orientalism* (1978) 'the Orient is portrayed as passive and female, prone to the masculine penetration of the West' (Manderson and Jolly 1997:7).

The prominent nexus between male Western colonisers and a feminised Orient does noticeably neglect the position of Western women. It could be argued that they are caught in a 'double bind' insofar a colonial women – and by extension, expatriate wives today – enter the Orient as members of a supposedly dominant social group. In other words, Western women are also colonisers, providing them with a perceived superiority with regard to the colonised Other, but at the same time, this status is fragmented, as they are themselves subject to patriarchal rule. Women are thus both colonisers and colonised, dominant and submissive: the same as Western men in terms of race, but different in terms of gender. Western women, like the Orient, are Othered in male discourse, but while the 'Orientalized Other' was cast as feminine, Western women are constituted as 'the other-within' (Lewis 1996:18).

If the insights generated with regard to colonial women are to some extent applicable to contemporary expatriates, it follows that due to this double bind, Western women's experiences as expatriates are bound to be ambivalent. Lewis (1996) conceptualises 'women's relationship to Orientalism and imperialism as a series of identifications that did not have to be either simply supportive or simply oppositional, but that could be partial, fragmented and contradictory' (1996:237). Similarly, McClintock (1998) argues that:

colonial women were ... ambiguously placed within this process. Barred from the corridors of formal power, they experienced the privileges and social contradictions of imperialism very differently from colonial men ... [some] served discreetly at the elbow of power as colonial officers' wives, upholding the boundaries of empire (1998:6).

Western women can therefore not easily be portrayed as either victims or perpetrators. While they may be victims of a patriarchal system, they are also beneficiaries of a colonial or dominant Western one.

A related set of paradoxes that characterise expatriate wifehood are identified in Callan's bookchapter on 'The premiss of dedication' (1975) in the context of the

British diplomatic service, suggesting that women's ambivalent relationship with power also underpins the position of the wives of diplomats. A British diplomatic wife, she suggests, is by definition 'committed to an institution from whose central operations she is necessarily excluded' (1975:98), highlighting a key parallel between colonial and post-war diplomatic service. The particular 'double bind' of a diplomatic wife stems from the fact that 'she is treated as if she were an employee of the organization, especially as regards behaviour expected of her and control claimed over her' (1975:99).

These expectations, however, are not unique to the wives of diplomats. Indeed, in a later publication Callan shows that diplomatic wives represent just one particular instantiation of a general model which she refers to as 'the incorporated wife' (Callan 1984). According to her definition, being an 'incorporated wife' refers to a situation where the wife's practical and emotional support work forms an implicitly expected, but unpaid part of her husband's contract with his employer. This model is not limited, as the term may suggest, to the corporate world, but underpins a whole range of professions, including the military, the police force, and appears among missionaries as well as academic dons of Cambridge and Oxford (Callan and Ardener 1984).

While examples of 'incorporated wifehood' can be found at home and abroad, such a model matters especially for Euro-American expatriates as it becomes more prevalent among couples who move abroad as part of the husband's career. Significantly, a considerable number of case studies in Callan and Ardener's book (1984) are located overseas, such as the wives of Shell employees, diplomatic spouses and military wives. It could be argued that the model of the 'incorporated wife' in fact becomes more important abroad due to the greater need for familial support systems, women's raised representational profiles, and a reinforcement of traditional labour divisions in the household. Consequently, although they are by no means synonymous, the notions of the 'expatriate wife' and the 'incorporated wife' are closely affiliated (see Fechter and Cole 2007).

In the context of expatriates in Jakarta, the demands made of an incorporated wife also constitute some of the boundaries demarcating the lives of expatriate wives. In particular, they define a woman's prime duty as supporting her husband and family during a posting abroad, smoothing over familial conflicts and generally putting her own interests second in order to successfully reproduce the expatriate family abroad. One 'paradox' for expatriate wives thus consists in being under their husbands' 'corporate umbrella', benefiting from financial allowances, a high standard of living, and potential support services such as pre-departure training or language courses on the one hand, while on the other, this corporate bond also requires them to relocate with their families at short notice, accept their husbands' long absences due to working hours or travelling, and generally being, as one wife describes it, 'at the mercy of the company'. Expectations of compliance with these rules find their explicit manifestation in what could be called the 'expatriate wife ideology', which I will return to later.

Expatriate Wives in Jakarta

Expatriate wives are women who accompany their husbands on their postings in the capacity of 'trailing spouses', as they are sometimes casually referred to. These

women's stay permits for Indonesia are usually linked to their husbands' working visas. The women are legally not allowed to work unless they obtain their own visa from an employer. As expatriates' pay packages are typically rather generous, it is not only difficult, but also financially unnecessary for the wives to take up paid employment. Partly due to their legal status, many expatriate wives therefore feel confined to being housewives and often mothers, since many expatriate families have small or school-aged children. There are, however, generational differences: the expatriate wives discussed here are mostly between 35 and 60 years old. Those at the lower end of this age range are more likely to have a professional qualification, and have held a job prior to their husbands' posting to Indonesia. The women on the higher end are more likely to have been housewives for most of their lives, both while living in their home country and while following their husbands abroad.

Thus, the expatriate wives I discuss in this chapter do not include female professional expatriates who are posted to Indonesia independently or obtain work after initially moving there as accompanying spouses. While the number of female professional expatriates is rising, they tend to be between 25 and 35 years old and are more likely to be unattached and without children. I also do not consider women in 'dual career households', which include both partners working abroad. Although their numbers are also growing (Hardill 2002), they are still comparatively rare in Jakarta, as are the numbers of male trailing spouses.

Lives of expatriate wives tend to be closely linked to, and shaped by the expatriate community in general, which is often organised along national lines, for example in the form of national women's associations, which provide key social networks for expatriate wives. As their husbands are at work for most of the day, and their children in school, many wives have ample spare time, which some women struggle to fill. This situation is often compounded by the fact that most of them are not in paid employment. Furthermore, it is regarded as indispensable within the expatriate community to hire domestic staff, so that part of the women's housework and childcare is taken over by them. Reflecting this contrariness, many wives thus describe themselves as 'living in a golden cage'. This metaphor, with its strong connotations of both privilege and boundedness, is part of a discursive repertoire that expatriates draw upon to describe their lives: others include that of 'living on the frontier' or being a 'pioneer woman'.

Living in a Golden Cage

As noted in the last chapter, when talking about their lives in Jakarta, expatriates characteristically resort to metaphors which strongly suggest boundedness, such as living in a bubble, a bunker, or a ghetto – some even describe their existences as 'unreal'. With regard to expatriate wives, the image most frequently drawn upon is that of 'living in a golden cage', as it appears for example in the remarks of Elsa, a German expatriate wife in her mid-forties, during a newcomers' coffee meeting:

We are living in a golden cage here – it is almost a non-real world. Everybody has a pool, servants, and we only have dinner in big hotels. I can't even cross the street by myself – I'm not used to it any more, and it is too dangerous.

The image of the ‘golden cage’ invoked here symbolises key parameters which define life in Jakarta for expatriate wives: that is comparative material affluence coupled with the experience of being fenced in and restricted in terms of social and spatial movements.

The bars of this cage are apparent in the structure of a typical day of an expatriate wife. Sabine, for example, a German woman with two school-age children, would start the day around 6am, when the family’s maids began work. By 8am, after her husband and children left for the office and school respectively, Sabine would find herself alone in the house with the staff. At this point, she tended to leave as well, as she felt uncomfortable and, as she put it, ‘in the way’ of her cleaning, cooking, and gardening staff. Many women’s associations’ meetings and events were scheduled on weekdays from 9am, presumably to coincide with the family’s absence from the house, and often ended around noon or mid-afternoon, to allow women to get home in time for their family’s return. Apart from these organised events, many women, including Sabine, filled their spare time with sports activities such as tennis or golf, shopping in malls, or meeting friends for lunch. Sabine pointed out that her husband worked longer hours than in Germany and also had to travel frequently, thus leaving her alone some evenings as well. Occasionally, Sabine reported, she and her husband would meet other couples for drinks or dinner, but generally they tended to have early nights to prepare for the following day. While this might sound like a privileged lifestyle, some expatriate wives were at pains to express their dissatisfaction with it, due to their feelings of emptiness and enforced idleness.

A related scenario, which similarly juxtaposes the material wealth of trailing spouses and their feelings of lack of purpose, could be described as ‘misery at the pool’. This expression relates to expatriate wives, who did not particularly want to live in the country their husbands were posted to, and who then spend their days at their private swimming pools feeling miserable. Ellen for example, a German woman in her late fifties, had been an expatriate wife for more than twenty years. She had lived the past few years in Jakarta, where her husband successfully established the branch of a major insurance company. In contrast to his rewarding and busy job, she felt that her life has become rather monotonous. On one occasion, she hosted a meeting of a women’s group at her home, which was followed by a lunch. Soon afterwards, the younger women excused themselves and headed home to take care of their children, while the older expatriate wives remained. After more chat and coffee, Ellen’s friend Ulrike half-heartedly declared that she was going to go home; Ellen almost pleadingly asked her to stay a little longer. As they were looking on to the swimming pool in the sun-filled garden, Ellen sighed and remarked: ‘*oh well, I can always sit at the pool later on*’. This brief statement seemed to sum up years of lonely afternoons spent at the pool, carrying with it a profound sense of sadness.

Expatriate women’s situation is exacerbated as they feel that their unhappiness is not recognised by their husbands, or their relatives at home. Brenda, an American woman whose husband works for an oil company, describes her situation: ‘*My husband says, “you do not have to work, you do not even have to do housework, you’ve got spending money – what’s your problem?”*’ Such reactions were described by women as ‘husband jealousy’. Similarly, Sue, whose situation I sketched at the beginning of the chapter, recalled that when she first got to Jakarta:

my husband didn't understand how difficult it was for me. Everybody's husband is the same, they do not understand. They say, there is a safe full of money, go shopping! But I never liked shopping! And we live in a hotel where we can't put any household stuff, so what can you buy? Batiks and gongs and puppets...

As she was explaining this to me, we were seated in a hotel suite which had been Sue's and her husband's home for the past 15 months. Living in serviced accommodation meant that, after her husband had gone to work, Sue was left to herself with little housework to take care of. Consequently, she had established a schedule for herself which included regular tennis sessions, playing board games with other wives, and committee meetings at the British Women's Association. While she enjoyed some of these activities, she confided that her main motivation was, in her words, *'to get out of the house. I won't do myself a favour if I stay in, and I would probably go mad. The main rule which we tell newcomers is always: get yourself out of the house'*. As indicated in the introductory sketch, Sue made a conscious effort, in her words, to 'keep herself happy', for her own sake as well as for her husband's. Such management of emotions has been described as women's 'emotional work' (Hochschild 1983). An expectation to carry out such work is part of the 'expatriate wife ideology'.

Women like Ellen or Sue, who feel that they are trapped in a 'golden cage', for example in the form of a Hilton hotel apartment, or who suffer from 'misery at the pool' in their back garden, often do not find the financial and time resources available to them sufficient compensation for the loss of their old lives. Many regard themselves therefore as victims in some sense. Examining this sense of victimhood more closely, it emerges that their dissatisfaction stems partly from the loss, or change, of their former roles as professionals or homemakers; from an unsettling of their social and feminine identities, and what they regard as their reduced agency. The loss of their professional identity is often experienced as the most profound of these changes.

Professional Identities

The example of members of the German Women's Association illustrates the extent to which women were affected by a loss of job. Of about 50 active women members, nearly 30 held academic degrees or professional qualifications and had a job before following their husband on his posting. For many of these women the move to Indonesia therefore entailed a loss, or at least a change of identity on several levels: firstly, as a professional; secondly, as a homemaker in the way they had been before; and thirdly, as a person – being disconnected from family ties and social networks in their home countries. Several women described their move abroad as 'wiping out' their former professional identities: for example, Susan, an American who used to work as a civil engineer, found that: *'no matter what a woman did at home, when you come here and you're not working, your identity vanishes. What you did before doesn't count. People don't know, they don't ask – it is just wiped out.'* Without their professional roles, women's social identities often seemed to be conflated with their husbands'. This situation neatly resonates with Callan's definition of women's

incorporation as a 'condition of *wifehood* ... where the social character ascribed to a woman is an intimate function of her husband's occupational identity and culture' (1984:1, original emphasis).

This incorporation becomes apparent in the expatriate community, for example during newcomers' meetings, where the question 'and what does your husband do?' is routinely employed to establish the social status of the new arrival. The role of husbands may also be socially prioritized outside the expatriate community among the local population. As Brenda, a newcomer to Jakarta, went for a run in her compound, she was troubled when she was greeted by her Indonesian neighbour as 'Mrs Thomas', Thomas being her husband's first name. She recalled her reaction: *'I smiled back, but I thought – am I not a person by myself anymore? Is that what I am – Mrs. Thomas?'* Before moving to Jakarta, Brenda had been a bank employee in Texas. She had liked her job and to some extent regretted giving it up. Brenda's case also highlights the complexities involved in what is often a collective decision to move as a family. Expatriate women's discourses, which often express, more or less explicitly, a sense of hardship, loss, and victimhood, also mask more ambivalent attitudes towards their situation and the genesis of their decisions.

Especially for women of an older generation, a dominant concept is that of a supportive wife and mother, who is expected to put her own aspirations aside and emotionally maintain the expatriate family abroad. As the husband in these families tends to be the main breadwinner, the move to Jakarta is accepted as a necessary part of his career trajectory. Within the group of slightly younger women in their thirties and early forties, the situation is often less clear-cut insofar as many women used to hold their own jobs. When differences in earnings are marginal, there may be negotiations whether a husband's or wife's career is to be foregrounded, at least for the medium-term future. A case in question was Susan, a friend of Brenda in her early thirties, who had also come from Texas. Susan had worked there as a civil engineer and her husband, Bob, had a job with an oil company. When Bob's employer offered him the post in Jakarta, Susan and Bob had lengthy discussions about the move, which resulted in her following him to Jakarta. She never reconciled herself to this situation, however, and after about six months, they decided to abandon the assignment, mainly because of Susan's concerns, and returned to the United States.

Joint decisions are also influenced by financial considerations. As expatriate assignments are often exceptionally well remunerated, both husbands and wives regard this as an opportunity to get onto a more financially secure footing as a family, or, for example, to pay off their mortgage. A sense of shared benefit as a family thus effects a decision in favour of the relocation. However open or thorough these negotiations within the family might have been, or in which ways a family arrived at a certain decision, this did not seem to affect women's constant attempts – often failures – to come to terms with their life as trailing spouses. Social practices and discourses in the expatriate women's communities were therefore characterised by women's various attempts to 'make sense' of the move for themselves.

Although the loss of a job remained problematic for many, some women decided to regard this as an opportunity to readjust their priorities. Paula for example, a Scottish medical doctor, reckoned that: *'back in Scotland, work was my whole life*

– *maybe too much so. So when Mark [her husband] wanted to go abroad for a while, I thought a change would be good.*’ A few months later, though, it turned out that her stay in Indonesia was jeopardising her medical career. New legislation limited the number of new consultants, a career path that Paula had wanted to pursue, and which she feared she was going to be excluded from now. This was a cause of ongoing anxiety for her. The situation was somewhat easier for professional women who had become a ‘trailing spouse’ only temporarily. This was the case for Angelika, a German civil servant, for whom her time in Indonesia constituted a break. Having worked for more than twenty years, she explained, *‘I didn’t have children, so I regard this as my ‘baby-break’, and I am enjoying it. But I can go back to my job in Germany, which makes a big difference.’* A more or less enforced career break could thus be seen as a welcome respite from a stressful worklife in women’s home countries. However, despite their professed temporary relief, many women were anxious to take up their career on their return, which points to the sustained importance that paid work had for them.

Social Lives and Feminine Identities

Apart from their professional lives, a key concern for many women is a loss of personal identity, as they feel cut off from their social environments in their home countries. These networks are to some extent replaced by expatriate wives’ communities. While providing support, however, such communities often constitute confined social spaces, governed by rigid rules of interaction. Stripped of their own professional identities, some women feel that within these groups, they are ranked according to their husbands’ jobs. Long-term members of the German Women’s Association, for example, pointed out in private that in earlier days, unspoken rules regarding seating arrangements at the monthly coffee mornings had allocated the tables at the top end of the room to the wives of director generals, followed by the wives of senior, then middle managers, whereas wives of engineers or mechanics would be seated at the lower end. I was repeatedly assured that this was not the case any more, and social interaction had become, in their words, ‘more relaxed’. Despite these assurances, Lotte, a German wife of a director general in her fifties, found that ranking according to husbands was still very much in place. As she observed, *‘people always ask, what position does your husband have? And people are anxious about whether it is acceptable for Mrs General Manager to have a cup of coffee with Mrs Manager’*. Nevertheless, many women appreciated the social support that the women’s groups provided. These new networks, however, did not fully substitute for their former social relations. As well as women’s sense that their social standing was to a greater extent predicated on their husbands’ positions, some also felt restrained by the implicit regulations of some women’s associations concerning dress codes or levels of formality. Furthermore, a high turnover in membership meant that these groups were rather transient, making them less reliable as a resource for social identifications.

A further change for many expatriate wives concerns their identities as *women*. As their former jobs, homemaking, and old social relationships matter less in

Jakarta, motherhood and childrearing attain a heightened significance. This shift, in turn, can compound the pressure placed on childless women, for whom this resource is unavailable. In addition, the perceived sexual temptation of their husbands by Indonesian women can unsettle expatriate women's sense of their feminine identities. Although the so-called 'local ladies' appear in expatriate women's conversations, they are often only talked about in muted tones or allusions. As Paula, a British expatriate, put it: *'they are young, gorgeous, and they have nothing to lose ... they will do anything to get that man'*. For many expatriate women, this implies that besides possibly having sacrificed a career, they feel they are also losing their attractiveness as females and are unable to compete with young Asian women. Feeling constantly compared to 'Asian female bodies', with an added sense of their marriages being at risk, can thus further undermine their already brittle sense of confidence.

These changes to women's identities are compounded by a sense of reduced agency. Many women experience their lives in Jakarta as restricted. Sabine found that in Germany, she had: *'independence and freedom. Freedom to move, and to work. In Indonesia, that is not possible'*. This feeling of lack of agency stems from various sources: a major one being legal constraints, such as the difficulty of obtaining a work permit. In addition, many women feel confined in terms of physical mobility, as Karin, a German woman in her fifties, stated: *'I can't go for a walk down the road, because it is hot and dirty. And I don't go out after dark, because it is too dangerous'*. Similarly, Caroline missed being able to drive. She explained with some resentment that: *'at home, I just got into the car and got out, and here, I always depend on the company car and driver'*. In addition, many women are uncomfortably aware of their dependence on their Indonesian staff. Women's lack of Indonesian language skills often feeds their feeling of helplessness in Indonesian environments, such as negotiating prices in markets. The loss of professional agency is thus exacerbated by a sense of their incompetence within social settings and being redundant in their own homes. The situation also raises the question, though, as to the extent of the circumstances by which women feel limited are of their own making.

Women's Complicity

Expatriate women's feelings of restriction arise from a number of factors. A core issue is the possibility of expatriate wives finding paid work in Indonesia. Its availability is largely determined by the role of the Indonesian government on the one hand, and the complicity of expatriate women on the other. From a legal perspective, expatriate wives are unable to work insofar as their stay permit is tied to their husband's working visa, which stipulates that an accompanying wife can not take up paid employment. Women are only allowed to take up employment if they receive their own working visa from an employer. Whilst not impossible, it is difficult for women to obtain such a visa, and in this sense, it is the political economy of the Indonesian government which restricts expatriate women.

At the same time, expatriate women seem complicit in maintaining this situation. Gaining an independent work visa requires determination and tenacity. As women

have to look for employment while already in Jakarta, their possibilities are more limited than their husbands', who were posted to Jakarta to perform a specific job. In addition, few women have professional qualifications that translate easily into an Indonesian working environment. Some are teachers or health professionals, so that the jobs potentially available to them are often located within the expatriate communities themselves, such as in international schools. Another important aspect is women's financial situation. As male expatriates usually earn a higher salary than in their home countries, expatriate families are often financially well off. This provides a further disincentive for women to seek employment, as they weigh up the benefits of a job against a more stressful lifestyle. For example, Silke, a woman in her forties, had worked as an arts teacher in Germany before her husband was posted to Jakarta by a pharmaceutical company. As she did not particularly enjoy her life as a housewife, she considered taking up a post with an international school. However, being hired locally, her salary would have been a small fraction of her husband's; she would have to commute for more than an hour each way to work and would have less time to spend with her two sons. Under these circumstances, she decided that '*it was not worth it*', and devoted her time instead to activities within the expatriate wives' community.

In terms of women's complicity in their situation, the influence of women's associations can be considerable. A pervasive, if often implicit, discourse within these groups is what I refer to as an 'expatriate wife ideology' (e.g. Pascoe 2000b). This ideology valorises women's roles in maintaining and supporting the expatriate family abroad, thereby discouraging their active search for paid employment. Callan identifies such an ideology in relation to diplomatic wives, and regards it as the 'most prominent single feature of their collective self-image' (1979:100). She convincingly argues that such an ideology is an 'internalization of the organization's implicit presumption of moral commitment to itself on the part of the employees wives' (1979:100).

In expatriate wives' communities in Jakarta, such an ideology not only underwrites much of women's existences, but is also expressed explicitly. Sheila, an American, angrily recounts the behaviour of a group of American women in China. It emerged that these accompanying wives had complained so intensely about the living conditions there, that this had reputedly undermined their husbands' productivity and ultimately forced their families to abandon the posting. Sheila commented with exasperation on the failure of these women to carry out their supportive duties: '*These women obviously haven't grasped the basic necessities*', a comment which was met with nodding approval of her friends. In line with this thinking, Sue, who regularly participated at events at the British Women's Association, explained her efforts to keep her husband happy:

People ask me, "you must like playing Mah Jong very much, since you go so often!" The truth is, I don't – but if I stay home all day, I am in a bad mood when Jim comes back from work, and that's not good for us.'

Such practices undermine women's self-representations as mere victims, and make apparent their ambivalent and conflicting attitudes to their situation.

‘Frontier Women’ and Charity Work: Transcending the Limitations?

A question raised at the beginning of this chapter was how migration experiences might affect women; in particular, in what ways migration might have limiting or liberating consequences. This issue has been approached by Pessar and Mahler through exploring the link between migrants’ social locations and their possibilities for agency. In particular, Pessar and Mahler are interested to find out how social locations influence migrants’ agency as ‘initiators, refiners, and transformers of these locations’ (Pessar and Mahler 2003:817). This link is also pertinent for the situation of expatriate wives. Although I have so far mainly discussed the restrictions placed on them, it has to be noted that their transnational situations also afford them possibilities for agency and personal empowerment.

Yeoh and Khoo, in their study of expatriates in Singapore, observe that studies of gender and migration have often neglected women’s agency. They aim to re-establish women as active negotiators in the context of skilled migration, and suggest that women develop various coping strategies to deal with their situation (Yeoh and Khoo 1998:162). While expatriate women in Jakarta certainly utilise such strategies, it is difficult to determine whether these should be understood as expressions of increased agency, or whether they merely reflect the limitations which arise from women’s transnational situation in the first place. Also, within the tier of privileged movement, it is worth noting that the ‘transgressive’ potential of women’s transnational lives is often based on economic and social power imbalances.

Celebrating It

How women respond to their situation and the restrictions they feel it places on them varies greatly. While some women cast themselves as victims, others accept this framework and exploit it within its limits. Indeed, one way of inhabiting the position of the accompanying wife is to embrace it. Some women expressed their gratitude for being given time and space for themselves, for personal growth or pure enjoyment. Hilde for example, a German woman in her late fifties, expressed a sentiment shared among women of her generation when she declared: *‘I am not a modern woman. I am fine with staying at home and enjoying life, making the most of my time here’*.

Such attitudes are not confined to the older generation, but can also be found among women in their thirties. I met Marie for example, a young British expatriate, at a fashion show on a Monday morning, which she was attending with a several friends. Marie had started modelling at these fashion shows, while her friend Gemma was involved in an interior design business and her friend Greta, an artist, was using her time as an expatriate wife to pursue her painting, organise exhibitions and run art courses. When discussing whether life as an expatriate woman left one with too much time on one’s hands, the three of them simultaneously opened their diaries. In A4 format, their pages were covered in highlighter, with social events such as evening receptions or weekend trips pencilled in, in colour, rarely leaving as much

as a free afternoon. ‘*You see?*’ Marie eagerly pointed out, ‘*we’re so busy – we do not know how to fit in any more, we’re booked up already!*’ The question might remain to what extent these hectic social schedules are more than time-fillers in a situation not of their own choice. This ambivalence did not disappear even with women who seemed to celebrate their status as an ‘expatriate wife’.

Life on the Frontier: Housewives as Pioneers

Some women shun the image of the ‘spoilt wife’ and redefine themselves as ‘frontier women’. This metaphor ties together notions of the boundedness of expatriate life with a potential for agency. In the ‘living on the frontier’ scenario, Jakarta represents an outpost of civilisation, where women provide for their families under difficult circumstances. Given that the aim of many expatriates is to recreate a Western lifestyle, this can become a time-consuming occupation. It is comparable to the lives of pioneers in the ‘Wild West’, or women in wartime Europe, in recreating ‘civilisation’ from scarce resources. Expatriate women take over the tasks – and agency – of ‘pioneer women’.

Katharina, a German mother of two, stated for example:

I am quite proud of myself. My husband is away so often, and I’m managing everything on my own – but I think, we have managed to build something here. You are out here on a frontier, you are doing the dirty work, and nobody thanks you for it!

Katharina was running a rather well-organised house, which was lovingly decorated with flowerpots and curtains in rustic-style, and drawings evoking rural European idylls. Her children, who were 5, 7 and 10 years old, took part in various extracurricular activities, and Katharina herself was an active member of a parents’ association at her children’s international school, as well as heading a subsection of the German Women’s Association. It was most important to her, it seemed, to maintain the model of a well-functioning middle-class family in Germany even under the adverse circumstances of Jakarta city life.

This ‘frontier mentality’ also becomes visible in sourcing Western foodstuffs. Jean, an American, explained her shopping strategies: ‘*The rule in Jakarta is, when you see something rare, buy it immediately. A few weeks ago, I saw that Kemchicks [a Western-style supermarket] had chocolate chips, which they almost never have. I bought a dozen packets – and now I can make chocolate chip cookies whenever I like!*’ Food and the re-creation of Western dishes play a major part in maintaining Western identities, and they also cast expatriate women as inventive pioneers. Irene, a Swiss woman, had found a way, for example, of making the Italian dessert *Tiramisu* with the limited ingredients available, and she proudly called her recipe ‘*Tiramisu à la Jakarta*’.

Constructing Indonesia as a difficult territory also helps to overcome the culture of victimhood. Indonesia offers multiple possibilities to re-invent oneself as a courageous adventurer and explorer. This can also be a way to accumulate social capital, as these ‘daring’ women enjoy a certain kudos among their peers. Antje for example, a German woman in her mid-thirties, made regular trips to Irian Jaya,

visiting villages and trekking through the highland terrain. She also organised tours for her more adventurous friends. This provided them with opportunities to meet the exotic ‘Dani tribe’, who were understood as ‘*living in the stone age*’. Antje thus gained a reputation as an explorer, which enhanced her confidence and prestige in a way that would be difficult to achieve at home.

Even a foray into one’s *kampung* [local neighbourhood] can have this effect. A German woman recounted with a mixture of horror and admiration their friend Brigitte’s activities: ‘*she takes her bike and goes for a ride through the next kampung [neighbourhood], and sometimes she gets off and goes into people’s houses. I could NEVER do that!*’. Brigitte herself quite enjoyed the reactions of the other women. When I asked Brigitte about her cycling trips, she replied airily, ‘*Oh, there is nothing to it, I do it all the time. And anyway, the people are so friendly!*’ As long as Antje and Brigitte did not associate themselves too closely with the ‘locals’, but kept to their expatriate lifestyle, they remained a respected member of the women’s community. The carefully managed transgression of boundaries, for example between a German woman and the Dani, can provide women with social capital and a sense of agency. It also shows, though, that while these gains arise from the expatriate situation, they may only be efficacious within it.

Charity Activities

Apart from such adventurous activities, another way to escape the limitations of the ‘golden cage’ is to take up charity work. A considerable number of women support Indonesian orphanages, medical centres, youth projects or similar initiatives. While the management of these programmes and their real benefits for Indonesians might be questionable, they provided expatriate women with opportunities for agency. For example, Tania, a trained therapist, became involved with a street children’s project, which aided the transition of these children from life on the streets to a regular house. While Tania was active in the planning and conducting of many activities, which she found very satisfying, this mostly took place within the framework of Western expertise. For example, she told me rather triumphantly that to pacify unruly streetchildren, she had played Mozart to them, and ‘*it immediately calmed them down. This is how it has to be done*’. It seemed that Western civilisation had won over Indonesian chaos again.

Charity work could also consist in caring for orphans. Brenda, an American, took part in such activities together with other wives whose husbands worked for a large oil company. As Brenda explained, ‘*we go to an orphanage every Tuesday to hold the babies, because the people there never get down to actually holding them*.’ I was visiting her one day in her house in a compound owned by the oil company, which was separated from the outside by high concrete walls. While we were sitting in a vast, air-conditioned living room, a friend of hers called with the news that one of the children at the orphanage had died a few days ago, which had very much upset her. As Brenda hung up, she shook her head and said ‘*My friend is really sad about this. Well it’s a pity, isn’t it? But I guess it just happens...*’. When I asked her whether the group of wives were also providing financial support for the orphans, she was

appalled: ‘*Oh no, there is no money involved. We just go there to hold them.*’ While this might be a self-gratifying exercise, there is a thin line between caring for orphans as a vocation and as a passing interest for want of other things to do. It remains undetermined to what extent charity work is undertaken with genuine conviction, or whether it mainly keeps women occupied, such that they would abandon these activities as soon as their circumstances changed.

Breaking Through the Boundaries?

So far, I have considered expatriate women’s attempts to move within the boundaries of an expatriate wife’s existence. From this perspective, Indonesia can be experienced as fairly limiting. At the same time, however, it also offers opportunities for personal development. As I have tried to indicate above, it is often their social advantages as Westerners which allow expatriate women to gain a sense of empowerment. An important aspect of women’s agency is whether they come to Jakarta independently, or as an accompanying spouse. However, arriving as an accompanying spouse does not prevent them from becoming ‘self-made’ women in the course of their stay in Indonesia. Margarete for example is a German-trained zoologist who settled in Jakarta together with her husband in the 1950’s. Soon after their arrival, she began taking care of orang-utans in the zoo and ran an orang-utan camp in the province of Kalimantan on the island of Borneo. She played a significant part in protecting this endangered species in Indonesia. She now lives in her own house in the zoo compound, and keeps away from the ‘*coffee morning wives*’, as she disparagingly calls them. While many German women are aware of her, many prefer to keep their distance, not least since her lifestyle suggests an alternative to what is postulated as the ‘*only way to live in Jakarta*’. Margarete was able to utilise her Western skills and qualifications to achieve agency, such as effectively influencing Indonesia’s efforts at species conservation. This would have been harder to achieve in her home country. While Margarete represents a more ‘traditional’ case of successfully carving out an independent life for oneself in Jakarta, it does happen in present times as well.

Western single female expatriates working for international companies in Jakarta, often posted from their home countries, provide rather more straightforward cases of being independent professionals. They mostly lead ‘expatriate lifestyles’ and benefit from their posting in a similar manner to their male counterparts. They receive generous pay packages, and are usually given greater responsibilities at work, together with enhanced future career prospects. Most of these female professionals, though, are part of the ‘younger generation’, who I will discuss in Chapter 7.

Sheltered by a ‘corporate umbrella’, whether their husbands’ or their own, certainly makes it easier for women to find a personal or professional niche. Living in Indonesia becomes harder without those privileges. This was, for example, the case with Nadia, a French artist, who had reluctantly followed her husband to Jakarta. Nadia was uncomfortable with her expatriate life from the start. She felt that staying in Jakarta limited her as an artist who specialised in landscape paintings, as she felt its urban environment was not particularly inspiring. This also brought out

underlying tensions in her marriage, which eventually led to a break up. During a stay in Bali, she met a Balinese artist, whom she fell in love with. After separating from her husband, she moved to Bali and worked as a teacher, living together with her Balinese boyfriend. Apart from the emotional turmoil in her life, one of the greatest challenges was leaving the socially sheltered and financially secure expatriate life. As she explained, *'it is very strange giving all that up for a poor life in Bali. I suddenly have to start counting dollars.'* She seemed happy with her new life, though, and did not regret her decision. She thought that living in Bali had brought her to herself: *'I have always led a very comfortable life – I just cared about my art. But my Balinese boyfriend is worse than me in terms of organisation and money – so I have to deal with these things, and I am growing up.'* Nadia's account hints at a recurring feature in relationships between Western women and Indonesian men. Within these relationships, Western women seem to take on the role of a provider, which is often presumed to be a male domain in relationships in the West. In terms of women's agency, Nadia's decisions brought about personal changes that might not have happened had she stayed in her secure relationship in Europe. In this sense, her position as a Westerner in Indonesia afforded her a different, and more powerful, gender role than was available to her before.

'Emails from the Edge'

I finally want to discuss an aspect of expatriate women's lives about which most are overwhelmingly enthusiastic, that is, the role of the Internet and specifically Email.

It is hard to overestimate the impact that these technologies have had on expatriates' lives, particularly those of 'trailing wives'. This is reflected in memoirs of expatriate life, such as in Maguire's book entitled *Emails from the Edge* (2001), in which Maguire, an expatriate wife herself, describes Email as indispensable for her 'survival' as an American expatriate in Japan. Similarly, most expatriate wives I spoke to insisted that Email had changed their lives immensely. Beth, an American in her forties, stresses for example that, *'Email is my lifeline – it has made living in Jakarta possible. It keeps my sanity, and it is cheaper than a shrink. Without Email, I would be totally homesick and lost.'*

The significance of these new communication technologies partly derives from the fact that their use breaks the isolation that many women experience as accompanying spouses, as well as providing them with an increased sense of agency. As discussed in the case of 'pioneer women', being posted to Indonesia can provide women with opportunities to gain skills which they might not have gained at home. In particular, this concerns women's access to Email. Many women have only recently become comfortable using the Internet, and many, especially those of the older generation, had only started using Email since they arrived in Indonesia. While there often seemed little incentive to familiarise themselves with these technologies at home, moving to Indonesia prompted the decision to learn how to use them. This is not to say that they would not have achieved this in due course at home as well, but the relocation certainly accelerated the process.

Interestingly, among older expatriates, women seem to start using the Internet later than their male counterparts. In contrast to this, women's starting point seems less related to general trends in society but more connected to their personal needs: the correlation between moving to Indonesia and starting to use the Internet is much higher with women than with men, for whom this is possibly more related to work practices. Secondly, while women often start using the Internet later in absolute terms, they are more likely than men to take it up as they grow older. Interviews suggest that among elderly relatives back in their home countries such as their parents, who are introduced to Email by their expatriate children, women seem more willing to take up these technologies.

Yet this does not reveal the psychological obstacles often involved in this. Hertha, a wife of a senior manager of a German company in her late fifties, recounts how difficult she found the processes of getting 'online':

my friends kept saying, Hertha, there is no more letter writing – you have to write Emails! My husband said, I'll switch on the laptop for you, and then you just type in your letter. So finally I sat down at his desk at home, and typed in my letter. You should have seen how our *pembantu* [helper] looked at me, sitting at the laptop! But now I have learnt to send emails to my friends.

For slightly younger expatriate women, this does not only extend to writing Emails to friends, but is increasingly used for practical purposes, such as making travel arrangements and organising finances. Regina, a German woman in her forties, said,

I've been using the Internet for one-and-a half years now. I bought a laptop when I was still in Germany and brought it here. And now I am casually emailing with our tax advisor and my bank manager – and I've also started online banking.

In contrast to younger professionals, for whom this is usually not worth mentioning, Regina and her friends still express a sense of awe – as well as pride and sense of achievement at being able to participate in this new world. Apart from gaining access, the enthusiasm about these technologies displayed by many women stems from the sense that they significantly improve their quality of life as expatriates. In particular, it makes their position as 'trailing spouses' much more tolerable through helping them overcome the isolation they experience. Sue, for example, who was on her second posting to Jakarta, contrasts her current experience with that of her earlier stint:

there was a great sense of isolation in 1989. If someone at home was ill, it could have taken them a week to contact me. All that has changed. I can read the Sunday Times now – I can pull up the gossip columns and see what Fergie is up to.

The experience of life in Indonesia as isolating also resonates with the metaphor of 'living in the bubble' and the boundaries this implies.

Many women consider that Email has not only made their lives in Jakarta easier, but has made their existences there possible in the first place. Beth, whose grown-up children are at college in the US, acknowledges, '*if I didn't have Email, I would totally*

miss my job. But it made such a difference, and I realised, well, this isn't too bad. I don't think I could have stayed here without it.' Women with longer experiences of living abroad illustrate the extent to which expatriate life has been changed by these new technologies. Donna had been working as a volunteer in Yogyakarta in the late seventies, and came back to live in Indonesia about ten years ago. She recalls:

It's so different from when I first came to Jakarta. We had a phone, but you had to wait for half an hour till a tone came! When I was in Yogyakarta in 1979, I would go once a month to a *wartel* [telephone kiosk], and talk maybe for ten minutes. If you wrote a letter, you spent hours writing it. It took two weeks to get there, two weeks to get back. My mom says this to her friends, when Donna went to Indonesia it was like she went to the moon – like, we lost her. When she got a telephone, it's like she moved overseas. When she got Email, it's like she moved to Seattle – that's two hours from where we live.

Internet and Email 'break the isolation' by enabling expatriates to maintain contacts with people in their home countries. Linda, who has been living in Indonesia for more than five years, describes it thus:

Email has drawn me closer to all my friends and family both emotionally and even physically. By feeling like I can 'drop in and say hello' to people on a frequent basis and they can do that with me, even though we are half a world apart, I think I'm right next door. Of course it does not take the place of seeing people face to face, but it sure helps!

Apart from keeping social relationships with people 'at home', Email allows women to maintain a wider social network of friends in different places all over the world. Although younger professionals are very familiar with these possibilities, older expatriate women are only slowly becoming aware of them. Helga, whose husband is working at the German embassy finds that:

people at the embassy keep being moved around. You start making friends with people, and then you have to send them Emails when they are posted somewhere else, like New York or Paris, and my husband is still in touch with people from his time in Africa, they are now in Brazil.

It is important to note, though, that women's appreciation of Email does not diminish but rather confirm their sense of victimhood. While making their life as trailing spouses more bearable, and helping to overcome their isolation, it also indirectly validates the notion that they are in need of such remedies.

Kinship Online: 'Traditional' Ties on the Internet

A further aspect of women's internet use also reflects the traditional division of labour associated with expatriate wives. As mentioned above, they are often expected to perform the emotional work involved in supporting the expatriate family abroad. Part of this is what Leonardo (1987) terms 'kinwork'. In the present context, I take this to refer to women maintaining contact with family members, in particular elderly parents and grown-up children, who still live in the expatriates' home country. As women

increasingly communicate via Email, it might be argued that they are performing kinship online. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it is an example of how migration can further engrain such ‘female duties’ rather than challenge them, even if they are conducted through new communicative technologies.

Furthermore, such electronically mediated performances suggest that living a transnational lifestyle does not imply the abandonment of kinship ties, as is well documented with regard to migrant families who are engaged in ‘transnationalism from below’. Similarly for privileged migrants such as expatriates, being geographically far removed from family members does not diminish the importance of kinship bonds. Neither does the distance seem to dim their sense of family duties, such as caring for increasingly frail parents. This issue becomes especially important for the generation of ‘family expatriates’, as opposed to the young professionals discussed in Chapter 7. Since most ‘family expatriates’ are between 35 and 60 years old, their parents are usually older than 65 – an age where illness and bereavement become ever more relevant. In addition to this, many ‘family expatriates’ have grown-up children, who no longer accompany their parents on overseas postings. This can be a matter of concern for expatriate mothers, who are often anxious to keep in close contact with their children while overseas. Consequently, many expatriate women fulfil what could be seen as kinship duties, often via Email and instant messaging rather than by telephone. Far from kinship ties becoming unbound through their residence overseas, these technologies can reinforce them.

Increased communication possibilities can thus enhance the reproduction of kinship bonds over long distances. Instant messaging in particular allows partners to ‘chat’ to each other in real-time, that is, they can view each other’s text as it is typed on screen, and respond instantaneously. The importance of this immediacy becomes apparent in conversations with expatriates, especially concerning elderly parents. Donna, who, as I mentioned earlier, has been living in Indonesia for more than ten years, describes her communication with her mother, who lives in Washington State, USA:

almost every morning, I get on the Internet and talk to my mom! My father passed away in February and my mom is lonely. And now I can say, what are you doing tonight, how was that dinner you were invited to last night? It’s five o’clock in the afternoon there when it is eight o’clock in the morning here, so it is right at the start of the evening – and for a recently widowed lady, it is a bad time because you are all alone in your house and you dread the evening. So we can talk a bit, and it gets better.

It is interesting to note that Donna describes her interaction with her mother as ‘talking’. Although their conversation is conducted through written text, the lack of a time delay seems to transform this exchange into something much more intimate. Similarly, Helga, whose elderly mother recently had to undergo heart surgery, was obviously rather concerned, and appreciated being kept informed. As she reflects,

You certainly are more in touch with everything. When my mother got ill and had to have heart surgery I was in constant touch with my brother. You also know that you can be reached anytime – which is very important in such a situation.

This also holds for having contact with grown-up children. Beth explains how important it is for her to communicate with her adult children in Texas:

my kids and I instant message daily. It's the next best thing to talking on the phone. It makes us feel a lot closer than half way across the world! Mostly we message about 6 am in the morning my time in Jakarta, which is afternoon for them. So all four of us are connected ... and we send pictures back and forth. I actually do not miss my parents so much, but most of all my kids'.

The prerequisite for these exchanges is of course that elderly family members in their home countries have access to computers and are able to use them. Consequently, a 'chain introduction' to using Email takes place. This education is passed on from expatriates to their relatives or friends in their home country. Many had introduced them to the Internet specifically so they would be able to communicate with each other during the expatriates' stay abroad. At the same time, many expatriates kept in touch much less frequently, if at all, with friends or family who did not use Email. As it turns out, the role of these new communicative technologies for expatriate wives is ambivalent. Being regarded as a 'lifeline' by many, it evidently helps them to counter their sense of isolation and the loss of their old social networks caused by the move abroad, thus confirming their status as victims of the relocation. At the same time, it affords them opportunities for agency, such as gaining access to these technologies, which might not have happened with the same speed had they stayed at home.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that examining *privileged* migration from a gendered perspective contributes valuable insights into the interplay of gender and transnational migration, which has so far mainly been studied with an emphasis on poor, non-privileged migrants. This approach takes up Pessar and Mahler's suggestion to pay attention to migrants' social locations, but it does so in the less researched tier of affluent movers. At the same time, a *gendered* perspective on privileged movement seriously questions the notion of a transnational global elite – which would include privileged migrants such as corporate expatriates – as leading fluid lives which are largely unaffected by social, ethnic or cultural boundaries. On the contrary, a gendered analysis of corporate expatriates points towards the sustained relevance of such boundaries, especially for their accompanying expatriate wives.

It emerges that in the case of expatriate wives in Jakarta, their lives are in many ways more restricted than they were in their home countries. However, women are to some extent complicit in this. While they may appear as victims of a male-dominated system, they also profit from being members of a 'dominant class' of Western expatriates. Their opportunities for transgressing boundaries are thus partly based on their advantages as Western women. I therefore suggest that their capacity for agency remains ambiguous. Although expatriate women develop potentially empowering practices, which help them to break out of the 'golden cage', these practices often emerge as responses to the limitations of their transnational situation.

Consequently, a gendered perspective on privileged transnational migration, looking particularly at expatriate wives, suggests that transnationalism also has restrictive effects. The case of expatriate wives therefore sheds a different, more complex light on the effect of migration on gender roles in the privileged tiers of movement.

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Chapter 4

Space, Embodiment and the Gaze

Saskia, a 30 year old German, works for a development agency. She lives in a rented apartment which is part of a hotel complex in the centre of Jakarta. From the 11th floor of her flat, she has a panoramic view of the city. Her office is located just a few hundred meters away, on the opposite side of a busy roundabout. In the beginning, she attempted to walk there. Her path, after leaving the hotel grounds, first led her past a row of bicycle rikshaws and their drivers, who were waiting for customers from the nearby shopping mall. As she walked past, they were shouting: *'hello mister'* or *'transport, transport'*. She reached a large roundabout, teeming with minibuses driven at breakneck speed, expelling fumes. While the early mornings were still cool, by the evening the air was hot and filled with smog. She had to climb a footbridge, past beggars and people selling magazines and bric-a-brac. They would follow her moves with their eyes, trying to catch her attention. She had to cross the road again to reach her office building. She says, *'at this stage, I felt so exhausted, hot and drained, that in the end, I stopped walking to work'*. Instead, she now calls a taxi every morning, which picks her up at the hotel lobby and drops her off at the entrance steps to her office. Almost apologetically, she explains that *'I know it is only a short distance, but it all got too much, and I could not take it any more'* (Fieldnotes, February 2000).

Embodiment and Migration

In the introduction to his edited collection, *Embodiment and Experience*, Thomas Csordas proposes to 'reformulate theories of culture, self and experience, with the body at the centre of analysis' (1994:4). The background to his statement was a widespread tendency in the social sciences to neglect or dismiss the body as a legitimate object of research (Turner 1991, Csordas 1999). Even though this has now changed considerably, and the body receives attention in its own right, especially in anthropology (Lock 1993), Csordas has something more radical in mind as he outlines his vision of the body as the 'existential ground of culture and self' (1994:4).

At the core of such a phenomenological theory (Merleau-Ponty 1962, Heidegger 1962) lies the paradigm of embodiment. This notion, Csordas suggests, reverses the conventional separation of the body as a material entity from its symbolic meanings. In order to overcome the unhelpful dichotomy of the material and the symbolic, Csordas employs Heidegger's concept of the body as 'being-in-the-world', which, he argues, collapses the 'dualities between subjective and objective, meaningful and material' (1994:13). This concept envisages the body not as a passive object, but as an 'active subject of embodied being-in-the-world' (1994:14). Csordas critically notes that the consistent privileging of the symbolic over the material has rendered the body 'as a kind of readable text upon which social reality is "inscribed" '

(1994:12). Instead of reducing the body to a *tabula rasa*, a passive site on which external forces act and express themselves, he argues that through developing the notion of embodiment ‘the body is transformed from object to agent’ (1994:3).

These ideas can be related to the privileged migration of expatriates in several ways: first and foremost through linking the concept of embodiment to migration research. Although being a migrant is, amongst other things, a profoundly bodily experience, literatures on migration have so far given scant attention to the role of body. Mandy Thomas points out, in the context of her work on Vietnamese migrants in Australia, that the body has been largely absent in studies of migration, even though it is the ‘pre-eminent generator of the meanings of difference in the displacement process’ (Thomas 1998:74). Thinking about the embodiment of migrancy not only focuses attention on its corporeal materiality, but also helps us to consider its symbolic dimensions. I suggest that looking at the migrant experience through the prism of the body is particularly appropriate in the case of expatriates, as their bodies become a key site, as well as an agent, through which their understanding of Indonesia and their identities as Western, white expatriates, are produced and articulated.

Thomas refers to migration as a ‘displacement’, reflecting the tendency in migration studies to study transnational migration ‘from below’ (Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Insofar as it exists, work on the embodiment of migration often replicates this tendency. Napolitano-Quayson, for example, explores the ‘embodied state of transnational migrancy’ (2005:335) with regard to poor Mexican migrants who work as day labourers in San Francisco. I argue that as a complement to such studies, it is insightful to consider the embodied states of *privileged* migration. A focus on migration from ‘below’ produces particular theoretical narratives, which revolve partly around the vulnerability of migrants’ bodies, the experience of spatial exclusion, and the negotiation of public space (Law 2002). Expatriates, in contrast, although an ethnic and racial minority, in many respects enjoy a privileged status in the host country, which produces rather different bodily experiences of migration.

Furthermore, I draw on Csordas’ notion of the body as an agent. This concerns the body as it marks boundaries and thus creates spaces. In particular, I want to explore what kind of spaces expatriates produce. I approach space from a phenomenological perspective here, regarding it as ‘constructed’ as well as embodied. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues, space does not exist as a material given, but is constructed through experience. Thus, there exist a multitude of spaces as they are made by active subjects. In this sense, spatial experiences are always of a bodily nature, as much as bodily experiences are inherently spatial (Tilley 1994, Ingold 2000).

I suggest that expatriates’ bodily experiences and practices become especially meaningful as they position themselves in the city of Jakarta, and in Indonesian society in a broader sense. This is most evident in their practices of making, defending, and negotiating spatial boundaries. De Certeau recognises the implicit connection between space and boundaries when he notes that ‘it is the partition of space that structures it (...) there is no spatiality that is not organised by the determination of frontiers’ (1984:123). The role of the frontier or boundary, especially in the context of power relations, is often discussed with a view to the marginalised groups that it excludes. The case of expatriates is reversed insofar as they constitute a privileged

minority in Jakarta, who, I argue, attempt to exclude a large part of their environment, and along with it the people who inhabit it. In this, they are comparable to the middle- and upper class American citizens in the US described by Setha Low and others, who retreat into 'gated communities' driven by a desire for safety and ethnic homogeneity (Davis 1992, Blakely and Snyder 1999, Low 2003). It could also be argued that the behaviour of expatriates to some extent mirrors that of wealthy Indonesians, whose dwelling and movement practices are similarly designed to create a distance between them and the city in which they live (van Leeuwen 1997).

Although the spatial practices of these privileged minorities can appear comparable or even undistinguishable from each other, the political, ethnic and social contexts in which they are embedded and, consequently, the meanings with which they are invested differ considerably. A key distinction between wealthy Americans and Indonesians leading rather secluded lives in their respective home countries, and expatriates in Indonesia, is that the former are in many ways part of mainstream society, for example in terms of citizenship, ethnicity, language, and, to some extent, culture. In contrast, expatriates are set apart from Indonesian society on all these counts, and I suggest that their experiences and practices play a key role in their understanding and negotiation of these differences. These embodied practices produce and express what they regard as the Otherness of Indonesia and Indonesians, while shaping their own identities in return.

One might argue that the ways in which expatriates carve out their spaces in Jakarta – marking divisions that produce social distance – is merely a further example of the space-making processes that may occur in any contemporary city. I suggest, however, that their case is distinct and becomes theoretically relevant when situated in two different conceptual contexts. The first relates to expatriates' status as privileged migrants. As discussed in Chapter 2, much of the literature on transnational migration is characterised by a discourse of 'fluidity', which emphasises the global flows of people and cultures, and celebrates the potential for resistance and liberation that these flows enable. Expatriates confound such expectations insofar as they are fundamentally concerned with the production and negotiation of boundaries. In fact, as I will demonstrate, expatriates find 'fluidity' and 'flows' particularly problematic.

Secondly, in order to make sense of their preoccupation with boundaries, it is useful to place expatriates in a historical context, specifically that of the late Dutch colonials in what was then the East Indies. As discussed earlier, I do not suggest that these colonials were the direct precursors to corporate expatriates, nor that the lifestyles and attitudes of expatriates in their entirety can be traced back to colonial practices. I do suggest, however, that expatriates share some aspects of their 'colonial imagination'. William Leggett, in his analysis of corporate expatriates in Jakarta, argues that 'through the colonial imagination a union is forged between Western populations and a divide created between East and West as transnational economic processes become situated within a genealogy of empire' (Leggett 2005:272). Even though the notion of a uniform 'colonial imagination' is problematic, I draw on it here to characterise specifically expatriates' way of conceptualising 'Indonesian' space.

Drawing on such a ‘genealogy of empire’ establishes a continuity of the imagination of Dutch colonials and expatriates insofar as they both try to ‘exclude’ the city of Jakarta from their lives. Rudolf Mrázek, in his book *Engineers of Happy Land* (2002) describes in detail the efforts of late Dutch colonials, through the building of roads and railways and the architecture of houses and cities, to insulate themselves from a strange and alien Indonesian environment. The attempts of expatriates to distance themselves from their surroundings closely resemble some of these colonial practices. Furthermore, the colonial context draws attention to the complexity of power relations between colonials and locals. It would therefore be mistaken to assume that ‘colonial power flowed unchecked in its drive to dominate local cultures’ (Glover 2004:78).

Considering this issue in the case of expatriates, I examine the web of power relations in which expatriates’ bodies are enmeshed. At first, it may appear as if they hold the requisite economical and social power to ‘exclude the city’ in the sense of being able to maintain lifestyles that protect them from unwanted outside influences. I argue, though, that their situation is more complicated insofar as spaces and the bodily practices of the Other frequently elude their control. This loss of control becomes apparent in several areas of their lives. A particular one is expatriates’ discomfort with their bodily visibility as Whites in a predominantly Asian society. As I will demonstrate, this desire for invisibility is persistently thwarted by what I have called the ‘gaze of the Other’, that is, being looked at by Indonesians in public space. The gaze represents a form of power which many expatriates, not always successfully, aim to escape. This adds an important dimension to theories of migration, as their focus on migration ‘from below’ foregrounds the vulnerability of poor migrants’ bodies. Perhaps surprisingly, although expatriates are privileged migrants, I argue that they are significantly affected by local practices, such as being stared at. The flow of power is therefore not unidirectional, but their Indonesian environment has the capacity to unsettle expatriates. In the following, I discuss these processes in more detail.

Jakarta Cityspace

If your package doesn’t include a house with closed windows, air filters, adequate AC and air conditioned car with driver then do not bother to come (posted on the *Living in Indonesia* forum by seeu2@net.net.id, 24/01/01).

This statement sums up the attitude of many expatriates living in Jakarta in the sense that they divide the cityspace into an Inside – a clean, safe space – and a dirty, dangerous Outside. In what follows, I show how they experience the materiality of the built environment, climate and traffic, and what kind of practices they develop in response to them. For many expatriates the Inside embodies Western values, while the Outside represents everything that is feared, disapproved of or unknown. As a consequence, negotiating everyday life in Jakarta becomes a continuous, careful management of space and their movement through it. Mrázek describes a similar imagination among Dutch colonials, who divide the world into a pre-modern realm,

which is equated with ‘messy and smelly space ... the native quarters’ (Mrázek 2002:56), and the modern Dutch realm of order and control.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, one of the key metaphors used by informants to describe expatriate life in Jakarta is that of ‘living in a bubble’. This metaphor seems especially appropriate with regard to the hermetic spaces they create. Mrázek uses the associated image of ‘floating’ to describe colonial Dutch architecture in the Indies. As they felt ‘imperiled by strangeness’, he suggests that the colonial expatriates tried to evade this sense by building their houses as if they were ‘floating’ above Indonesian soil (Mrázek 2002:65). Both images capture the quality of people not living ‘on the ground’, but hovering above it, without having, quite literally, to set foot in local streets. I shall discuss this situation in more detail with respect to housing, the navigation of public space, and expatriates’ lives inside the ‘bubble’.

Housing

I suggest that a main concern in expatriates’ use of space is to distance themselves from ‘Indonesia’. Most of expatriates’ dwellings tend to disconnect the inhabitants from ordinary Jakartan surroundings. One example is the kind of accommodation rented by expatriates located in central Jakarta, especially in the areas of Menteng, Senayan and Kuningan. Approaching one of these apartments on foot, the street is noisy with sounds of traffic, the air filled with fumes, and the temperature about 35 degrees Celsius during the day. One can only walk slowly, one’s breathing made difficult by heat, dust and fumes. One makes one’s way through ramshackle vendors’ carts lined up at the side of the street to arrive at a security post guarding the entrance to the apartments. The multi-storey structures of steel and glass tower high over the streets below. However, when one enters the lobby, a different world unfolds. Well-presented, uniformed staff greet visitors and operate the elevators. The entrance hall is marble-floored, decorated with mirrors and indirect lighting, air-conditioned, and the street sounds are replaced by unobtrusive background music.

Once inside such an apartment, the large windows frame panoramic views of the city, a cluster of high-rises, with *kampung*-settlements in between, stretching as far as one can see, obscured by a haze of dust and smog. Inside, it is cool, quiet, clean, and spacious. The apartment usually contains Western-style furniture, a fully equipped kitchen, and vast living-room areas, looking out on the city. On the streets below, distant crowds and cars, canals with green, oozing water and people sitting on the rims, fishing, are visible. The height, together with the cool and absence of noise, creates an experience completely removed from the streets below. De Certeau describes this, with reference to New York City, as being ‘lifted out of the city’s grasp’ (De Certeau 1984:92). Expatriates, one could argue, similarly experience the ‘exaltation of a scopic drive’ (1984:92). In their case, this visual pleasure is also a safe, distanced way of relating to the city. In contrast, when one leaves the building, one could suffer an ‘exit-shock’, as one is immediately submerged by the wave of heat, noise, smells and crowds that make up ‘the street’.

While apartment living might be one extreme, other forms of expatriate housing represent similar attempts at seclusion. As apartments in central Jakarta mostly cater for younger, unmarried professionals, families with children often live in large, villa-style houses in one of the well-known 'expatriate' areas such as Kemang, Pondok Indah and Cilandak. While these areas are not exclusive to expatriates, they have a high density of rather expensive houses, which contrast starkly with the poorer housing areas around them. The streets leading to these houses in Kemang, for example, are often narrow and crumbling. The house itself is set in a small compound, which comprises the house, garden, garage and front area, and is fenced off by high walls. After ringing a bell, an Indonesian security guard opens the compound doors and leads visitors to the 'main' door. While these houses are usually only one or two storeys high, they are extremely spacious. Inside, there is no dust or noise, but space, quiet and comfort. Guests are seated in a large living room area, decorated with Indonesian or Western art pieces. The living room windows open on to the garden, maybe to a terrace with Javanese garden furniture, and a small swimming pool. Behind the pool, high walls keep out neighbours and onlookers.

At this point, I want to stress that I do not disregard the practical rationale for technologies such as air-conditioning or the advantages of unpolluted indoor air and domestic hygiene. I do not mean to present expatriates' desire for 'clean spaces' as unreasonable or unfounded (Shove 2003). It is important to keep in mind, though, that they seem to disproportionately stress their own need for a cool and quiet environment, while supposing that Indonesians, who often cannot afford an air-conditioned home, would be '*more able to deal with heat and noise*', as one of my informants put it. However, expatriates disregard the fact that members of the Indonesian elite in Jakarta also live similarly 'air-conditioned lifestyles' (van Leeuwen 1997), which indicates, that given the opportunity, at least some Indonesians would prefer not having to exist in such conditions either.

More to the point, though, the relevance of expatriates' housing features extends beyond the purely material, and embodies a 'symbolic rhetoric of exclusion and superiority' (Glover 2004:62). Their houses provide comfort, but also shelter them from the Outside insofar as the Outside represents the Other. William Glover, in his study of the colonial bungalow in India, claims that 'in colonial settings, the Anglo-European home was seen as ... a refuge from the strange and unfamiliar world outside' (Glover 2004:62). Expatriates often perceive Jakarta street life as the embodiment of chaos, poverty, and the opposite of what they regard as civilisation. Yet, these are the circumstances under which many ordinary Indonesians live. These include ramshackle houses and shops lining the streets; the calls of the cart vendors; the sight of battered scooters, hand-pulled carts and motor rikshaws; wares lined up for the sale on the dusty ground; and the bustle of dense crowds of people, milling about, or sitting at roadside stalls. In this context, a house is more than a comfortable space, but represents 'Western' values, such as order, wealth, and modernity. The houses contribute to the construction, and exacerbation of differences between Inside and Outside. If one lives in such a house, going outside can be overwhelming and threatening, especially as the interiors are often styled to resemble 'Western' houses and the fact that they are located in Jakarta is not immediately obvious. This also links to a sense of power and agency. Street life confronts expatriates with the

incomprehensible behaviour of the Other, subjects them to their gaze, and exposes them to a world beyond their control.

Consequently, many expatriates try to insulate their houses from the Outside as much as possible. These attempts often fail in the sense that, especially in the tropical climate, many houses are in constant need of repair. As a consequence, for example, roofs leak during the rainy season, telephone lines can be faulty, and sophisticated electronic equipment is subject to power failures; cockroaches, ants, mosquitoes, mice, snakes, geckos, and larger lizards constantly encroach on the inside of the house and have to be kept at bay. All of this becomes a persistent reminder of the impossibility of perfectly sealing their housing ‘bubble’. This is further evidenced by the fact that many expatriates do not regard these spaces as truly their own. Several women told me that they did not really feel at home in their houses, partly because of their Indonesian staff. As a German woman, Kathrin, told me:

it is terrible – from the minute I wake up, I feel I am not alone in my house. As soon as we leave the bedroom, the servants are there. My husband and the kids leave by 7am, and then the house is empty – leaving me and the staff. But I can’t relax with them running around all the time. That’s why I go out early and play tennis. I never feel at home in my house, except for the weekends, when they are gone.

The presence of Indonesian staff can thus be seen as intruding into the ‘inner sanctum’ of expatriates’ existences, a further example of the Outside entering their lives. As was the case for Dutch colonials, ‘their self-imposed quarantine was continuously challenged by the actions of ‘natives’ perceived as ‘out of place’ in spaces of Dutch creation and control’ (Leggett 2005:275).

William Glover, in his discussion of the colonial bungalow, argues that ‘rather than simply symbolising an idea of European power and authority, the colonial domicile was a complicated milieu where the attitudes and practices of European authority met with – and never fully overcame – a range of stubborn obstacles’ (Glover 2004:63). I suggest that this also applies to expatriates’ dwellings. One example of such an obstacle was recounted by another German woman, Tania, who lived in a comparatively green neighbourhood. Her veranda overlooked a spacious garden, which was exactly how she had imagined living in the tropics would be like. But even there, she felt that her space was constantly being audibly invaded by ‘Indonesia’. As she described it,

our garden is very nice – if we’re lucky enough to be able to sit in it. Because there are all these mosques around, and you can’t imagine the noise they make. And it’s not just prayers, they also have long speeches. Our friend tells us they are very anti-Christian, very nasty. You won’t believe what we endure here during Ramadan. We can’t use the garden at all, it is a shame.

It appeared that for Tania, this was not simply a disturbing noise, but particularly offensive as the prayer calls signified religious differences: the presence of a Muslim Other. In her view, this represented a much more serious intrusion than, for example, the sound of church bells would have been. Similarly, some expatriates felt bothered by the smells wafting over from neighbouring poor *kampungs*, especially

that of burning waste, which was similarly understood as a sign of Indonesians' backwardness.

One might argue that all of these concerns are typical of the older generation of what I have called 'family expatriates', where the husband is the main breadwinner, and the family follows him to his postings. Young professionals, in contrast, often initially stay in cheaper, low-key accommodation, located in a *kampung*, in close physical proximity to and social contact with their Indonesian neighbours, which they may or may not appreciate. As their careers progress and their financial circumstances change, however, many decide to relocate to more upmarket, and therefore more secluded, forms of housing such as the high-rise apartments in the city centre. While some find this a liberation from what they experience as unwanted social surveillance in the *kampung*, others regret the loss of close contact it entails. The experiences of three young expatriates exemplify this.

Marc, Konrad and Nick, professionals in their early thirties, have been living in Jakarta for periods of between two and three years. Marc, a Canadian, started his career in Jakarta working for an international development organisation. Due to his junior position, he initially received only a small housing allowance, and lived in a flat that had been converted from a garage and shared a car with a colleague. Two years later, he was promoted and moved to a rather luxurious high-rise apartment complex. Queried about his move, he explained his previous situation in the Indonesian neighbourhood:

Every time I went to work or came home, the kids in the street were shouting at me, "Mister; Mister!" They never seemed to get used to me, and it really got on my nerves. So when I had more money for renting a place, I moved to this apartment, because it saves me from all that.

A Dutch friend of his, Konrad, had started working as a trainee for an international banking corporation in Jakarta. Similar to Marc, as his career advanced, so his lifestyle changed. He now lives in an apartment complex similar to Marc's, but recalls his early days in Jakarta:

I was living with a Javanese family in South Jakarta, they were really nice, and I learned the language ... but I had to go to work by bus, can you imagine? I had no money then, so I was standing on the bus, squeezed in for an hour every morning!

He now is driven to work in a car provided by his company. When asked about the past, he reminisces that '*life is great in the kampung ... you can sit down on a bench and chat with the guys, have a cigarette, and just hang out.*' He rarely visits those *kampungs* now, but rather spends his leisure time with other young professionals. Konrad has an Indonesian girlfriend, who lives with him, and has little desire to return to the *kampung* herself. While living in a *kampung* was not as unthinkable for Konrad as it might be for many older 'family expatriates', it had become a rather distant memory, a way of living which he would not want to return to.

Things were different with Nick. While he was a junior member of a research institute, he lived in a shared house with other young expatriates in an Indonesian

neighbourhood. He spoke with great warmth of Rini, their *pembantu* [helper]: ‘*She was wonderful. She taught me all my Indonesian. She was always worried when I worked and partied too much. And through her, I knew about all that was happening in the kampung.*’ Later, when he moved to a high-rise apartment residence, he found that

It was just not the same in Eksekutif Menteng ... yes, it was all air-conditioned and very comfortable, but I really missed the contact with the people. I was very out of touch, and I never learnt as much as I had from Rini.

Although he regretted this, he reckoned that ‘*one can’t turn things back.*’ Once his career had progressed, he felt he was unable to maintain these relationships as he had before.

Movement and Transport

I have argued that anticipated contact with Indonesians fundamentally structures expatriates’ use of space, and this concern becomes even more vital outside their homes. I suggest that their movements through public space similarly reflect and shape their experiences of, and attitudes towards ‘Indonesia’. In particular, many expatriates feel rather uncomfortable being looked at by Indonesians, and their wish to avoid this ‘gaze of the Other’ therefore informs many of their spatial practices. I will discuss the effects of this ‘gaze’ further below.

For many expatriates, public spaces and streets become liminal zones which expose them to stares, comments, and other forms of behaviour, to which they often respond with both insecurity and contempt. Since walking on the street makes them visible and vulnerable, many expatriates’ lives take place in closed spaces such as their homes, offices, hotels, and other indoor leisure venues. This leaves them only to travel between these ‘safe’ spaces, and so movement strategies become important. Apart from the fact that walking would leave them feeling rather exposed, a further disincentive to walk is the nature of Jakarta’s urban space. This is not so much due to the absence of pedestrian zones, but to the general street layout, which makes it not only difficult, but also unpleasant and dangerous to move on foot between places in the inner city. The Central Business District (CBD) in Jakarta is bounded by three major thoroughfares, Jl. Sudirman, Jl. Gatot Subroto, and Jl. Rasuna Said. These have mostly six lanes, and are meant to be crossed only at pedestrian bridges, which are often far from each other. Many streets do not have sidewalks at all, but only dusty verges, intersected by open sewers and canals. Within the CBD, almost all buildings are modern high-rises, forming a stark contrast to the hectic movement of people and vehicles on street level.

The adversity of the built environment is exacerbated by the intense heat and fumes that pervade most of Jakarta’s outside spaces. These features combine to form a rather inhospitable setting, which makes walking a daunting and unrealistic prospect. Most expatriates therefore avoid walking not only in the city centre, but in all urban areas. Instead, the car becomes the main mode of transport. This situation

is reflected in a posting on the ‘Living in Indonesia’ forum, which gives advice to newcomers to Jakarta while drawing on the image of the ‘bubble’:

If you walk out on the sidewalks, when you first get here, you might feel like there is no oxygen and you can’t breathe. But do not worry. You’ll get used to it. Of course the expats in the bubble do not have to worry about this so much (posted on the Living in Indonesia forum by Linkh@bigfoot.com, 23/01/00).

The issue of walking also arises for expatriates working in offices located around the ‘Hotel Indonesia Roundabout’ in central Jakarta. Saskia, for example, whose office is located at the roundabout, described the problem of finding a canteen for her lunch break:

It is difficult because there is a food court in the shopping centre opposite our office, but it would take me 15 minutes to get there. I would have to manoeuvre my way across the roundabout with all that traffic, three lanes and no pedestrian crossings. By the time I’d get to the food court, I’d be full of dust and sweat and totally exhausted. So what we often do is, we cross one road to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel opposite, and eat in one of their cafeterias. It is a bit expensive for a lunch break, but what can you do?

Consequently, many expatriates’ preferred mode of transport is by private car or taxi. The contrast between a safe Inside and a threatening Outside means that being in transit is precarious, however, even when travelling by car. This precariousness becomes apparent as expatriates stop at the traffic lights at one of the main inroads to Jakarta. Crippled beggars and street children move towards the cars, pressing their faces against the windows. Vendors weave through the lines of waiting vehicles, selling newspapers, tissues, cigarettes or fake wooden antiques in the choking fumes, heat and dust. Partly in order to keep these people out, expatriates usually lock their car doors when embarking on a trip by car, and rarely hand money to beggars or street children through the car windows, as some Indonesians do.

Similarly, accidents and road checks are often experienced as threatening. Road checks by police, however, whose purpose seems partly the extortion of money, also provide expatriates with an opportunity to show their skill in surviving in the ‘urban jungle’ of Indonesian traffic. Stories of how they successfully bargained with traffic police is among the favourite subjects of men’s bar conversations. In contrast to this, accidents are a far more serious matter, not only with regard to possible damage and risk to life, but because of the risk of being ‘mobbed’ by Indonesians who might try to extract a substantial compensation payment from the expatriate involved, independent of the severity of the accident. Although I heard of very few accidents in which expatriates were actually involved, such a violent collision between Inside and Outside worlds was feared as a worst-case scenario.

A Life Inside

Many expatriates move around Jakarta exclusively by car, either their own private car, a company car with a chauffeur, or by taxi. This is partly due to the lack of the kind of public transport that expatriates find acceptable, such as the efficient,

clean, and ‘safe’ mass rapid transit system that exists in Singapore. In contrast, public transport in Jakarta consists largely of fleets of decrepit buses and minibuses, motorcycle rikshaws and a suburban train system which runs on only a few routes. Buses and trains are overcrowded and dirty, and are considered ‘impossible’ to use by most expatriates. A typical day for an expatriate worker might therefore mean leaving their house around 7am, taking an hour to be driven to work to their office in central Jakarta. Lunch would take place in the same high-rise office building or in a similarly artificially-lit, air-conditioned nearby mall. After work, the driver might bring the expatriate to a gym, hotel bar, restaurant or cinema. Afterwards, he or she would be driven home and not leave their house or compound until the next morning. A whole day’s activities can thus take place almost entirely indoors.

Such reduced exposure to the outside also applies to leisure spaces. Most venues where expatriates spend their free time are indoors or in enclosed outside areas. Many sport activities take place in gyms, which are often located in the apartment complexes where they live, thus making it unnecessary to even leave the building. While many use these facilities, not all appreciate them. Sam, for example, is an avid runner and regular user of the gym in the basement of his apartment complex. He told me, however, that he longed to ‘*go for a run in a park*’. Although organisations such as the Hash House Harriers organise weekly runs in the countryside on the edges of Jakarta, what Sam referred to was the lack of easily accessible green areas where he would be able to go for individual daily runs. Of the outdoor sports pursued by expatriates, golf and tennis were the most popular, the latter being a particular favourite of expatriate wives.

Golf is popular for a variety of reasons. Notably, there are several well-maintained golf courses in the city of Jakarta alone, and many more within an hour’s drive from the capital. While playing golf, as elsewhere, may be used for fostering business relationships, the golf courses in Jakarta assume a particular significance because they represent a ‘safe’, guarded outdoor space. Although golf clubs are not exclusive to expatriates, they provide shelter from unwanted attention from Indonesians. A German expatriate wife, Regina, summed up the particular advantages of a golf course in Jakarta: ‘*when you play golf, you are outside, the air is fine, there is enough space, and you aren’t bothered by anyone.*’ These correspond with some of the main complaints about living in Jakarta: the lack of fresh air, space, and privacy. Another favoured activity, especially among young professionals, is scuba diving. It similarly immerses them in a natural environment while eclipsing the social realities on land. As some expatriates praise the ‘*fantastic Indonesian underwater world*’, this rather accentuates the fact that they find it more difficult to appreciate the Indonesian over-water-world.

Being removed both from the everyday Indonesian social and natural environment is typical of many venues where expatriates socialise. Much of their free time is spent indoors, in air-conditioned spaces, often without natural light. During a coffee morning of the German women’s association, for example, the conversation turns to trips to Germany and Kathrin remarks: ‘*just being in natural daylight is such a treat when I’m at home, because in Jakarta, I spend all my time under neon lights.*’ Many expatriates go for drinks in places that are entirely cut off from the outside. The ‘pub around the corner’, let alone beer garden or street café, does not really exist, and bars are often tucked away in high-rise buildings.

Marc once made a joking remark that Jakarta was enjoyable only *'from inside, in the dark, or from above'*. In fact, the high-rise perspective was one of the ways in which the Jakarta cityscape could be most appreciated. Unsurprisingly, a popular place for expatriates to take visitors is a revolving restaurant on the top floor of a high-rise tower, which offers spectacular views of the city. On another occasion, when driving towards Jakarta's impressive night skyline, Marc declared that, *'this is how I really like this city.'* I suggest that expatriates' love of the panoramic reflects key aspects of their relation to Jakarta. As I have argued, a view of the city from the above is removed and therefore safe. As de Certeau notes, however, the panorama-city is also a totalising fiction (1984:93) in the sense that it obscures the multitude of practices that take place on street level. I suggest that this fictional character contributes to expatriates' sense of living in an unreal world, or in a 'bubble', which allows them to look out, while floating above the ground.

This removedness from the physical and social worlds around them is also captured by an emblematic incident which was narrated to me by Sue, who had been living with her husband in the Hilton Residence complex for several months. During the May protests of 1998, which led to the overthrowing of President Suharto, expatriates were advised not to leave their houses. The high-rise Hilton Residence is located next to the Semanggi intersection, which was one of the main locations for the pro-democracy street demonstrations. Sue recalled that

since we couldn't go outside, and the men couldn't go to work, we all gathered at the Hilton and had cocktail parties. Honestly, we had our Gin and Tonics here, looking out of the window, and could see the clashes between the protesters and the police happening right underneath.

Although expatriates to some extent appreciate such distanced relations with the Outside, some also dislike them. The removal from the natural environment, especially when compared to their home countries, fuels the sense that their lives in Jakarta are somehow 'unreal'. Germans in particular expressed that they were *'missing nature'* and wanted *'to be in the forest'*, or *'go out and feel the spring sun, and breathe fresh air'*, especially immediately before and after a journey to their home country. These bodily experiences were difficult to replicate in Jakarta. Some expatriates attempted to remedy this. Kathrin for example, a German woman, told me how she once decided to go for a walk through her neighbourhood to pick up her son who was training in a nearby sports stadium. But on the short way there, crossing a *kampung*, she felt that *'it was hot and dusty, it was a pain to walk. And there was this stench – I do not know what, the sewage canals or something burning, but I couldn't stand it. I couldn't breathe, it was too much.'* She abandoned the attempt and did not try again.

I suggest that some expatriates' sense of disconnection from the world around them was shattered in an unforeseen manner during a period of a few weeks in May and June 2000, as Jakarta felt the impact of a series of minor earthquakes, whose epicentres lay in West Java. None of the expatriates I knew had been harmed, and the ones I met at a gathering on the morning after the first earthquake animatedly exchanged stories of how they had experienced its effects on their homes the night

before. Martine for example, a Belgian woman who lived on the 15th floor of a high-rise apartment building in central Jakarta, described how she had put on a nightgown and went to the living room as she felt the tremors, and found the chandelier swinging from the ceiling. Saskia, whose apartment was on the 11th floor, talked about how she had woken up and saw the water moving in the glass on her bedside cabinet. Ingrid, who lived with her family in a one-storey villa, had looked out into the garden, and found that there were small waves in their swimming pool and water was splashing onto the lawn. Although they were intimidated by what had happened, there also was a considerable degree of excitement. This might be unsurprising, given that many had never witnessed the effects of an earthquake before. I suggest, however, that these experiences held additional significance for them insofar as the earthquakes connected them with the environment that they were usually isolated from. It seemed that the shocks of the earthquake had burst their ‘bubble’ and assured them that their lives were, after all, real.

The Gaze of ‘the Other’

Expatriates’ relations with their environment were complicated, however, through the presence of Indonesians, and more generally by being confronted with a non-white public space. This involved their bodily experiences of being Othered, either through being stared at by Indonesians, or through being called *bule*, an Indonesian term for ‘white person’ (Echols and Shadily 1989), while moving through public spaces. In the following, I will discuss their experiences as whites in a predominantly non-white environment, their reactions to it, and both Indonesians’ and expatriates’ understandings of what it means to call someone *bule*.

Page and Thomas (1994) as well as Hill (1999) have invoked, in different contexts, the notion of a ‘white public space’ which influences non-whites’ movement within it. While Page and Thomas discuss this with respect to the U.S. health system, for Hill the notion indicates the linguistic prevalence of English in the U.S., which is associated with whiteness. This prevalence implies the devaluation of Spanish as spoken by Hispanics, but ready acceptance of whites’ habits of using Mock Spanish. ‘White public space’ is thus constituted in part through whites’ appropriation of non-white language practices, while the original practices remain excluded from this space. For the case of expatriates, I adopt a corresponding concept of an ‘Asian public space’, which implies that in Indonesian society, whites are confronted with, and have to negotiate, a predominantly ‘Asian’ cultural and linguistic environment.

I use the notion of Asian public space specifically to refer to a visual and verbal public space in part composed of common Indonesians’ habits of gazing at expatriates and calling them *bule*. These are two important practices through which expatriates feel racially Othered. As I will discuss below, many expatriates find both of these practices deeply unsettling. Other unsettling practices, not discussed in detail here, include being talked to or shouted at in the street.

Hall, commenting on Franz Fanon, describes how the ‘the gaze of the Other fixes him (the black man) in an identity’ (Hall 1996:345). This implies a notion of identity as inherently relational. Hall expresses it as the ‘necessity of the Other to the self’

(Hall 1991:48), arguing that identities are always constructed vis-à-vis a (racial) Other. In this sense, 'there is no identity that is without the dialogic relationship to the Other' (Hall 1996:345). The 'gaze of the Other', while fixing the opposite in an identity, therefore also has to be recognised as an interactive process. Therefore, whilst the gaze usually refers to whites gazing at a 'Black Other', conversely it can hold for whites themselves being fixed in the gaze of this other – thus becoming a 'White Other'.

This reversal can also be applied to what Urry (1990) has called the 'tourist gaze'. In the context of describing tourist practices, Urry suggests that, 'we gaze at what we encounter. And this gaze is as socially organised and systematised as is the gaze of the medic' (1990:1). Urry, however, follows only one direction of the 'gaze', that is, tourists looking at 'locals'. But gazes exchanged between foreigners and locals can certainly be conceived of as a visual dialogue which can become very lopsided. In the Jakarta cityspace, expatriates become visible as whites in an Asian public space: they themselves become, the unwilling 'spectacle of the Other' themselves (Hall 1997). Expatriates can feel caught in the 'gaze of the Other' on the street, in shops, train stations, or at tourist sites as Indonesians stare, or turn their heads in order to follow them and what they are doing. Indonesians blatantly measure up, scrutinise, or pointedly attempt to establish visual contact with them. This contrasts starkly with their experiences at home where they effortlessly merge into predominantly white environments, and where, they feel, staring at others in the street is considered as unacceptable and rude.

Many expatriates experience this as an acutely unpleasant, unsettling experience. Eric, for example, a Canadian in his early thirties, was working for a large car manufacturing company. He had chosen to work abroad not only because of more interesting career opportunities, but also because he saw himself as rather cosmopolitan. Eric had spent the last three years in Chile on a posting for the same company. In Chile, he felt that he blended in more and could walk on the streets without 'looking different'. In contrast, this seemed impossible in Jakarta; he found that '*here people always stare at you, you are immediately recognised as a foreigner.*' Similarly, the main complaints of several middle-aged German women who had gathered at a newcomers' coffee morning concerned the sense of 'always *being seen as exotic.*' Katharina, a housewife and mother of two, who had been living in Jakarta for two years, warned that the feeling of exposure was likely to remain. As she explained to the new members of the German Women's Group:

here in Jakarta, everybody is always staring at you and starting to talk to you. I know they do not mean it, and they do not know any better, but it gets on your nerves. It was the same in Malaysia. That was so nice about going to Australia for holidays: even the kids said, "Mummy, nobody is talking to us here". You can move around as you like.

How expatriates live in and move through the city of Jakarta is to a considerable extent influenced by the aim to escape the 'gaze of the Other'. Many adopt a form of 'tunnel vision' whereby they ignore their peripheral fields of vision. This is aided by common practices such as wearing sunglasses and personal stereos when walking through public spaces. They are used as a kind of body armour designed to

protect the wearer from incoming gazes or comments invading their private space. These strategies, however, were often not particularly successful, as they can render the person even more visible, as Petra, a German woman in her thirties, came to understand. She and her husband had come to Jakarta for a stint of two years working in the head office of a national development organisation. They lived in a modest house in an Indonesian neighbourhood, and Petra generally felt rather positive about working in Jakarta. However, she was unsettled by feeling observed whenever she left their house. To escape these looks she started wearing sunglasses, but found that they did not solve the problem. Since nobody else was wearing sunglasses they made her stand out more, giving her an air, she felt, of haughtiness and opening her to charges of arrogance. As with many other expatriates, she eventually resorted to avoiding public spaces and their potential embarrassments altogether. Even the short walk to flag a taxi down became unbearable after a while; as she explained, *'I couldn't take the stares any more while waiting for the taxi. So in the end, I ordered the taxi by phone and waited for it inside my house.'*

The 'gaze of the Other' is also gendered. At play here is not so much the Orientalist discourse of the gaze of the black male on a white female body, which may have been moderated by the feminisation of the 'Asian male'. Instead, I argue that the key aspect is the white male discourse of the sexualised Asian female body. In this context, the 'white female body' is being re-evaluated vis-à-vis an idealised 'Asian female body'. A recurring topic in expatriate women's conversations are therefore feelings of lack of attractiveness when compared with Indonesian women. This can be exacerbated in the case of expatriate wives who left their jobs in order to follow their husbands. Professional identity diminished, their sense of femininity takes on more importance but can be undermined by a fear that Western men might prefer Asian women. In this context, being the object of Indonesians' gaze could be particularly difficult as it stresses not only their difference as whites, but also their bodily difference, and sense of inadequacy, as racially different women.

The desire of many expatriates to avoid embarrassing exposure to 'the gaze' led them to frequent exclusive shops, restaurants, golf courses, or private business clubs where they were less likely to become an object of attention. The only domain where they could be sheltered from the 'gaze of the Other' was in their own homes. While the older generation of 'family expatriates' tends to live in secluded compounds in certain areas of south Jakarta, younger professionals prefer high-rise apartments in the city centre. Both are well distanced from public space. Furthermore, it is important to note that while many expatriates dislike being looked at, they nevertheless like to take the Indonesian Other into view. Expatriates are therefore as much perpetrators of the 'gaze', as they claim to be victims of it. Expatriates may similarly wish to fix the 'Indonesian Other' in their gaze; the differences might lie in the ways it is performed. While looks from Indonesians are often direct, expatriates rather glance from a distance, for example through tinted car windows or from high-rise apartment buildings, which offer such a 'master's view' of the city from above, while sheltering their inhabitants from the environments of the streets below. This practice, though, might arise from expatriates' anxiety not to draw further attention to themselves, rather than from wishing to respect the personal spheres of Indonesians. The visual desire of

expatriates thus links their moral indignation about Indonesians' gazes, which many refer to as '*uncivilised*', to their discomfort with being the object of it.

'Bules'

Jakarta provides many Asian public spaces not only in visual, but also in linguistic terms. *Bule* is an Indonesian language word that is commonly used to describe white persons. The literal meaning of the term is 'albino' (Echols and Shadily 1989). Expatriates are referred to as *bule* in a range of situations, for example by people on the street, or in conversations among Indonesians. A common scenario is a Westerner passing a group of schoolchildren on the street, and one child nudging another, pointing to the foreigner and shouting the word '*bule*'. Similarly, it would be common to say '*My neighbour works for a bule*' or '*There are many bules living around Kemang*' – a predominantly expatriate neighbourhood – examples which were suggested by Indonesians in an English-language Internet forum discussing the topic.

As expatriates move through public space, Indonesian passers-by might use the word *bule* when directly addressing expatriates, as for example a vendor on a market calling, '*eh bule, beli ini dong!*' – 'hey *bule*, buy this here!'. Sometimes, it might simply be used to attract the attention of Westerners, and engage them in some kind of exchange, such as shouting '*bule*', 'hello *bule*', or simply 'hello mister', which can have the same function as the term *bule*. Monika for example, a middle-aged German married to an Indonesian, encountered such reactions, although they had a slightly difference resonance for her than for other expatriates. Monika had been living with her family in a modest Indonesian neighbourhood for several years. She worked in a small Indonesian company, spoke fluent Indonesian, and engaged in friendly chats with their neighbours. But situations would still occur when she would return from work, walk up to her house, and a neighbour would casually remark to his wife: '*look, the bule is coming home*' – a verbal gesture she strongly resented.

Expatriates seem particularly offended when they are not addressed directly, but when they are referred to as *bule* in conversations they overhear. For example, Nadja was a German woman in her forties, who had been living in Indonesia as a consultant for several years and spoke Indonesian well. She recounted how she was shopping in a supermarket, when she realised two young women were scrutinizing her, and one whispered to the other, '*see the bule over there?*' Nadja found this offensive, as she reckoned the women behaved as if she was unable to understand their conversation. This is not uncommon. For example, shop assistants might talk among themselves about the wishes of an expatriate customer, such as '*the bule wants the black frame for this picture*'. Incidents like these are often cited as hurtful and degrading by the expatriates involved. Apart from these direct exchanges, expatriates seem aware that the term *bule* is routinely used to describe Westerners in Indonesian discourses; or at least expatriates generally assume this. Their awareness, however, can in some cases turn into an almost obsessive suspicion. For example, a columnist for the daily English language newspaper, *The Jakarta Post*, was once accused by a newspaper reader who also participated in the Internet discussion forum of overusing the term

bule in one of her articles, while a close reading of that particular article in fact revealed the word occurring only twice.

The significances of ‘Othering’ practices are multiple, contextual, and can elude precise identification. Especially with respect to the use of *bule*, the intended meaning crucially depends on the speaker and the social context. Despite the determination of many expatriates to identify *bule* as an intrinsically derogatory term, its semantic potential remains ambiguous. As emerges from discussions with Indonesians, *bule* can be used in a neutral fashion, as well as carrying positive or negative connotations. Indonesians often explain that *bule* is used in an unassuming, functional way – as a shorthand to describe a white foreigner. As an Indonesian participant on the ‘Living in Indonesia’ forum states,

‘*bule* is purpose for a white or Caucasian foreigner, cos the skin looks more brighter than Indonesian skin. Don’t worry, it doesn’t mean any offense. Or it doesn’t mean Indonesian peoples [are] racist to white peoples or black peoples’ (idafix@cbn.net, 10/07/00).

An American contributor to the forum, who is married to an Indonesian, presents this attitude as follows:

‘There is nothing impolite inferred when an Indonesian refers to you as *bule*. At home we have to tread on eggshells and pretend all races (and sexes) are the same for political correctness, but Indonesians just call a spade a spade (no pun intended) and say it like it is. You are white; they call you *bule*’ (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by dcook@id.kufpec.com, 6/04/02).

Some Indonesians, however, point out that while *bule* might not be derogatory, it is considered impolite, as it is a rather informal term. As David, an American researcher at an Indonesian university, made clear: ‘*My university colleagues would never refer to me as bule in an official context, for example in a meeting. It’s seen as inappropriate because it’s too colloquial*’. Similarly, an expatriate on the forum reckons that ‘*any decent educated Indonesian will not address you as bule unless the person intended to flaunt disrespect*’ (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by da@lycos.com, 20/04/01).

Both Indonesians and expatriates who regard the term *bule* as neutral, concede that it can be used in a negative way. As one expatriate points out, ‘*I have never considered [bule] racist, but I can see why some people might use it in an offensive manner towards you*’ (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by paulcokerly@hotmail.com, 28/12/00). Another long-term resident in Indonesia also recognises its negative uses: ‘*if you get called “bule kampung” (...)* that’s another thing. *And if you get called “bule kepet”², then you really should be offended*’ (posted on the

1 *Kampung* is an Indonesian term referring to a village, a quarter, or a residential area for lower classes in a town or city (see Echols and Shadily 1989). The adjective *kampungan* means ‘countrified, boorish’; A *bule kampung* can therefore be understood as a derogatory term, referring to an unsophisticated white foreigner.

2 The Indonesian verb *kepet* refers to failing to clean oneself after defecating, or failing to bathe; the derived term *ngkepet* means ‘to be a shit ass’ (Echols and Shadily 1989).

Living in Indonesia Forum by dcook@id.kufpec.com, 6/04/02). An expatriate living in Jakarta reckons that

when people are trying to be offensive by the use of “*bule*”, it’s usually pretty obvious. Example 1: walking down the street, a bus zooms by and dozens of school kids yell out the windows, “BLAY³”. Example 2: walking through Blok M late at night and a gang of young males standing in a dark corner shout out “BLAY” (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by shekelle@biology.wustl.edu, 20/04/01).

It is not clear, however, whether the above examples are in fact intended as insults, or are attempts to establish communication, or merely to attract attention. Although *bule* certainly has pejorative potential, it is not necessarily always realised. Finally, Indonesians as well as expatriates point out that *bule* can be used in positive ways. As the American David points out: ‘*some of my Indonesian friends just love bules, they admire bules and everything that bules do – and they still call them bule*’. The use of *bule* can thus vary: it is not reducible to an insult (as far as Indonesian speakers’ intentions are concerned). While some expatriates acknowledge this, expatriate discourses still often construct the term as a ‘racial slur’. Debates of the meanings of *bule* are much more prominent than those concerning staring. Although in informal conversations expatriates express their irritation with both, the discomfort with the ‘gaze’ features much less in public debates. Similarly, many Indonesians seem more ready to discuss the term *bule*, than the issue of gazing at foreigners. Furthermore, while the potential meanings of *bule* can be defined, the significance of the ‘gaze’ might be harder to determine. Some Indonesians explain that looking at Westerners can be a gesture of curiosity, also suggesting the wish to make contact. Others point out that the ‘gaze’ is not specifically directed at foreigners, but is part of a ‘spectator culture’ in Indonesian public life, where any extraordinary occurrence quickly attracts the attention of passers-by.

Expatriates’ Constructions

I argue that expatriates, through their discursive constructions and practical responses to instances of being Othered, attempt to regain a power position vis-à-vis Indonesians which they feel has been undermined. This demonstrates Hartigan’s (1999) point that whiteness, as any other racial category, is socially constructed in specific social locales. Moreover, in the situation of expatriates, it is also contested. It corresponds to Bonnett’s imperative that whiteness has to be theoretically ‘made slippery, torn open’ (Bonnett 1999:204). Expatriates’ constructions of the Othering practices to which they are subjected are not usually concerned with understanding their contextual nuances and situated intentions but tend to ascribe to them malevolent or derogatory intentions. With reference to the situation in the US, Dyson discusses ‘whiteness as the false victim of black power’ (Dyson 1999:221). He suggests that ‘whites were able to make themselves appear less powerful than they were

3 The word ‘blay’ here indicates *bule* as it sounds when being shouted across the street.

by overstating the threat posed by blacks' (1999:221). It is certainly possible that expatriates cast themselves as victims of Indonesians in order to detract from their own economically and politically powerful positions.

Another possibility is that the response strategies of expatriates are aimed at regaining the power of definition. As white Westerners, they object to being marked as 'racial' in the first place. As Hartigan points out, 'one central importance of whiteness ... is that it identifies how the unmarked and normative position of whites is maintained by positing 'race' as a category of difference' (Hartigan 1999:496). Whiteness is not even seen as a race at all, since the notion of race seems to refer only to non-whites. Being classified as a race is an uncommon and uncomfortable experience for expatriates. It also explains why many Indonesians' assertion that *bule* is used in neutral way, and simply states the fact of expatriates' whiteness, is no consolation, as expatriates might find this racialising disturbing in itself.

The loss of anonymity that many expatriates bemoan is also an expression of surprise and regret at their sudden bodily visibility, whatever its shape and colour. They can no longer be 'dis-embodied' (Dyer 1997:39). Expatriates presence in Indonesia as well-paid experts indicates the economical and political power of Western industrialised countries in Indonesia. While expatriates' lives are predicated on this political presence in Indonesia, they would actually prefer it to be combined with bodily invisibility. Their obvious visibility is then attributed not to their racialness but to Indonesians' perceived racist behaviour.

Expatriates' dismay is further compounded by the fact that their whiteness is not only defined as a race, but marked as one that deviates from another, in this case Asian, racial norm. An American, Michelle, expresses her feelings about being regarded as racially deviant:

Indonesians look at me as if I'm a freak of nature – but I'm not! God has intended me to be this way, I'm not some genetic mistake. I tell them: where I come from, there are millions of people just like me!

Her hurt and incomprehension were almost palpable. Tom, a young Canadian expatriate, summed these up: '*if they call me bule, that means I'm somebody who is rich, rude, and ignorant, who smells of cheese and has no morals – and nobody likes to be stereotyped like this*'. Expatriates might find the notion of whiteness as a negative quality especially difficult because, as Dyer suggests, whiteness is often seen as 'nothing in particular, that white culture and identity have, as it were, no content' (Dyer 1997:9) – let alone a negative one.

Discussions on the 'Living in Indonesia' forum address the issues that 'whiteness' might be constructed by Indonesians not just as an Other, but an Other that is lacking in relation to the Indonesian norm, for example with respect to skin colour. One contributor complains:

My official Indonesian dictionary says that "*bule*" is a Javanese word with one of its meanings being "*luntur*". *Luntur* is, of course, the Indonesian word for "faded" as in faded blue jeans. I'm not faded any more than someone who's dark-skinned was dipped in shit (Posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by star@cbn.net.id, 21/04/01).

Irrespective of the factual accuracy of this reasoning, the participant clearly finds it disturbing that white skin might be regarded as a lesser version of dark skin. White skin as a deficiency is also discussed in the following posting: *'bule in Bahasa Indonesia originally means 'albino' or 'unpigmented skin', like those of pigs. Now it's widely used in Indonesia to indirectly call people of Caucasian race'* (Posted on the *Living in Indonesia* Forum by harsya2001@hotmail.com, 01/03/02). Being defined as 'deficient' is possibly seen as an expression of power which, expatriates feel, has been seized by Indonesians illegitimately. Expatriates' exasperation could be fuelled by the implicit conviction that Indonesians, as former colonial subjects, who are often regarded as politically, economically and socially inferior, have the least right to assume such power of representation over expatriates. Being stared at, and being called *bule*, by people whom many routinely regard as subordinates, is thus seen as adding insult to injury.

A complicating factor is that expatriates might dislike their visibility because it intensifies their feelings of guilt about their luxurious lifestyle in Indonesia. In the same vein, they find the use of the term *bule* with its connotations of 'rich, arrogant Westerner' problematic, because it reminds them of who they are. Finally, some expatriates are irritated because being called *bule* does not acknowledge the extent of integration that they think they have achieved. This holds especially for expatriates who have lived in Indonesia for longer periods of time, speak Indonesian well, and regard themselves as rather competent in terms of Indonesian social life. Yet, they are often treated just like any other white Westerner. Johanna, a German married to an Indonesian, recounts a typical incident: *'One day, I am coming home from work, going into my house, and somebody shouts, ohhh, bule! And I am like, this is MY house, I have lived here for more than 8 years, can you not yell bule at me in my own front yard?'* Long-term expatriates thus often feel that their social integration, as they regard it, is not reflected in Indonesians' reactions, who might see them first and foremost as foreigners. As Johanna describes it:

I have lived here longer than anywhere else, I have lots of friends. If I want to buy something, I know where to go. I know how to go from A to B, and if not, I know how to find out. I am perfectly at home and this is my home. But every time someone looks at you, you are a foreigner!

She finds this constant Othering wearing:

You are seen as someone who doesn't know. I walk up to someone and speak Indonesian, and they just look. The constant assumption is, I do not know anything, I am the one you can't talk to, the one who is rich. That is very tiring.

I suggest, however, that even these situations are fundamentally related to power distribution between expatriates and Indonesians. Here, it concerns the power to evaluate whether an expatriate 'belongs'. Some expatriates might be upset, because given their individual efforts, they are convinced that they should rightfully be accepted by Indonesian society, and are offended if this seems not to be the case. This resentment might stem from the assumption that expatriates should decide about whether they 'belong'. As some expatriates consider themselves 'integrated'

in Indonesian society, they find it hard to accept that some Indonesians might think otherwise.

In her article ‘The trickster’s play: whiteness in the subordination and liberation process’, Hurtado (1999) identifies a list of ‘tricks’ that, she suggests, whites employ in order to maintain positions of dominance. In a similar vein, one could describe expatriates’ ‘tricks’ to reclaim power. Two strategies are employed to disparage Indonesians: firstly, characterising them as primitive, childlike, and uneducated, and secondly, as racist.

Jean, an American, explains that ‘*they (Indonesians) don’t know it’s impolite to stare in our culture ... they don’t know any better*’, while Martha, a German, reasons that, ‘*they are not educated, for them we are like somebody from television*’. Both strategies become especially visible in contributions to the ‘Living in Indonesia’ forum. This is not incidental, as the relative anonymity of the forum encourages people to voice their opinions more frankly, and more extremely than they might do in face-to-face interaction. Discussions often centre on the use of *bule* as an offending practice. One contributor identifies ignorance as its main cause: ‘*The word’s (bule) origins are and remain derogatory. Allowing people to use the word – or worse, using it yourself – supports the ignorance that surrounds us here as it does in every culture*’ (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by nobody@indo.net.id 16/07/02). Another blames the Indonesian peoples’ character:

Indonesians use the term (*bule*) to boost their own lack of self-esteem. As we know, belittling someone else to give yourself an ego boost won’t work for long. If short sightedness is a stumbling block to nation building, Indonesians are only delaying the day when they can truly claim to be citizens of a nation they made instead of one they inherited from the UN after WW2 (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by subaru@cbn.net.id, 5/04/02).

Finally, an expatriate argues that Indonesians need to be discouraged from using *bule*, with the justification that

teaching people their own language and setting limits for correct social behavior is a right we all possess as humans. I will not allow someone talking to me to use derogatory English terms for ethnic Western groups, so why should I allow an Indonesian to use a slur when referring to me? If anything, not correcting them is even more arrogant – it shows you don’t think Indonesians are worth teaching... because ignorance and laziness are at the root of this country’s centuries-old troubles (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by SEF, 1/02/02).

Frank, a British expatriate working for an oil company, claimed that ‘*Indonesians don’t have any respect- they know that bule is a rude term, but they use it anyway*’. As a contributor to the Living in Indonesia forum declares,

bule is offensive and this is one of the most racist – or race conscious – societies I’ve ever lived in. It’s probably worse than the Southern United States, where I was born. It’s worse because on top of low general educational levels, most Indonesian have few real social graces (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by star@cbn.net.id, 21/04/01).

A second participant agrees:

Indonesia is one of the most racist societies in which I've ever had the pleasure of living. Indonesians are constantly denigrating others (including one another) by tribe, birthplace, and religion. While, admittedly, this is human nature at its worst and done everywhere, it still has no place in a pluralistic, democratic society. Because developing that kind of society is Indonesia's main problem now, use of any derogatory remarks to describe other humans must be stopped now (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by sam@idola.net.id, 23/04/01).

While postings like these abound, it does not seem to occur to the writers that their impression of Indonesian society being racist might be due to the fact that they are for the first time a racial Other themselves.

Some expatriates, though, employ the strategy of adopting the term *bule* themselves. One expatriate would thus tell a friend, '*we went to this new bar in Blok M, but there were not many bules around, mostly Indonesian rich kids*'. Another example is Sergio, a young Italian, who told me that, '*sometimes I have to go to a bule café for a cappuccino, just to relax*'. Or, as a contributor to the 'Living in Indonesia' forum explained, '*I try not to be ignorant, but I use that word too to my dearest bule friends*' (posted on the Living in Indonesia Forum by ssrb, 20/03/02). While this seems like a convenient, functional usage of the term, using *bule* in such a casual, self-deprecating manner also represents a power move: through re-appropriating the term, expatriates limit the unwanted connotations that Indonesians' usage of the term might have, thus linguistically regaining a dominant position.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that examining the embodied experiences and spatial practices of expatriates provides a key perspective on their lives as mobile professionals. This supports a broader argument to be attentive to the corporealities of migration experiences as well as their symbolic dimensions. In particular, I have explored the kind of spaces that expatriates create, and argued that many of their practices are concerned with the drawing and negotiation of boundaries. In this respect, corporate expatriates share the 'colonial imagination' of late Dutch colonisers as they feel 'out of place' in Indonesia, and consequently partition their environment into a safe, 'Western' Inside and an alien, threatening Outside. Through discussing in detail their dwelling habits and movement strategies, I hope to have illustrated the degree to which Euro-American expatriates are willing to seal themselves off from the messy reality of the Indonesian cityscapes (cf Mrázek 2002:275).

The significance of their attempts at seclusion extends beyond establishing parallels with colonial contexts. Placed in a framework of current transnational migration, expatriates' concern with boundary-making becomes important as it critically questions the currently prevailing discourse of 'global flows'. As I have demonstrated, many expatriates try hard to channel 'fluidity' rather than immersing themselves in it. Their insistence on fortifying spatial and social divides challenges notions of a transnational capitalist class which is claimed to be geographically

mobile and cosmopolitan in outlook (Sklair 2001, Hannerz 1996) – such conceptions appear to be insufficiently grounded in ethnographic realities.

I also suggest, though, that striving to exclude the city of Jakarta through the creation of an expatriate bubble remains imperfect insofar as the Indonesian Outside keeps seeping into their spaces and frequently eludes their control. Such leakage can occur in the material conditions of their houses, for example, or in the presence of their Indonesian domestic staff. The sense of loss of control over their personal space emerges more dramatically in the street. Being looked at by Indonesians, for instance, can be a disturbing experience. These scenarios point more generally to the complexity of power relations between expatriates and Indonesians. Rather than flowing unidirectionally, the power of privileged migrants, similar to that of colonials, is continuously contested and effectively challenged through local spatial materiality and bodily practices. Providing a perspective on migration ‘from above’, the case of expatriates therefore reveals the vulnerability of *privileged* migrants’ bodies, and the capacity of the Indonesian environment to disturb them.

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Chapter 5

Boundaries of the Body

On a busy road in south Jakarta, tucked in between Western-style supermarkets, boutiques, and Javanese furniture shops, is a popular beauty salon. Behind a busy reception desk, several large rooms are bustling with Indonesian staff. Pop music is being played in the background. In a corner of the main room, two American expatriate women are seated next to each other. One of them is quite large, and her body barely fits into the treatment chair, its squeezed flesh bulging out from underneath the armrests. Her head is stuck in a stationary hair dryer. One beauty technician is sitting on a wooden step close to the ground and performs a manicure on her right hand, while her feet are bathed by another squatting over a washing basin on the floor. The other American woman receives a head massage while her nails are treated by another Indonesian woman. Cups of coffee and magazines are sitting on a table next to them. The expatriate women, almost oblivious to the efforts of the Indonesian stylists working on them, are chatting with each other. The large woman tells the other: *'Joan was getting really upset, because Susan had been talking behind her back, but I said, why are you getting upset? You know she can be like that'*. Her friend nods in agreement, while a herbal conditioner is massaged into her hair. She readjusts the towel covering her shoulders and sighs: *'I never trusted her, but you just have to put up with these people'* (Fieldnotes, June 2000).

In the previous chapter, I argued for bringing the notion of embodiment to bear on processes of privileged migration. I have specifically considered the 'body-in-space', including how expatriates draw boundaries and mark divisions through their housing and movement practices. In this chapter, I focus on the boundaries of the body itself, and on the significance of bodies as sites where expatriates' relations with Indonesia are enacted, articulated and negotiated. I suggest that these boundaries become especially important in situations where the body is perceived as an entity in flux, both in a corporeal as well as a conceptual sense. The notion of the body in flux is expressed in recent theoretical discourses on the body. Thomas Csordas suggests that previously, the body was regarded as a 'fixed, material entity ... existing prior to the mutability and flux of cultural change' (Csordas 1994:1), but argues that this attitude has now changed, and that 'the body should be understood not as a constant amidst flux but as an epitome of that flux' (1994:2).

One could argue that notions of a fluid body resonate with the emphasis placed on global flows in current discourses on transnationalism. Not only are people, goods and ideas seen as being in constant flux, but also the body itself. As with the concept of global flows, though, geographical mobility or bodily fluidity in itself does not necessarily imply that expatriates appreciate the possibility of becoming open-minded, or, to formulate a parallel, 'open-bodied'. On the contrary, I suggest that while many are aware of inevitable flows across the boundaries of the body,

they often struggle to contain and control them. Their concerns echo those of late Dutch colonials in the East Indies. Rudolf Mrázek, in his study on technology and nationalism, argues that one of the key objectives of the Dutch for implementing technologies such as sewage systems and canals was not only to literally contain contagious fluids, but also to control ‘fluidity’ in a metaphorical sense. He suggests that ‘the threat, especially as modern cities were emerging in the Indies, was in fluidity ... To rule the colony, to become modern there, to stay, meant to confine the flow’ (Mrázek 2002:56). This ‘flow’ thus refers to sewage, but also to Indonesian practices and beliefs more broadly that were seen as pre-modern and detrimental to their colonial authority by the Dutch.

Such fluidity, both physical and figurative, arguably constituted a threat for colonials as well as for modern-day expatriates because of issues related to purity and pollution, as discussed for example by Mary Douglas (1966). As explored in the previous chapter, many expatriates perceive ‘Indonesian’ spaces are dirty and disorderly, whereas Western ones are seen as clean and controlled. I suggest that borne out of this division is expatriates’ fear of contamination which fuels their desire to fortify the boundaries of the body, and to carefully control what passes them. As discussed in the previous chapter with regard to space, the boundaries of the body are the site of closure and obstruction as much as of transgressions and leakages, as well as of controlled passages across them.

It would be inappropriate, therefore, to construct expatriates’ attitudes as entirely focused on obstruction and closure. As has become apparent in the previous chapter, many expatriates also feel uncomfortable with their secluded and seemingly ‘unreal’ lifestyles. Saskia for example, while having dinner with a group of friends at a rather luxurious Indian restaurant, remarked on this occasion: ‘*I really don’t like living here in the way that you are cut off from the life around you... you don’t interact with all the other people. You live in your own bubble*’. Her comment reveals an inherent ambivalence about their lives that is characteristic for many expatriates. While there is a desire for insulation, there is also the wish to embrace certain aspects of Indonesian culture, and incorporate them into their lives. These complex and shifting attitudes can lead to the rejection or appropriation of certain bodily practices, including feelings of repulsion and disgust, which may nevertheless be tinged with a sense of exploration and exotic adventure. I suggest that consequently, expatriates are willing to expose themselves – and specifically their bodies – to aspects of Indonesia, provided this takes place in a manner that they can control. Technologies of transformation play a key role in this.

Expatriates’ anxieties about the body’s boundaries speak of the central role that the body has in negotiations of identity, a topic which has been widely explored. In the present ethnographic context, Ann Stoler’s (1995, 1997a,b) analysis of the reproduction of European bodies and identities in the colonial Dutch East Indies is particularly instructive. Stoler examines the racial and sexual politics in the Dutch colony, and traces the continuous efforts of Europeans living in the colony to distance themselves from the ‘natives’, thereby asserting and maintaining their European identities. Within this situation, Stoler specifically attends to what she calls the ‘quotidian technologies of self-affirmation’ developed by Europeans (Stoler 1995:113). These technologies include instructions on housekeeping, childrearing,

and issues of domestic hygiene. Stoler emphasises the significance of the body for the construction of a colonial European identity, and discusses how these ‘European bourgeois bodies were produced in practices’, for example through instructions on their ‘medical and moral care’ (Stoler *ibid*:110). Stoler’s ideas also speak to the case of contemporary expatriates in Indonesia. A key issue discussed by Stoler, which particularly resonates with expatriates, concerns the negotiation between Europeans’ lifestyles and what are considered ‘Western values’ on the one hand, and Indonesian influences on the other.

Employing Stoler’s arguments in a contemporary context, expatriates’ bodily practices can be seen as attempts to maintain, and sometimes transcend, the boundaries between a symbolic ‘West’ and ‘Indonesia’. The West has connotations of ‘civilisation’, order, and purity, while Indonesia stands for ‘non-civilisation’, disorder, and pollution, in physical as well as symbolical terms. This is linked to what Lupton calls the concept of the ‘civilised body’ (1996:19). The production and maintenance of such civilised bodies can entail a range of practices. The complex negotiations of expatriates’ Western identities become apparent, for example, in expatriates’ food production and consumption, in their rejection or appropriation of certain Indonesian beauty treatments, and their disinterest in Indonesian-style clothing, as I discuss below.

Making the Alien Palatable

Indonesian Food? That’s poison on a stick!
(Lizzy, British expatriate, at a newcomer’s coffee morning).

A central notion in the anthropology of food is that food consumption is closely linked to the production of identities. Fischler (1988) for example, suggests that, through eating, we incorporate outside substances into our body and into our ‘self’. Similarly, Bakhtin famously declared that ‘by the act of eating and absorption of food, *we become what we eat*’ (Bakhtin 1984:281). Here, I demonstrate how technologies of food transformation assume a central role for expatriates. As many are anxious to affirm their ‘Western’ identities vis-à-vis their Indonesian environment, food becomes relevant in several ways: Indonesian food is a potential source of material as well as symbolic pollution. Consequently, it has to be transformed to be ‘safe’ for expatriate consumption. Western-style food, in contrast, becomes crucial for the reproduction of Western lifestyles. Under certain circumstances, however, Indonesian food can be used to express a ‘Western cosmopolitanism’.

In anthropological discussions of attitudes and beliefs surrounding food, food has often been understood as signifying difference. Caplan (1997) notes that there is ‘a preoccupation with food as a marker of difference, including such classic sociological variables as gender, age, class and ethnicity which frequently “make a difference” to eating patterns’ (1997:9). Similarly, Lupton (1996) points out that, ‘food is instrumental in marking differences between cultures, serving to strengthen group identity, [and that] food and culinary practices thus hold an extraordinary power in defining the boundaries between “us” and “them”’ (1996:25–26). ‘Us’ and

‘them’, in this case, would respectively refer to ‘us’ Western expatriates, and ‘them’ as Indonesians.

The history of theorising food production and consumption, though, often replicates false dichotomies between what are seen as material and symbolic dimensions. Structuralists such as Lévi-Strauss and Douglas, for example, have treated food mainly in terms of its symbolic qualities. In Douglas’ (1975) view, food encodes messages about social relations like ‘hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across boundaries’ (Douglas 1975:61). Lévi-Strauss (1970) was similarly interested in food as a signifier; he argued that ‘not only does cooking mark the transition from nature to culture, but through it and by means of it, the human state can be defined with all its attributes’ (1970:164).

It seems that anthropology’s preoccupation with the symbolic is only beginning to be replaced by the realisation that ‘the physiological dimension of food is inextricably intertwined with the symbolic’ (Lupton 1996:8), in the sense of taking seriously its visceral qualities. In this way, Csordas’ (1994) appeal to conceptualise ‘embodied experiences’ – of which the production and consumption of food are prime examples – is more than timely. This does not necessarily imply, however, a neglect of its symbolic qualities. In the expatriates’ case, it emerges that processes of boundary making and transgression are performed in both visceral and symbolic ways. Fischler’s (1988) main concept, ‘incorporation’, implies that by eating, we literally incorporate outside substances into our body and thereby into our ‘self’. Incorporation is ‘the action in which we send a food across the frontier between the world and the self, between “outside” and “inside” our body’ (Fischler 1988:279). This simultaneity of material and symbolic processes echoes Bakhtin, who declares that: ‘by taking food into the body, we take in the world’ (Bakhtin 1984:281). Through the passage of food from an Outside to the Inside, people assume not only physical, but also symbolic qualities of what they ingest, which in turn is linked to Douglas’ (1966) notion of pollution. Douglas suggests that a crucial aspect of food consumption is the avoidance of pollution, which results in food taboos. Furthermore, she reasons that the concept of ‘pollution’ is linked to disorder – polluted matter being ‘matter out of place’. Douglas’ concept also includes a distinction between pure and polluted substances.

This distinction crucially rests on the identification of ‘anomalies’, such as the pig in the Hebrew, or the pangolin in the Lele case. These creatures are seen as anomalous, since their bodily features place them between certain categories of animal classification. The fact of their being ‘anomalous’ makes them polluting and unacceptable. Douglas (1966), and to a lesser extent Lévi-Strauss (1970), have been criticised for their conceptualisation of the anomalous. In Douglas’ view, the anomalous is conceptually negligible compared with the main categories. One could argue, though, that the anomalous in fact constitutes the categories, as the categories are conceptualised through their difference from, and in opposition to the anomalous. The anomalous can therefore be seen not as a mere aberration, but as forming the basis for the construction of categories in the first place.

These concepts are highly relevant for the case of expatriates, not only in relation to food, but also to their use of beauty treatments and clothes, as I will discuss below. Here, I show how ideas of pure and polluted substances are a key to understanding

expatriates' food practices, especially in terms of their differentiations between Western and Indonesian food. If one accepts that the ambiguous and polluting are highly significant, and productive of categories, this suggests that expatriates' ideas of Western food are changed, and even constituted, by notions of Indonesian food being unfamiliar, ill defined and therefore potentially polluting. The category of Western food, then becomes everything that is familiar, well defined, and pure. I argue that this shift in conceptual significance forms a backdrop to expatriates' food beliefs and practices.

If it holds, as Fischler (1988) and others have suggested, that taking food into the body signifies incorporating its symbolic qualities, then this can be a hazardous realm. The intake of Indonesian substances must therefore be tightly controlled in order to prevent the unwanted contamination of expatriates' bodies, and by extension, their identities. Lupton (1996) asserts that 'this sense of danger around food and eating in relation to bodily boundaries is ... central to any act of eating' (1996:16). In the expatriate context, with its highly contested values, food consumption can become a sensitive and precarious practice. Referring to Europeans' practices in the East Indies, Stoler similarly suggests that nineteenth-century housekeeping guides 'reiterated such dangers in many forms' (Stoler 1995:112).

The ingestion of Indonesian foods can thus be loaded with a sense of physical as well as symbolic danger and a fear of pollution. Although many expatriates aim to avoid Indonesian food items altogether, for practical reasons this is not always possible. Even in the Indonesian capital Jakarta, where most of the expatriates discussed here are based, many Western foodstuffs are not readily available. To enable the use of Indonesian food items while limiting their possible pollution, expatriates employ a range of practices which could be called 'technologies of transformation'. These consist of transforming Indonesian foods in such a way as to make them safe for expatriate consumption. In this context, Lévi-Strauss' (1970) concept of the raw and the cooked is instructive. He suggests a dichotomy between nature and culture, which is instantiated by food practices, especially in relation to the 'raw' and the 'cooked'. Lévi-Strauss claims that, 'the raw/cooked axis is characteristic of culture; since cooking brings about the cultural transformation of the raw' (1970:142). As cooking transforms nature into culture, he reasons that, 'cooking is conceived of in native thought as a form of mediation' (Lévi-Strauss 1970:64). In the expatriate context, the raw, uncivilised nature would correspond to the Indonesian environment, while culture is identified with Western expatriate lifestyles. To make the 'raw' Indonesian food palatable, it has to be transformed – through cooking or through processes equivalent to it. Such technologies of transformation characterise many expatriates' handling of Indonesian raw materials, and thus enable their incorporation into their diets.

Before going to illustrate this, it is important to recognise that although many expatriates seem to recoil in horror when confronted with Indonesian food, this reaction can mask more ambivalent feelings; the disgust may also carry undertones of curiosity or excitement. As Stoler argues with regard to the Dutch East Indies, 'the self-affirmation of white, middle-class colonials thus embodied a set of fundamental tensions between a culture of whiteness that cordoned itself off from the native world and a set of domestic arrangements ... that produced cultural hybridities and

sympathies that repeatedly transgressed these distinctions' (Stoler 1995:112). This ambivalent attitude, exemplified here in relation to Indonesian food, becomes evident in expatriates' practices of sampling Indonesian food, appropriating certain dishes, and an enthusiasm for so-called 'fusion products', as will be discussed below. While such appropriation is sometimes driven by necessity, it also represents a means of gaining cultural capital through demonstrating their openness and cosmopolitan mindset.

Technologies of Transformation

As Indonesian food is seen as a potential source of pollution, in a physical as well as in a symbolic sense, a common strategy among expatriates is to maintain their food habits as much as possible through the consumption of Western food as they would have done in their home countries. As they are forced, however, to make use of Indonesian foodstuffs, many develop a range of techniques of 'purification'. These techniques consist of the sourcing of ingredients from outlets regarded as 'safe', such as buying only packaged goods in supermarkets, and their transformation in expatriate kitchens. They also include the careful adaptation of Indonesian dishes, and their discursive and visual presentation as 'ethnic specialties'.

The informant's quote above, referring to Indonesian food as '*poison on a stick*', exemplifies a common attitude of many expatriates towards local foodstuffs. Paula, a British expatriate, recounted that '*I never had culture shock when I came to Jakarta – but I felt shocked when I could not find the food I wanted to – the local stuff is pure poison!*' For many expatriates, buying food from Indonesian vendors or street kitchens is unthinkable. Their appalled reactions suggested that eating there implied, if not serious illness, at least danger and immediate discomfort. This is also illustrated by a quote from the 'Expatriate Wife's Prayer' referred to earlier:

Lord, please lead us to good inexpensive restaurants
 where wine is included in the meal and the food does not cause dysentery.
 Have mercy upon us, Lord, if it be the latter; make us fleet of foot,
 to make the loo in time and strong of knee in case we have to squat.

As a consequence, many expatriates are wholly unfamiliar with Indonesian staple foods. For example, an American woman, Sheila, expressed genuine surprise after tasting a banana fritter [*pisang goreng*] at an expatriate friend's house. During two years in Indonesia, she had never tried this snack, which is sold at virtually every street corner in Jakarta. Similarly, a conversation with Beth, a British woman, revealed that she had never heard of *tempeh*, fried fermented soybeans, which are a basic ingredient in much Indonesian home cooking. Their ignorance may indicate both the pervasiveness of expatriates' beliefs that Indonesian foods were inedible, and their reluctance to challenge these received wisdoms.

At the same time, expatriates' insistence on consuming Western dishes, even in circumstances where their quality and freshness may not be guaranteed, occasionally leads to perhaps predictable casualties. One example was the experience of Sue, whom I described previously. She appeared at a newcomer's coffee morning of the British Women's Association with plasters on both of her arms. She explained that

they resulted from the drips she received after having been admitted to hospital because of food poisoning. She recounted her story:

that morning, I only had a banana for breakfast. Then I went out shopping, and met friends for lunch in the Chatterbox [a café located in a shopping mall]. I was starving, so I decided to have fish and chips. They arrived far too quickly, which should have made me suspicious, but I tried them, and they seemed alright. Then I did some more shopping, and got home by four in the afternoon, feeling funny. By four thirty, I was down on my bed, and then I spent three days in hospital, getting everything through a drip, because I could not take anything. My husband was so angry that he was going to give his notice. He said, what kind of a country is this where you can't have fish and chips without ending up in hospital for three days! But he has calmed down now.

As expatriates aim to maintain their Western food habits, many buy food almost exclusively from Western-style supermarkets, which offered, for example, meat and dairy products imported from Australia, Europe or the US at exceptionally high prices. In many cases, a refrigerator in an expatriate household would contain a range of products such as English preserves, French cheese, American biscuits and Italian ground coffee, thus enabling them to feed themselves 'just like at home', as many expatriates put it. Although many stocked up on these goods, such practices were also tinged with ambivalence. Maybe displaying the thriftiness of a good housewife, some German women during a conversation at a private gathering agreed that '*one doesn't always have to buy the expensive imported stuff*'. They were specifically referring to dairy products such as cheese, and found that there was an acceptable, cheaper alternative in the dairy range called 'Yummi', which was produced locally in a factory under German management, which I discuss further below.

More generally, it appeared that discourses on the consumption of imported foods hinted at people's genuine enjoyment of them, as well as a degree of embarrassment – as if such consumption was testimony to expatriates' inability, or unwillingness, to make do with local products. Transforming and adapting local ingredients into Western-style dishes, however, was seen as a feasible and desirable option. While it is possible in theory to subsist entirely on Western food in Jakarta, this is not always practical. Imported foods not only tend to be expensive, but they can be of poor quality, and their availability is often limited. A common complaint by expatriates was also that some foods 'do not taste the same' in tropical conditions, referring in particular to products such as cheese, wine, and chocolate. Consequently, expatriates are forced to make use of Indonesian ingredients for the preparation of everyday dishes. Long-term expatriates especially acknowledge these practicalities, which means that some of the food served at their homes is Indonesian – in the form of basic ingredients or even whole dishes, which crucially had undergone some form of transformation.

One way to make Indonesian foods safe is to buy them from Western-style supermarkets rather than from street market stalls or cart vendors trailing through the neighbourhood. In supermarkets, the very same items – for example melons, mangos, beans or spinach – are sold individually wrapped in plastic, rather than loose and thus open to street pollution. Where expatriates source their foods thus becomes a measure of how demanding, anxious, or pragmatic they are, or even to

what extent they have ‘gone native’. For example, Eve, an American expatriate, told a newcomer ‘to make sure your staff buy things from the local supermarket – if you don’t watch them, they will just go to the cart vendor instead’. For Eve, this was a crucial precaution, as the idea that she might unwittingly consume ‘street food’ clearly horrified her.

Having obtained the food from appropriate sources, its treatment in expatriates’ kitchens becomes vital. American expatriates in particular often instruct their cooks to soak the supermarket-bought vegetables in chlorine before peeling or cooking them, making them completely safe. Supervision of Indonesian kitchen staff is also important. For example, Eve explained how she had trained her cook: ‘The first time I saw her wash the salad, I said no, you can’t do it like that ... then I showed her, leaf by leaf, and now she does it properly!’ For the same purpose, a community centre for expatriates offered courses on kitchen and personal hygiene for Indonesian staff, which I will return to later. While hygienic aspects play a role here, I suggest that the ‘proper treatment’ of food also alleviated fears of symbolic contagion.

After washing, the most common way of making Indonesian foods acceptable is through turning Indonesian ingredients into Western dishes. This process becomes especially visible in bilingual cookbooks. Several women’s clubs in Jakarta – for example the American, British and German Women’s Associations – publish their own cookbooks. These consist of American, British and German recipes respectively, which are usually printed on the left-hand side. The opposite pages contain the translation of the recipe into Indonesian language to enable Indonesian staff to prepare the dishes properly. While some recipes seem taken directly from expatriates’ home-country cookbooks, some allowance is made with regard to the availability of ingredients. Thus, occasionally, substitutes are suggested, such as using coriander for parsley, or apple juice instead of white wine. Such practices are reminiscent of English colonial practices, as William Glover describes them with respect to the management of the life in the English bungalow in India. He notes that ‘the household manual is largely focused on techniques for managing Indian servants and converting unfamiliar settings and foods into a reasonable facsimile of their English equivalents’ (Glover 2004:77) In the same vein, at dinner parties, hostesses seem especially proud when their Indonesian cooks had created, for example, a German yoghurt-and-cucumber soup entirely from Indonesian ingredients. These practices seem to transform foods which were possibly regarded as ‘primitive’ into sophisticated dishes. In that sense, these dishes demonstrate expatriates’ ability to ‘civilise’ local materials, turning them into triumphs of Western taste.

In general, there are not many Indonesian food items that expatriates feel able to endorse wholeheartedly. Their receptivity towards products which could be adopted, though, becomes apparent in the considerable success of what could be called ‘fusion products’. These are foods based on Western recipes, manufactured in Indonesia, under Western standards of quality and hygiene. One such example is Yummi, a range of dairy products produced in Jakarta, which I mentioned earlier. The Yummi brand was established by a German expatriate woman, who, having started with a home-based production, went on to establish a small dairy factory in a suburb of Jakarta. The Yummi range successfully reproduces German-style dairy products such as yoghurt, *Quark* and various kinds of cheese, based on

local ingredients, manufactured locally, and being much cheaper than comparable imported products. The German Women's Association, among others, conducts regular tours of the factory. The visitors, mainly expatriate women, usually highly praise both the conditions of manufacturing and the taste and quality of the products. I suggest that the popularity of the Yummi range, apart from its quality, is also due to the fact that it offered an element of Indonesia that expatriate women could safely adopt. Consuming Yummi products allows for a continuation of Western food habits, while the use of 'locally produced' food demonstrates expatriates' ability to venture beyond their Western culinary lifestyles.

While these transformation techniques characterise food production, expatriates sometimes adopt whole Indonesian dishes, especially in the social context of receptions or dinner parties. While this could be seen as a way of 'neutralising' Indonesian foods, in the sense of controlling their preparation within one's own household, it also enables expatriates to express their cosmopolitanism. These Indonesian dishes are thus proof of expatriates' adaptability, and their open-mindedness with respect to Indonesian culture. In order to be successful, though, the consumption of these dishes crucially has to take place on expatriates' terms.

One way of turning these foods into a source of social capital is to present them as specialty foods. They are thus elevated from local staples to ethnic delicacies. This is performed for example through their elaborate visual display, and a changed verbal discourse, which turns an unpalatable street food into a palatable slice of Indonesia. Suitable items for this treatment are, for example, spring rolls. When bought from a street vendor, spring rolls [*lumpia*] could be dripping with frying oil, and might be wrapped in bags of scrap paper. In contrast, expatriates' homemade spring rolls would be neatly arranged on decorative paper, dried of excess oil, and be accompanied by a bowl of chilli sauce. While street stalls do not always advertise their goods, in expatriate contexts Indonesian foods were often marked with a cardboard label, spelling out the English or German translation of the dish. An ill-defined, unknown Indonesian food item can thus become a clearly defined, sanitised product which can add to the consumer's cosmopolitan kudos. Thus, while most foods at expatriate gatherings are Western-style snacks, Indonesian spring rolls could be the hostess' pride. They also provide an opportunity for guests to demonstrate their appreciation of local culture: *'I could just die for these spring rolls'*, Alex, a young German woman, sighed, having eaten a couple at a committee meeting. *'They are very nice, aren't they'*, the hostess agreed. Whether this is understood as a token gesture or genuine enjoyment, spring roll consumption could confirm expatriates as being cosmopolitan, while not risking to appear 'too local'.

Domestic Hygiene

As will be apparent in relation to food, concerns about hygiene and more metaphorically about purity are among the central issues that influence expatriates' attitudes towards, and relations with Indonesia. Hygiene issues relate to food preparation, but also to cleanliness in the household more generally. It is important to clarify here that I do not regard expatriates' fears of disease as unfounded, but merely as the exaggerated

sensitivities of anxious Euro-Americans. While these concerns especially in tropical climates are legitimate, the aim here is to explore their symbolic dimensions. Discussions about germs are, on one level, about hygiene, but I argue that these discourses are also a way of speaking about Western values. In a similar vein, Stoler links the development of germ theory in 19th century Europe to the ‘barrage of advice on contaminations’ given to Europeans living in the colonies (Stoler 1995:112).

To illustrate these issues, I present here extracts from a debate on ‘hygiene’ which was held on the ‘Living in Indonesia’ internet discussion forum. It is significant that such a debate takes place on the internet rather than in a real-life social setting, since the two main interlocutors might not have had such an intense, rather acerbic debate in a face-to-face encounter. The relative anonymity of an internet discussion forum allows for, and maybe encourages, a more confrontational approach in expressing one’s views and contesting those of others, and possibly generating a rather distorted representation of expatriates’ beliefs. I nevertheless suggest that the following exchange offers relevant insights into expatriates’ perceptions and practices relating to their own and their staff’s hygiene. The discussion below is an edited version of the original thread, which became increasingly abusive. It consists of a conversation between Paul, an expatriate who has been living in Indonesia for a few years, and Julie, a British expatriate wife who has recently arrived in Jakarta, and has joined the debate on the forum in order to obtain advice on ensuring the personal hygiene of her live-in staff, which she finds lacking. The discussion is initiated by Rebecca, a newcomer with similar concerns.

Date: 4 Feb 2001
 Name: Rebecca
 Subject: A bit worried.

I have been in Jakarta for a week tomorrow & have started looking around for a home. Having seen the state of most of the maids quarters, I’m worried about hygiene ie: will the cook be responsible for giving the family more than meals!

Date: 4 Feb 2001
 Name: Adriana
 Subject: It is quite normal though.

I know what you mean. But this is part of the culture shock. It is very important to give them a lesson in personal hygiene.

Date: 10 Feb 2001
 Name: Julie
 Subject: It is a well known fact.

I have already learnt, first hand that “these people” have to be told at least 6 times before the message gets through. I don’t hold that against them...I take a deep breath AND smile. What that tells me that after the 6th time, my hygiene duties can stop.....but can they? (...)

Yes I inspect everything that I need to, that does not include their personal belongings or their knicker drawer! It does include their kitchen and bathroom, why should I have to? I don't enjoy doing it but unfortunately it has to be done until they learn how to look after it properly. When this happens I will leave them alone.

Date: 10 Feb 2001
From: Paul
Subject: Obsession next stop! . . .

Dont get sucked into the whole germ-obsession syndrome its the first sign of madness in expat living! (...). Really, dont get hung up with it. The *pembantu* [helper]/cook are not children, nor are they guests. They are employees if you had employees in the States or Australia or where ever in the west, you would not even THINK about looking at/through their personal things or harping about something as obvious as personal hygiene – yes, it is an underdeveloped country and yes, some people don't have a strong sense of hygiene here but they are in the minority – by and large Indonesians (and asians generally) are a very clean and hygienic people. For example, Thai's call us "*Frangs*" – those who smell of shit – cause we smear it on ourselves with paper rather than washing it all off after toilet like any self respecting human being would . . . see what I mean? Its all relative . . . p

Date: 11 Feb 2001
From: Julie
Subject: I inspect them daily.

All I wanted was some practical advice about maintaining western standards of cleanliness in my new home. Yes, believe it or not, western standards ARE different from the locals – open your eyes! OK, cleaning may not get rid of every microscopic germ that may be lurking in the toilet/kitchen etc., but a wipe over with bleach will kill the majority & washing your hands is a UNIVERSALLY accepted method of maintaining personal hygiene. Once I am convinced that my staff have got the "hygiene message", I don't think I'll need to inspect them daily, but in the meantime, I will do what is necessary to keep my family healthy & that doesn't mean storming in like the Gestapo. You seem to think it all comes down to some sort of racist or superior attitude ie: you wouldn't do it to western staff, but it really comes down to different standards. It's just a matter of education.

Date: 11 Feb 2001
From: Paul
Subject: Re: I inspect them daily.

How can you realistic say you inspect (notice the word usage) them daily and respect their privacy? Sewers are inspected, visitors to prisons are inspected, would you like to have your living quarters "INSPECTED"? (...)

Date: 11 Feb 2001
 From: Julie
 Subject: Who mentioned personal hygiene?

I did say before that I do not go through their personal belongings. Personal hygiene isn't "obvious" to these people, get real. Also their kitchens leave a lot to be desired... why do you think associations like ICAC (International Community Activity Center) etc feel the need to provide courses on food hygiene and preparation AND personal hygiene "for your employees"? If you want that outside your door because "it's relative" then feel free....but our discussion is how NOT to have it outside our back door.

Date: 15 Feb 2001
 From: Paul
 Subject: good example of brewing obsession....

My point remains that you would not dare to behave like this if your staff were "whites" or spoke good english – but it's OK to do it to "these people", as you call them. Secondly, the whole germ/cleanliness thing is a crock of shit – if you think that cleaning surfaces and washing hands is going to protect you from millions of microscopic germs all over the place and the literally thousands of uncatalogued and untreatable viruses lurking in the tropics, then you are sadly deluded... Thirdly, a concern about hygiene can easily become a fixation and then become an obsession in the tropics – particularly for those who don't get out much. Reminds me of the accountant in Jakarta who insisted that his *pembantu* [helper] clean his morning egg in chemically treated water before she boiled it for his breakfast, or the woman who bathed only in bottled water! ...As for ICAC, they do a good job in their training work, but they do meet market need, not real need – that is, they give people what they want but this doesn't "prove" anything, except maybe that there is a lot of obsessed people "out there".

Central to this discussion is the physical proximity between Indonesian staff and expatriates. Although live-in staff usually have their own 'quarters', they inhabit expatriates' living spaces during the day and are closely involved, through cooking, cleaning, or childcare, in the maintenance of the expatriate household. Such close contact can cause expatriates' anxieties about what the staff might, as Rebecca put it, '*give to the family*'. In this sense, one could argue that expatriates' bodies are perceived as being threatened by contamination through Indonesians' bodies, and their presumed lack of personal hygiene. As Stoler writes about servants in the colonial era, 'it was precisely those who served the needs of the *middenstand* who were viewed as subversive contagions in those carefully managed colonial homes' (Stoler 1995:110). In order to contain such possible contagion, it becomes necessary to instantiate regimes of domestic cleanliness and personal hygiene. Similarly, Glover describes, with reference to the colonial bungalow, that it was 'a complicated social and material milieu, the setting for a type of domesticity that was meant to help reflect and instil the values and dispositions that separated rulers from their subjects' (Glover 2004:62). Julie's inspection of her staff rooms could be regarded as an attempt to instil such values. It is the symbolic subtext of racial superiority that

Paul refers to when he points out that she would not behave in such a way towards Western staff.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the efforts of expatriates to distance their living spaces, and bodies, from those of Indonesians, for example through staying in houses surrounded by high walls. In a situation where their respective spaces are barely separated, however, as is the case with live-in household staff, it seems to become imperative that the spaces – and by extension, the bodies – of Indonesian staff are also brought under control. One could therefore interpret Julie's inspection routines as an attempt to impose what she sees as Western values on her staff's rooms and their bodies. A telling quote in this respect is her insistence that '*our discussion is how NOT to have it outside our back door*', which suggests that she is not only keen to control her own family's space, but also the 'Indonesian' space immediately adjacent to it, that means, the space just outside her 'back door'. A further example is the training courses on personal hygiene for domestic staff organised by the ICAC, which similarly aim to engrain 'Western' bodily hygiene practices in Indonesian staff which they are perceived as lacking. As Stoler points out, however, ideologies of distance between coloniser and colonised are paralleled by a set of more hybrid domestic arrangements that compromise them (Stoler 1995:112). One could argue that expatriates' awareness of these hybridities and their resulting unease partly explains the ferocity of these debates on hygiene, which seem to far exceed the merely practical task of keeping expatriates' households clean.

Women's Bodies

As this internet forum debate indicates, the task of maintaining the health of the expatriate family, as well as the supervision of the hygiene practices of Indonesian staff is routinely performed by expatriate women. Threats to the integrity of expatriate bodies, however, are not only posed by the outside in form of contamination, but also arise from within. In particular, this includes preventing the body from transgressing its boundaries in form of a bulge, for example through overindulgence in food. Such concerns, especially in relation to women's bodies, are of course not unique to expatriates. I argue, however, that women's anxieties regarding their body shapes assume a particular meaning in the expatriate context.

I have indicated in Chapter 3 that expatriate women's bodies attain a heightened significance. Many experience a loss of agency and identity brought about by being unable to work, and being separated from social networks in their 'home countries'. In these circumstances, I argue that women's bodies, unlike men's, remain one of the few resources available to them for expressing agency and identity. This precise moment, however, also coincides with their racialisation as white bodies, as described in the previous chapter with regard to the 'gaze of the Other'. In the case of white Western women, this racialisation can engender a sense of being threatened by 'Asian female bodies', which are seen as lithe, gracious, exotic and more attractive to Western men. A line from the 'expat wife's prayer' introduced in Chapter 1 jokingly illustrates this fear: '*Almighty Father, keep our husbands from looking at foreign women and comparing them to us.*'

In this situation, women's awareness of the necessity to guard the boundaries of their bodies might therefore become especially acute. The following exchange among two German couples, all in their late forties, provides one such example. At a dinner party, Sybille had just declined a second helping, pointing out she had to watch her weight. Horst, turning to his wife, Hilde, said: *'Well, you see that at least Sybille takes care of her shape! You could do that, too!'* Sybille responded: *'To be honest, Peter says that I would look better still with a few kilos less'*. Her husband, Peter, laughed and nodded in agreement. Similarly, at a trip to the Yummi factory mentioned above, as they were surveying the range of cheeses, desserts and other dairy products and deciding which ones to buy, one of the women remarked that *'I don't want anything with too much fat, though'*, and the others hastily murmured their approval. Although such exchanges are not particular to expatriate women, because of the circumstances sketched above these issues become especially significant for them.

The fear of getting fat is intensified by not having full-time work, which increases, as suggested by several women, the temptation to eat when staying at home. Sue for example, who lived in a serviced apartment, explained: *'I try to never keep anything in the fridge, because otherwise, I would just eat it'*. A related concern was smoking. A German woman, Angelika, mentioned that working full-time in Germany had prevented her from *'letting herself go'*, as she put it, because she would only smoke when she was out of the office, in the evenings. She said: *'But here, nothing prevents me – I just need to step out onto the terrace and have a cigarette, and I can do that all day'*. The status of accompanying wife in particular therefore placed women in a position where their bodies became more important than before, while at the same time they felt that keeping them attractive was made more difficult by the kind of lives they led in Jakarta. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that expatriate women's groups regularly organised events such as workshops on make-up, styling, and anti-wrinkle treatments as well as fashion shows, further reflecting the relevance of bodily appearance.

Beauty Treatments

The visits to beauty salons undertaken by expatriate women is a further example of attention focused on the body. I suggest that these visits can be understood not only in the context of body enhancement, but on a range of different levels. As places for apparent self-indulgence, women's attitudes to beauty salons also reflect their ambivalence about their leisurely lifestyles: while they enjoy being 'pampered', as they put it, there is an implicit fear that living in the 'Orient' will lead them astray from European ideas of duty and discipline. This is prefigured in colonial accounts, as Ann Stoler describes that by the end of the 19th century, 'Indies-born Netherlanders became associated with indulgent and ostentatious life-styles, contrasting the work ethic prescribed for the self-disciplined European-born Dutch' (Stoler 1995:113).

Beauty salons also become important in the context of managing the boundaries of expatriates' bodies vis-à-vis the Indonesian environment. I have described above how some people like to incorporate elements of Indonesia into their lives

through the consumption of appropriately transformed foods. I suggest that certain 'traditional' local body treatments can serve a similar purpose. Expatriates' use of such treatments illustrates the conflicting tendencies characteristic of their relations with Indonesia. Some practices, such as drinking herbal medicine, are regarded as dangerous and polluting, while others are adopted with gusto, especially if they are suitably transformed and marketed for Western customers. In particular, I discuss here expatriates' attitudes towards *jamu*¹ [herbal tonic], and beauty treatments.

Java has a long tradition of natural body treatments, herbal medicines and massages, which are used to cure ailments and enhance general wellbeing. These treatments comprise a whole range of beliefs and practices, which are alive and popular in metropolitan Jakarta. Many Indonesians regularly use herbal drinks, called *jamu*, which are prepared and sold by so-called '*jamu-ladies*'. These familiar figures ply their trade in the *kampung*s [neighbourhoods] of Jakarta, often elderly women dressed in a traditional-style blouse and skirt, who carry plastic bottles of their home-made mixtures in baskets on their backs and call at people's houses or offer their services to people around the *kampung*. *Jamu* is often kept in re-used plastic bottles, has a cloudy brown, red or yellowish colour and a syrupy consistency. For those expatriates who had come across it, *jamu* represented a prime example of an unknown, polluting, and dangerous substance, and to ingest it seemed quite unimaginable. Hardly any of the expatriates I knew had ever tried it. One could argue that part of the reason for this aversion were worries about hygiene, and a general reluctance to buy foodstuffs from street vendors. Apart from such concerns, however, I suggest that the consumption of *jamu* also had symbolic significance. It was not only how it was presented – being sold on the street, stored in bottles wrapped in used plastic bags, and poured into plastic containers – but also the belief in the healing power of herbs that the use of *jamu* is based on which marked it as part of a pre-modern irrational local mindset and thus unacceptable for many expatriates.

While the use of *jamu* is not an option for many, Javanese health practices also include beauty treatments which are more suited to expatriates' sensitivities. As indicated in the introductory sketch, receiving Javanese body treatments at a beauty salon becomes part of many expatriate women's monthly routines. Although their clientele can consist of both Indonesian and expatriate women, some salons offer services specifically tailored to expatriates, and are more obviously designed for Western customers. One example is a popular salon, itself called '*Jamu*', located in south Jakarta. The choice of name is significant, as it indicates the kind of transformation from the alien into the palatable that I have described in relation to food. While the encounter with *jamu* in the form sold by women peddlers in *kampung*s provokes expressions of disgust in expatriates, using treatments that are based on 'Indonesia's centuries old beauty rituals' (*Jamu* salon brochure) in an affluent setting not only becomes acceptable, but is regarded as a pleasant way of safely experiencing 'Indonesia'.

The range of treatments on offer at the *Jamu* Salon exemplifies the juxtaposition and merging of Indonesian and Western practices: something which is also apparent in

1 The term *jamu* refers to a tonic made of medicinal herbs (Echols and Shadily 1989).

their promotional material, from which I quote here. Conventional Western procedures such as leg waxing, ‘cellulite control’, manicures and pedicures are performed alongside ‘Jamu foot and leg treatment’, which make use of local ingredients such as the *kemiri* nut. On the more ‘exotic’ side of the spectrum, Jamu offers herbals rubs such as the *mandi lulur*, a ‘traditional prenuptial treatment to enhance the softness and lustre of women’s skin’, as well as the ‘Javanese Selendang Body Bind’, which is ‘traditionally used after childbirth and it is believed to help slim and restore the figure’. Their refreshments include ‘Indonesian Jamu: for internal female cleansing and added energy’ as well as soft drinks such as lemonade and Coca Cola.

The Jamu salon thus generates the atmosphere of an exotic spa which appeals to Western needs and tastes. This becomes apparent when entering the salon. The scent of aromatic oils pervades the rooms and traditional Javanese *gamelan* music plays in the background, while well-presented Indonesian beauty technicians tend to Western clients in tastefully decorated rooms, their walls painted in muted colours and dimmed lights. This scenario bears little resemblance to the *jamu*-ladies described earlier, who had their wares strapped to their backs and trailed around *kampung*s selling home-made herbal drinks. One regular customer at the Jamu Salon was a young American woman, Tina, who worked for a consulting firm. She explained that ‘*I love going to Jamu, because it’s great to be pampered when you had a hard day, especially living here in Jakarta – plus, I really like their creambaths.*’ A creambath is a hair treatment combined with a massage, which includes the hair being washed and herbal conditioner slowly being worked into the hair. Head, neck, shoulders, and upper arms are then massaged, too. This is a distinctly Javanese practice, which many expatriates adopt with relish. After her creambath, Tina had her legs waxed, while her friend Andrea had a manicure and pedicure. Andrea declared, while two assistants were working on her hands and feet, ‘*it’s such a nice atmosphere here, they make you feel great, and at home in New York I just couldn’t afford this kind of thing.*’

The visits to such beauty salons become meaningful in several ways. In the first instance, using these ‘ethnic’ treatments fulfils the desire of many expatriates to leave their ‘bubble’ and demonstrate to themselves and others their appreciation of local customs and traditions. These visits, however, can also be considered as reproducing colonial attitudes: being tended to hand and foot by ever-smiling, deferential Indonesian staff feeds into some expatriates’ perception of being socially superior and consequently deserving of such treatment. The fact that this is a luxury that some would not be able to afford at home might also fuel such perceptions. Furthermore, these spa experiences match visions of an ‘Oriental’ sensuality and indulgence which expatriates may have held before moving to Jakarta. While much of their life in the city is seen as an assault on the senses in terms of the heat, noise and smells they are confronted with, the salon treatments more appropriately fulfil such exotic fantasies.

Clothing

A further instance of negotiating the boundaries of their bodies is expatriates’ use of textiles and clothing. Stoler notes with respect to colonial times that ‘adoptions of Javanese dress by European-born Dutch colonials were only permissible at leisure, as

other more hardfast cultural distinctions between European and native were drawn' (1995:113). In a similar vein, clothes become a means through which expatriates fortify the boundaries of the Western body. In the first instance, I therefore suggest that expatriates' choice of dress reflects their desire to distance themselves from their Indonesian environment. This is evidenced by the fact that expatriates hardly ever wear Indonesian clothes in any form, most preferring instead the Western-style outfits they would use in their home countries, albeit modified to suit the tropical climate. This avoidance of local dress is perhaps even more significant since many ethnic groups in Indonesia have long traditions of textile production, of which the well-known Javanese *batik*² is just one example. Although especially in cities like Jakarta, most Indonesians dress in Western-style clothes, members of the older generation, people living in more rural areas, and those attending formal occasions wear more 'traditional' Indonesian attire such as *kebaya* [women's blouse] and *sarong* [fabric worn as skirt by men and women].

Relating expatriates' preferences to the concept of the body as boundary between the outside and the self, as well as to Douglas' (1966) notion of pollution, one could suggest that wearing 'raw', unmodified Indonesian clothes would bring Indonesia uncomfortably close to the expatriate body and thus to the self. Here, Lévi-Strauss' (1970) concept of a transformation of raw materials into 'culture' becomes relevant, as described earlier in relation to Indonesian foodstuffs. One form in which expatriates wear 'Indonesian dress' in the widest sense, is after locally bought fabrics have been transformed into Western-style clothing. Quite a few expatriate women, for example, enjoyed shopping at Pasar Raya, a large mall with a textile and clothes bazaar. The materials they bought there would not necessarily be traditional Indonesian cloth, such as *batik*, but merely locally sourced fabrics. Quite a few expatriate women knew Indonesian seamstresses who would make skirts, dresses or blouses for them, which were modelled on expatriates' items that they had brought from their home countries. Local materials would thus be transformed into facsimiles of Western-style clothes.

Apart from this, it seemed that the use of traditional local clothes was only permissible in very limited forms, for example women consciously wearing locally bought Indonesian shawls as an 'ethnic' accessory. On the few occasions when someone did wear an entire Indonesian-style outfit, this was met with a few raised eyebrows within the expatriate community, and a notable absence of flattering remarks. One such occasion involved Claire, a British expatriate wife who had been closely involved with an Indonesian children's charity. One day, when a group of expatriate women visited the children's home run by the charity, Claire appeared in an Indonesian-style summer dress made of *batik* cloth, while the others were wearing Western-style shorts, blouses and T-Shirts. Nobody made any negative comments, but there seemed to be a tacit agreement that Claire had gone a bit too far in associating herself with the Indonesian children and the charity project.

2 *Batik-cloth*, among *ikat* and *songket*, is probably the best-known textile product from Indonesia. Clothes made from *batik* are still worn by a part of the population, for example in rural Java, especially by the older generation.

Similarly, while wearing *batik* shirts on formal occasions is conventional good practice for Indonesian men, this was not deemed appropriate for male expatriates. More specifically, wearing a *batik* shirt often marked out Western men who had married Indonesian women, and therefore may have been regarded, in the eyes of their expatriate colleagues, as having ‘gone local’. At a reception at the German embassy, for example, the only men seen in *batik* shirts were those Germans with Indonesian partners, alongside with elderly, long-time missionaries. Showing one’s allegiance to Indonesia, and closeness to its people in such a way was thus regarded with some suspicion among the Western family expatriates.

While wearing traditional fabrics in their raw, untransformed state was usually frowned upon, under certain circumstances it could become proof of one’s time spent in Indonesia. For instance, a favourite item of interior decoration in expatriates’ homes were traditional fabrics – such as woven *songket* from the island of Sumatra, as well as colourful *ikat* from Timor, which were expensively framed and hung on expatriates’ living room walls. The cases of Caroline and Tim provide a further example. Both were young professionals living in high-rise apartments, who in their daily lives had little contact with Indonesians. Caroline was rather keen to avoid contact with Indonesians on the street, which she often found disconcerting. Yet, as her two-year contract in Jakarta was nearing its end, she and her friend Tim excitedly discussed the possibility of having traditional Indonesian wedding dresses tailor-made for themselves. Eventually, Caroline ordered a Sumatran-style wedding dress for herself, while Tim had a complete Javanese wedding outfit made for him, including a *kris* [traditional Javanese dagger]. After several weeks and repeated fittings, Caroline finally received the finished costume and had some pictures taken as she was wearing it. She remarked with some satisfaction: ‘*now that I have lived here for a while, and I am going away soon, I want something to show that I was in Indonesia, something to prove this!*’ Similarly, Tim, who a year ago had moved out of an Indonesian neighbourhood because he did not appreciate the close proximity to his neighbours, proudly showed me his newly acquired dagger. These objects appeared to be token claims of an involvement with Indonesia that was not borne out by their personal lives. Similarly, the wish to be photographed in ethnic costume suggested that they were acting out an oriental fantasy that was quite disconnected from their everyday realities.

Conclusion

I have argued that expatriates’ bodies, and specifically their boundaries, become sites of negotiating their Western identities vis-à-vis Indonesian society. Taking a cue from Stoler’s (1995) analysis of European colonial practices in the Dutch East Indies, I examine how expatriates’ identities are produced, affirmed, and contested through their bodily practices. These practices include areas such as food production and consumption, domestic hygiene, the use of local beauty treatments and clothes. Douglas’ notions of purity and pollution are relevant here, as expatriates often seem to regard Indonesian substances as polluting and dangerous, whereas Western ones symbolise purity and safety. The sense of danger surrounding Indonesian foods or

herbal medicine drinks is linked to Bakhtin's suggestion that 'we become what we eat' (Bakhtin 1984:281). In the expatriate context, the consumption of Indonesian food could thus unsettle and undermine expatriates' sense of their Western identities.

Central to this is the notion of the body-as-boundary between the Western self and an Indonesian environment. While many expatriates aim to maintain their familiar habits, particularly in relation to food or clothes, practical reasons sometimes necessitate the use of Indonesian raw materials. Incorporating such items into their lives, however, requires transforming them from an impure state, associated with Indonesia, into a 'pure' product, as indicative of Western culture. These technologies of transformation include the sourcing of foods or fabrics, the supervision of food preparation by Indonesian staff in expatriate homes, and thus turning Indonesian raw materials into Western dishes, clothes, or beauty treatments that suit expatriates' tastes. These practices thus represent some of the 'quotidian technologies of self-affirmation' (Stoler 1995:113), which are crucial for the reproduction of expatriates' Western bodies and identities.

Importantly, though, expatriates are not solely concerned with fortifying the boundaries of the body, but also initiate transactions across it. Appropriating parts of Indonesia can also be driven by a desire to escape the expatriate 'bubble'. The adoption of Indonesian dishes for example can enhance expatriates' self-images as cosmopolitans, under the condition that these dishes are presented and consumed not as an ambiguous street food, but as clearly labelled and neatly displayed ethnic specialties. A similar sense of consuming the exotic surrounds women's use of beauty salons, which successfully market 'authentic Indonesian' body treatments to Western customers. A further example is the purchase of entire tailor-made 'ethnic' costumes, which become highly visible tokens of expatriates' time in Indonesia, but which starkly contrast with the lack of their social interaction with Indonesians during that time. The facets of interplay between anxiously guarding their Western identities, being both repelled and attracted by Indonesian practices, and occasionally appropriating them, thus become manifest in the management of expatriates' bodies.

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Chapter 6

Performing Expatriate Identities

The monthly coffee morning of the German Women's Association is held in a well-known hotel in the city center. One of the hotel's main ballrooms is prepared with large tables, covered with white tablecloths, and high-backed chairs. A group of about fifty women are gathered, ranging in age from their thirties to early sixties. They are smartly dressed in Western-style summer clothes, and are chatting animatedly at the buffet before settling down at the tables. After a welcome by the Association's president, the featured talk for this month begins: a slide show and talk by Antje, a German expatriate woman, on her trips to the Dani, an indigenous group living in the highlands of Irian Jaya, the Indonesian part of New Guinea. Antje first went to visit the Dani a few years ago, and has since been regularly leading small groups of visitors on trekking tours in the area, staying in local villages and introducing them to Dani tribespeople she knows. The women in the audience listen, with moderate interest, to her stories of mountain treks, and watch slides of tourists and locals gathered around campfires. They become more attentive, however, as Antje shows an image of a Dani man, holding a stick, and naked except for his *koteka*, a penis sheath. Waves of suppressed giggles ripple through the ballroom. As Antje explains the function of the *koteka*, the women keep looking at the slide, and some whisper excitedly with their neighbours. A few older women look sternly ahead, ignoring the commotion. Hardly anybody seems to listen to Antje, who says that penis sheaths are common male attire, worn as a cover, and have little to do with sexual displays of masculinity or penis size. 'Oh my god', remarks one woman to her friend, 'Did you see how long it is? You wonder what they do with it!' Her friend nods, with some embarrassment, and remarks: 'well, I guess they really live in the Stone Age' (Fieldnotes, March 2000).

In the previous two chapters, I have explored how expatriates construct and negotiate boundaries through their spatial and bodily practices. Here, I consider how they respond to challenges to their identities which arise in the wake of their move to Indonesia. In a fundamental sense, identities depend on the creation of boundaries insofar as they mark out what is regarded as self and other, and representations play a key role in this process. I suggest that their relocation to Indonesia engenders the intensified drawing of such boundaries, specifically in terms of belonging to certain ethnic, national, and social groups. In the following, I will look in more detail at the instances, practices and arenas in and through which this happens.

Hall notes that the concept of identity in the social sciences has undergone several changes. He distinguishes between the Enlightenment period, a 'sociological' notion of identity, and, most recently, the post-modern subject (1992:275). While the Enlightenment saw subjects as unified individuals, the sociological subject is not self-sufficient, but constructed in relation to others. Finally, the post-modern subject becomes fragmented and consists of several, possibly contradictory identities (1992:276–77). Identities are no longer seen as essential or permanent; instead, they

become ‘transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented ... in the cultural systems which surround us’ (1992:277).

Identities are thus relational, plural, and processual, or, as Miller puts it succinctly, ‘multiple and contested, discursively constituted through narratives of the self, constructed in relation to socially significant others and articulated through relations with particular people, places and material goods’ (Miller 1998:23–24). Identities are relational insofar as they are constructed in relation to an Other, based on ‘the necessity of the Other to the self’ (Hall 1991:48). They are also multiple and dynamic, and their changes – simultaneously and over time – are predicated on different social contexts. In the case of expatriates, these contexts exist, among others, in the form of Indonesian society as well as expatriate communities, which surround them and in which they participate to varying degrees. In a broader perspective, the geographical dislocation of expatriates, living outside their native countries, gives the processes of their identity construction a particular urgency. For, as Mercer (1990) suggests, ‘identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty’ (1990:43). This describes the situation of expatriates insofar as living in Indonesia challenges their sense of self in multiple ways.

Such challenges are inherent in their expatriation, insofar as they experience the loss of their cultural environments in their native countries, and as they have to newly position themselves in relation to Indonesians as well as to expatriate groups of other nationalities. As discussed in Chapter 3, the change or even loss of identity is especially marked for expatriate wives. Cut off from the professional and social networks they maintained in their home countries, many feel rather unsettled when faced with an alien Indonesian environment. The move to Jakarta may also affect them disproportionately as their husbands often spend a considerable amount of time in transnational offices, where their jobs provide them with a continuing professional identity which many women lack. In contrast, the construction of their identity as ‘expatriate women’ takes place mainly within national women’s groups. In the following, I focus on how expatriates, and in particular women, respond to the unsettling of their identities, and discuss the increased significance of boundaries around and within expatriates’ communities. I suggest that as a consequence of encountering other ethnic, national and social groups that they may not have come into contact with in their home countries, many expatriates invest in the creation, affirmation, but also careful transgression of boundaries which separate them from variously defined Others. The expatriate sector, as Cohen (1977:83) terms it, is thus divided into multiple segments.

The most fundamental line that sets this sector apart as a whole is a racial or ethnic one between (mostly white) Western expatriates and Indonesians. As many expatriates are immersed in an Asian environment for the first time, living in Indonesia racialises them insofar as they become aware of their Whiteness in a way that they had not been before, as discussed in Chapter 4. This situation contributes to the creation of a collective identity as ‘Western expatriates’ vis-à-vis Indonesians, which is expressed in expatriates’ discourse of being part of a ‘community’. The meaning of the term ‘community’, however, is contextual and can relate to the

expatriate sector as such, or to the different national expatriate communities that are contained within it.

In the age of globalisation, when they are sometimes regarded as members of a ‘transnational capitalist class’ (Sklair 2001), it is perhaps surprising that expatriates in Jakarta are organised along national lines. The website for expatriates, ‘Living in Indonesia’, illustrates this. Its list of community organisations shows that while many are interest-based, such as the ‘Wine and Spirits Circle’ or the ‘Jakarta Offshore Sailing Club’, there exist a considerable number of national or regional-based groups, such as the Scottish St Andrew’s society, the English Royal St George’s society, the Singapore Association, the Nederlandsche Club, the Nordic Club, and the Union des Francais de l’Etranger. Many of the national-oriented organisations are women’s groups, such as the American, British, German, Canadian, Indian and Korean women’s associations¹, suggesting a key role of women in the construction of national identity abroad (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989). Furthermore, these national groups are divided internally depending on social status, mostly as defined the profession and level of seniority of the husband. All of these boundaries are created, fortified, and occasionally transgressed through the performances of expatriates’ identities. They include the re-creation of essentialised national identities, re-enacting a national habitus, being an ‘expatriate-in-Indonesia’, as well as aspiring to a more cosmopolitan, international-oriented identity. In what follows, I illustrate these as they occur in a range of settings: social events of national women’s associations, national days, domestic interiors and the activities of the Indonesian Heritage Society.

The Coffee Morning

Although national expatriate women’s organisations are not synonymous with the respective national communities, the two are closely associated. Women are crucially involved in creating and maintaining national groups through their friendships and social activities, and through their engagement with ‘national’ schools. More generally, regarding the relations between women and nation, their role could be described as reproducing the boundaries of national groups (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989:7). Expatriate women’s associations thus constitute a key arena for the performance of national identities.

Given that all national women’s associations, implicitly or explicitly, emphasise their national distinctiveness from each other, it may seem ironic that the stated purpose of their existence, organisational structures, and social activities are almost identical. Anthony Cohen’s point is pertinent here that ‘saliency attaches less to the *substance* of the supposed distinctiveness, and more to the need to display it ... it responds to the need to delimit the bounds of similarity’ (1989:110, original emphasis). For example, the American, British and German Women’s Associations, like most of these groups, refer to charitable aims as their main *raison d’etre*. They all have a chairperson who presides over sub-committees, one each for charity,

1 For a comprehensive list, see www.expat.or.id.

newcomer support, sports, and other leisure activities. They usually produce a monthly newsletter, publish the bilingual cookbooks which were mentioned in Chapter 5, stage fashion shows, and hold regular 'crafty afternoons', where women produce handicrafts that are sold at their respective Christmas Bazaars. Perhaps the most distinctive institution they have in common, however, is the Coffee Morning.

The Coffee Morning is arguably one of the most recognisable institutions of expatriate women's lives, and most people who have ever come into contact with expatriate communities are familiar with it. They also provide a habitual target for ridicule within a popular male discourse on expatriate wives. This discourse presents them as spoilt housewives, who spend their time shopping, harassing the servants, and whiling away the day at coffee mornings. I will not discuss the institution in general here, but look specifically at how different kinds of identities – national, ethnic, and social – are performed in the context of this institution.

A typical setting for the respective women's associations' Coffee Mornings, which are held once a month, is a ballroom in one of the major international hotels in Jakarta, such as the Shangri-La, the Regent or the Kempinski. Between 9 and 10 am, a succession of chauffeur-driven cars arrive at the hotels, from which the women emerge, while their drivers park the cars in the underground car parks, where they wait for them for the duration of the event. Most women are carefully turned-out, with neat hairstyles, pearl necklaces, and smart casual summer clothes. They proceed to the area in front of the ballroom, where stalls by Indonesian vendors sell local textiles, jewellery, antiques and art objects. After browsing the stalls, and catching up with friends, the women enter the main room. A buffet is prepared on one side of the room, there are display tables with information about the association's activities, their charity projects, and second-hand books offered for exchange or sale. Occasionally the event is held in a ground-floor room, with large windows and doors opening to the outside. The heavy curtains are often drawn, however, shutting out the views onto the roadside, street vendors, and traffic. Well-trained Indonesian staff serve at the buffet, while Indonesian nannies in white uniforms mind the small children on the periphery of the ballroom. Most coffee mornings follow a similar order: during the initial meeting-and-greeting, women have refreshments, organisational matters are then discussed during the formal part of the meeting, and finally there is a featured presentation. After the talk, everybody mingles and chats, until most leave around noon, while committee or long-time members often stay on to have lunch together.

In continuation of the theme of food consumption I discussed in Chapter 4, I suggest that the refreshments served at these coffee mornings are a significant part of the performance of national identities. At the British women's coffee mornings for example, having a cup of tea entails choosing from a splendidly labelled selection of loose leaf teas, which are prepared by the cup by uniformed Indonesian waiters. Instead of ordinary biscuits as they may be served in the UK, refreshments consist of freshly baked muffins and mini-pastries, appetisingly presented in individual paper wrappings. Water is provided at the tables in heavy silver pitchers, and filled into high-stemmed glasses. The scenario is therefore not simply a re-enactment of 'being British in Britain', but rather constitutes an exaggerated form of Britishness. The sophisticated catering may also be designed as a counterpoint to the outside

Indonesian environment, which is considered rough and uncivilised. Similarly, at the Coffee Mornings of the German women's association, the food provided represents such an essentialised version of German culinary culture. Although the meetings begin at 9:30 in the morning, the buffet includes rolls with meat and cheese, cream cakes and gateaux, and 'typical' savoury German dishes such as potato salad. None of these would normally be consumed in an ordinary German household for breakfast, either in Germany or Jakarta.

Alongside such food displays, coffee mornings can also be read as more or less conscious performances of what could be called a 'national' habitus (Bourdieu 1977), not only with regard to food consumption, but also social interaction more generally. The German buffet may reflect a particularly German notion of food, insofar as it is substantial, rich and plentiful, and may be underscored by a seriousness about eating which makes it more than just an accompaniment to general socialising, as seemed to be the case at the British Coffee Morning. Such differences in habitus also became visible at more informal occasions, for example at 'newcomers' mornings', where long-term expatriates met with recently arrived ones to offer practical information and support. At one such meeting of the American women's association, the food available was not especially elaborate, but was a reflection of what would have been served at a comparable occasion in the US. Mugs of coffee and ordinary soft drinks, such as Coca-Cola, were served without much ceremony; there were pre-packaged blueberry muffins and chocolate chip cookies, and popcorn was prepared in a microwave, thus providing reassuring 'home comforts' to the American women.

Apart from food display and consumption, different forms of communication, leadership styles, and ways of socialising also relate to a national habitus. One example is the farewell note of the president of the American Women's Association (AWA) as her time in office ended, which was printed in the association's monthly newsletter, *The Kayon*. With exuberant expressions, she thanked her '*talented and dedicated fellow board members*', and claimed that being president of the AWA '*is a memory that I will cherish all my life*' (*The Kayon*, May 2000). Furthermore, symbolic orchids were given to members who had made special contributions to the AWA's work. In comparison, the tone among the British women was dry and occasionally self-mocking. The newly elected president introduced herself in her first public speech by commenting on her short stature, which barely enabled her to see above the lectern, which was only made possible, she pointed out, by wearing high heels. In contrast, social exchanges at the German Women's meetings could seem quite stern. Their chairperson was a former teacher, which might have contributed to her style of communication, as she once tried to impose order on a chatty crowd at the beginning of a coffee morning. '*Ladies!*' she shouted, '*just got up from breakfast and you're already at the buffet again! Everyone sit down at their places and listen now!*', which may be interpreted as a habitual German commandeering style, even if, as it later emerged, her tone was considered rather inappropriate by the women themselves.

Finally, the proceedings at the Coffee Mornings also help to produce an identity of a Western-expatriate-in-Indonesia. This includes the discursive and visual representation of the Indonesian Other, and of expatriates in relation to it. At one British coffee morning for example, the presentation of the day consisted of an

overview of the Indonesian charity projects that the association was involved in. Representatives of different charities gave speeches or performances as a way of thanking the women for their support. One of these groups was a choir of blind children, who, in their thin and high voices, sang some songs in Indonesian. A young orphaned boy, who had won a scholarship, read out a note of gratitude in English that he had written himself, and was afterwards praised for his brightness by the charity committee. The juxtaposition of the audience of well-groomed British women leading affluent lives made possible by their husbands' expatriate pay packages, and the scrawny figures and hushed appearances of the children in the surroundings of a luxurious hotel ballroom could have not been more stark. Nevertheless, the way in which 'Indonesia' appeared in the frame of the Coffee Morning was not just an instance of the contrasts and contradictions that are typical for expatriate lives, but was considered by them as an affirmation of their identity as both wealthy and charitable Westerners.

The mutual constitution of representations of self and Other also becomes manifest in the sketch at the beginning of this chapter. The slide show on the Dani in Irian Jaya was typical of the events organised by the German women's association insofar as they regularly featured themes of Indonesian society and culture. One presentation I attended, for example, was given by an elderly German lady, who had lived in Indonesia for decades and had become a connoisseur of the Javanese shadow puppet play, *wayang kulit*. The display of her extensive collection of leather puppets, accompanied by her talk on the different characters of the puppets and the role they played in the ancient *Ramayana* epic was very well received. Her talk presumably made the expatriate audience feel as aficionados of a well-known and highly regarded aspect of Javanese culture. The slide show on Dani, however, struck a different chord, as it reinforced the vast difference between them as white, modern Westerners and the Dani as black, primitive people, who lived on the outer edge not just of the Indonesian archipelago, but of civilisation.

The most striking aspect was probably the reaction of the women as they were confronted with images of the Dani men wearing penis sheaths, which was received as some kind of sexual titillation. Although the presenter, Antje, pointed out that for the Dani, these sheaths did not have any sexual connotation, this did not diminish the suppressed excitement of the expatriate women. Quite oblivious to her explanation, it merely reinforced the image of the Dani as highly sexualised primitives. Furthermore, the presentation of the Dani lifestyle, including dwelling in simple huts, preparing log fires, and being surrounded by nature, clearly endorsed the women's impression that the Dani were living in a different era – in the words of one woman, in a 'Stone age'. This bears out Fabian's claim that making an Other has a temporal dimension, insofar as the Other is denied coevalness (Fabian 1983). Finally, Antje also demonstrated how identities can be successfully forged by a calculated transgressing of boundaries: as mentioned in Chapter 3, while her adventurous spirit was admired by her compatriots, she was not regarded as 'having gone native', but rather as a mediator between the tourists and the Dani. One could argue that the slideshow thus confirmed the women's identities as civilised individuals with a properly controlled sexuality, who were firmly planted in the modern, civilised world.

While such events may foster women's collective identities as German nationals or Western expatriates, it is important to remember that their national communities are at the same time internally highly stratified. 'Social class' has a complex significance in the expatriate context, which I cannot sufficiently explore here. It can be said, however, that national communities are characterised by a double shift. On the one hand, they comprise a rather heterogeneous group of people who, by virtue of being posted abroad, share the status of 'corporate expatriates' and thus create a sense of community between them. This status distinguishes them not only from Indonesians, but also from other nationals who are not corporate expatriates, such as Western women married to Indonesian men, or English language teachers on low salaries. In this sense, class differences that existed in their home countries are de-emphasised. For example, Tanja, a German expatriate wife of a senior manager, explained to me how her social contacts had changed in Jakarta compared to their life in Germany: *'I found that suddenly we were invited by embassy people and we spend most of our time with company executives – people I wouldn't necessarily mingle with at home.'*

On the other hand, people often remain acutely aware of differences in social status. In fact, as Stoler states for the Dutch Indies, 'class distinctions within these European colonial communities were not increasingly attenuated but sharpened over time' (1995:103). This also holds for expatriate communities, and is especially pronounced among expatriate wives. As discussed in Chapter 3, their opportunities for expressing their social identities are much reduced through becoming 'trailing spouses'. Given the absence of their jobs, social networks, and families, the key marker of these women's status becomes their husband's job and rank. Social distinctions which may have been less visible or relevant at home are thus reinscribed abroad. Members of the German women's association admitted to me that several years ago there had been an implicit system of social ranking based on such criteria, but told me that people now were not as 'snobbish' as then. For example, as described in Chapter 3, the seating order at Coffee Mornings had apparently been determined by the women's husbands' positions in their companies, a practice which had since changed, but not disappeared completely. Similarly, a young German woman, Silke, confided in me that she felt that other members were looking down on her because her husband was a technician, who was employed as a highly qualified car mechanic by an international automobile corporation. She felt that this compared unfavourably with the managerial positions held by other women's husbands within the same company.

So far I have described different ways in which national identities are performed in the context of women's associations. While many of their activities can be understood as reinforcing national boundaries, however, there is also an increasing pragmatism which encourages women to transcend them, by for example joining a sports team of another national society. As Sue, who was a member of the British Women's Association, explained to me: *'we have some German and Australian women for whom the British women's tennis times and locations are more convenient than those of their own group, so they come and play with us, although they are not necessarily British.'* Apart from such casual, pragmatic switching between groups there exist an increasing number of international-oriented association, such as the

Indonesian Heritage Society, which I discuss in more detail below. Participation in these groups, however, usually requires confidence in English language skills, which many middle-aged women who are not native speakers often do not have. In this context, it is interesting to note that the Indonesian Heritage Society, despite its international remit, nevertheless hosts a Japanese and a French section, where activities are conducted in these respective languages. Joining an international rather than a national association thus remains difficult even for those who are quite interested in an internationally-oriented social life.

This growing flexibility also becomes apparent with regard to the choice of schools for expatriate children. Many used to send their children to the respective 'national' schools, insofar as they existed, such as the British, German, and French school in Jakarta², which follow the respective national curriculum, and are taught in the national language. More recently, though, a trend has developed among non-native English speakers to choose an English-speaking school over their national one. This would often be the Jakarta International School, which is guided by the US curriculum, and where students graduate with an International Baccalaureate. Such decisions are often motivated by the notion that in a globalising world, an English-language education will give children advantages with respect to their university education and future career. This attitude can cause friction within the national expatriate communities, since the 'national' schools depend on these children for their continued existence. In the German community for example, there was apparently some upheaval when the German ambassador at the time decided to send his children to the Jakarta International School rather than to the German International School, as this was considered disloyal and sending a 'wrong' signal to other parents.

Although there are growing signs of an international orientation among expatriates, in many ways national boundaries are still anxiously guarded. While spending time with the German Women's Association, I was sometimes asked whether I attended the events of other national women's groups for my research. When I confirmed this, few of them made further enquiries, but generally made remarks showing both suspicion and curiosity. Just how sensitive this issue was became clear to me at one coffee morning hosted by the British Women's Association. I had attended these a few times, and on that morning I unexpectedly saw a Swiss woman there, who I knew from the German Women's Association. To my astonishment, although I smiled and waved at her, she was loath to acknowledge me, and kept her distance throughout the morning. I knew that her two sons were attending boarding schools in the UK and were expected to go to university there, which may have prompted her to get involved with the British Women's Association. In any case, I had the impression that being seen to attend a different group's coffee morning made her feel acutely uncomfortable, as if she had betrayed her own association.

2 The 'German' school, for example, is called 'Deutsche Internationale Schule Jakarta', referring both to its location outside of Germany and to its national character in terms of the language spoken, and adhesion to the German school curriculum.

Sauerkraut and Bintang Beer: The Day of German Unity

Although performances of national identities may be particularly pronounced in the context of women's organisations, they are not confined to them. In this section, I discuss an occasion which concerns the national community as a whole, namely the celebration of national days. These events by their very nature seem to generate essentialised versions of a culture, but more importantly, they are also marked by their situatedness in Indonesia, thus performing not a national identity as such, or a reified version of it, but rather the particular positionality of Western expatriates in Indonesia. Representations of, and interactions with the Indonesian Other thus become part of what is meant to be a display of an *expatriate* national identity. At the same time, these occasions reinforce what Stoler (1997) has called the 'interior frontiers' of an expatriate community, where membership of a national group is affirmed and contested. While national days are marked in Jakarta by several expatriate communities, notably including the American and French, I focus here on the 'Day of German Unity'.

The Day of Germany Unity [*Tag der deutschen Einheit*], celebrated on the third of October, marks the re-unification of Germany in 1990. In Jakarta, this was commemorated by an evening reception at the German embassy. Admission was by invitation only, which in the past few years had included all German nationals registered in Jakarta. The event was held in the open-air courtyard of the embassy, where the Ambassador and his wife, accompanied by staff members, greeted visitors with a handshake. The atmosphere was characterised by contained excitement; many guests were dressed in formal eveningwear, including a women donning rhinestone earrings in the shape and colour of the German flag. For many, meeting the Ambassador was a proud and exciting moment. To be associated with, or acknowledged by the Ambassador and the wider diplomatic circle was much valued especially by members of the generation of family expatriates. As the ambassador explained to me on this occasion with grave benevolence: '*I see myself as the mayor of our little community here*', and this view was probably shared by many of those present.

After the welcome, people proceeded to the courtyard, where an extensive buffet was set up in the form of food stalls, imitating the layout of a German farmers' market. Each stall offered a 'traditional' German meat dish, such as *Schweinebraten* (pork roast), *Schweinshaxe* (knuckle of pork) *Gulasch* (diced beef), and various kinds of sausages, together with side dishes such as *Sauerkraut* (marinated white cabbage), *Rotkraut* (red cabbage) and *Kartoffelsalat* (potato salad), and regional specialties like Bavarian sweet mustard. Resembling a museum rather than a market, all dishes were marked with neat cardboard tags with the description of the dish, underscoring their role as national exhibits rather than as objects of consumption. In the midst of these displays of Germanness, aspects of Indonesia appeared as well. For the benefit of Indonesian guests, most of whom would be Muslim, signs had been put up depicting a jolly little pig with a curly tail, indicating dishes that contained pork, and signs with a crossed-out pig for those dishes which did not. The fact that this celebration of Germanness took place in Indonesia also was apparent for example in the drinks provision. As importing German beer would have been rather expensive,

an Indonesian company had been chosen to sponsor the occasion by providing the locally brewed *Bintang* beer, as a concession to the pragmatism discussed earlier. A member of the Indonesian catering team, serving food at one of the stalls, proudly pointed out to me that he had prepared the potato salad himself after an original German recipe. Towards the end of the evening, one of the Indonesian waiters, who had obviously drunk some of the *Bintang* beer he had been serving, started offering the remaining guests half-empty drinks he had collected from the tables. Far from causing offence, his behaviour was smiled upon, and possibly considered as an imitation of European drinking habits that was indulged rather than criticised.

It is interesting to note that the representations of Germany on this occasion were modelled on a very particular aspect of national identity, that is, Bavarian. Most of the dishes at the buffet were associated with Southern Germany, and the musical entertainment was provided by a Bavarian brass band, whose members were wearing leather trousers and felt hats and played a kind of German 'traditional' music [*Volksmusik*]. Similarly, the decoration consisted of white and blue banners, the colours of Bavaria. I suggest, however, that all these elements contributed to an essentialised version of Germany – a Germany which, in this form, existed neither in South Germany nor anywhere else. The food stalls with their concentration of 'typical' dishes would rarely be found at comparable gatherings in Germany. The occasion therefore did not represent any 'German life in Germany', but a rather particular, almost Disneyland-like representation of 'German life in Indonesia'.

The social composition of the event was similarly not representative of German society, but of the German expatriate population in Jakarta. There were mostly middle-aged couples with school-age children and unaccompanied young men, while single women were rare. Among the professional women present, many worked for cultural institutions such as the Goethe-Institute, or for development organisations. On the periphery of this group of 'family expatriates' were a few elderly men, such as a missionary and a pastor, who were living in Indonesia on a permanent basis. Only these, along with a few German men married to Indonesian women, were dressed in traditional Indonesian *batik*-shirts, in contrast to the suits and cocktail dresses of most of the other guests. Several young men, however, seemed to have made a deliberate decision not to dress up, and appeared in jeans, T-shirts and hiking sandals, carrying battered backpacks. As they ostentatiously munched their way through the buffet, their demeanour seemed to express disapproval of the Germanness displayed, of celebrating a German national identity in principle, and what they possibly considered the rather bourgeois character of the proceedings.

The boundaries of who belonged to the German expatriate community were not only deliberately questioned, such as by the sandal-wearing young men, but questions of legitimate belonging seemed constantly and silently being negotiated through quick glances, aversion of eyes, conversations that were struck up and those avoided or cut short, as people moved about the courtyard. They sidelined for example German nationals who were not posted to Indonesia but who lived there permanently, many of them married to Indonesian partners, who worked as 'local hires' on low salaries and who hovered in small clusters, somewhat uneasily, at the periphery. Significantly, these, along with the missionary, were the only Germans wearing Indonesian *batik* shirts, which is considered good practice for Indonesian

men at formal occasions, but is rather seen as a sign of 'having gone native' by posted expatriates.

Indonesian guests were eyed with even greater suspicion, and their presence at this event was continuously scrutinised. *'She's my business partner's wife'*, an expatriate man said apologetically to his acquaintance, explaining his conversation with an older Indonesian lady. *'So you were born in Germany then, yeah?'* two German teenage boys questioned another, who was of mixed German and Indonesian parentage. While expatriate men who had married an Indonesian woman still seemed to be accepted, their wives were often ignored altogether. Clutching their handbags, some of them seemed rather uncomfortable, clinging to their partner while manoeuvring their way through the crowd. The scenario was all too reminiscent of Stoler's observation, made with reference to the colonial Dutch Indies, that 'Europeanness was not only class-specific but gender-coded. A European man could live with or marry an Asian woman without necessarily losing rank' (1995:115), while, like in this case, this acceptance would not necessarily be extended to his local-born companion.

Such implicit negotiations of belonging also surfaced some time after the event at the embassy. Rumour had it that the reception had become too large and therefore expensive, and that guest numbers would have to be cut down. It was hinted that only 'real expatriates' were going to be invited in the future, which would exclude Germans in mixed marriages, and the number of Indonesian guests would be reduced. A similar line was drawn, as the German Military Attaché told me, regarding evacuation plans, drawn up in case of overwhelming political turmoil. He explained that, *'all-German couples would be evacuated first. We can't take everybody, and if people are married to an Indonesian, or are children from a mixed marriage, they're likely to be left behind.'* He admitted that *'this is very hard to justify. But we have to make a choice, which is terrible.'* Projections of a unified expatriate community with a shared identity were thus confounded by people who were situated, and sometimes attempted to situate themselves, outside of a continuously shifting boundary.

In addition to the celebrations on the Day of German Unity, I briefly consider an event that exemplifies another way of representing Indonesia in the context of the German expatriate community. This is an exhibition entitled *'Spuren einer Freundschaft: Deutsch-Indonesische Beziehungen vom 16.- 19. Jahrhundert'* [Traces of a Friendship: German-Indonesian Relations from the 16th to the 19th century], which was held in the year 2000 in the buildings of the former national archive in central Jakarta. Officially billed as an 'exhibition by the German Embassy for the millennium', it was curated by the German Ambassador to Indonesia at the time. It was accompanied by a catalogue, which included images of exhibits as well as extensive background material, written in German, English, and Indonesian. The aim of the exhibition, as stated in the introduction, was 'to look back on five hundred years of German-Indonesian relations' (Seemann 2000:7). The exhibition was divided into eight sections, including topics such as 'Early German travelers', 'Civil Servants, Governors, Soldiers', 'Literature' and 'Science and Research'.

The most notable aspect both of the exhibition and the catalogue was the almost complete absence of Indonesians from the visual and the written material, with the single exception of the Javanese painter Raden Saleh, who was discussed in more detail. Instead, the exhibition consisted entirely of paintings, photographs

and documents relating to fiction or travel writing, scientific research and business ventures involving Germans between 1500 and 1900 in the Dutch East Indies. The mainstay of the exhibition were accounts of the lives and works of these travellers, civil servants and scientists and their contact with the East Indies. This could on occasion be rather spurious, as some authors, whose works include references to the East Indies, had no personal experience of it. One example is the German thinker Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), who developed a linguistic theory related to the Old Javanese *Kawi* language without having ever been to the island of Java himself.

Given the content of the exhibition, one might argue that the title, invoking the ‘friendship’ between Germany and Indonesia, was simply misleading, since the emphasis of the exhibition was clearly on the German side of the relationship. While the absence of Indonesians might be attributed to this principal curatorial decision, it is nevertheless notable that the activities of the Germans in the East Indies were not represented as *interactions* with Indonesians, who remained an implied presence. The exhibition thus portrayed Germans as agents, whereas the role of Indonesians, as suggested by their non-representation, appeared negligible. This attitude was echoed by the catalogue, which presented the exhibition as an account of Germans’ contribution to the *Aufbau* [construction, development] of Indonesia as a country. While Indonesians feature in expatriates’ lives in many, more or less visible and explicit ways, it is perhaps unsurprising that especially this formal, public, high-profile account of ‘Germans-in-Indonesia’ largely excludes them.

Taking expatriate women’s associations and the celebration of the German national day as examples, I have identified and traced performances of different forms of identities, including the creation of an essentialised national identity, the reproduction of a national habitus, and, most importantly, being an ‘expatriate-in-Indonesia’. The latter displays different ways in which this identity is interspersed with, and inscribed by elements of Indonesia. This bears out a point made in Chapter 1, where I have argued that their physical location in Indonesia remains significant for expatriates irrespective of their attempts at leading secluded lifestyles. I have argued that their efforts to distance themselves from their Indonesian environment, as shown in the previous chapters, are paralleled by the demarcating of ‘interior frontiers’ within the expatriate sector, in particular through distinctions based on nationality and social status. All of these could possibly be understood as a response to the unsettling of their identities as a result of their transnational situation and the ‘global flows’ which have brought them to Indonesia.

Objects of Travel and Home

Material objects play a particular role in the construction and articulation of identities (Miller 1998). In this section, I want to explore how expatriates’ consumption of domestic artefacts reflects aspects of their identities which become relevant at different stages of their expatriate careers. I suggest that their practices conceptually intersect two established scholarly discourses. The first concerns the acquisition and subsequent display of ethnic artifacts by tourists (Graburn 1976, Hitchcock 2005);

the second is about migrants' use of objects that are reminiscent of a 'home' they have left behind (Tolia-Kelly 2004). While I suggest that the situation of expatriates includes aspects of both, I argue that in addition, they have a particular affinity with objects that reflect their specific situation as expatriates in Indonesia.

Studies of tourism have notably included discussions of the material objects which tourists collect on their travels (Hitchcock 2005, Lury 1997). As Morgan and Pritchard have argued, 'cultural artefacts and souvenirs that tourists accumulate on their travels and bring back into their homes form part of their construction of self, part of their own individual projects of self-creation' (Morgan and Pritchard 2005:34). In the expatriate context, I want to look at what kinds of selves they fashion through the acquisition and display of such objects. As an example, I briefly sketch the interior of a house of one expatriate family: a Canadian couple in their fifties, whose children had left home, and who had lived in Jakarta for about a year. Betty was very active in the Indonesian Heritage Society, and was a hobby watercolour artist. On entering their home, one was immediately struck by their hallway where they had arranged dozens of finely handcrafted, expensive leather puppets which are used in the Javanese shadow puppet play, *wayang kulit*. Their sheer quantity was stunning, and I had encountered displays such as this only at *wayang* performances, where the puppeteer lines up all the characters along the stage. The couple's living room was dominated by large textile wall hangings from Sumatra, resplendent with interwoven silver and golden threads. A Javanese-style wooden bench was draped in heavy cloth from the island of Timor. On a bookshelf stood three small, intricate stone carvings from the island of Nias. Elsewhere in the house, there were Balinese masks, batik cushions, and Javanese brass gongs, all carefully arranged. As Betty regularly entertained fellow members of the IHS in her home, visitors never failed to admire and comment on these home decorations.

In the classic text, *Ethnic and Tourist Arts*, Graburn has suggested in relation to ethnic arts and artefacts that 'there is a cachet connected with international travel, exploration, multiculturalism, etc. that these arts symbolise' (Graburn 1976:2-3). Similarly, Thomas has described the 'European appropriation of indigenous things' (Thomas 1991:125). Examining Captain Cook's voyages in the Pacific, he notes that 'indigenous artefacts virtually became trophies which reflected the broader experience and mastery of a passage around the world on the part of a traveler' (1991:143). These insights relate to expatriates insofar as they can be considered, in a sense, as tourists. Although they are temporary residents in Jakarta, they also have a tourist experience of Indonesia, because their relationship with Indonesian culture is often as fleeting, distanced and orchestrated as that of tourists. Furthermore, their visits to tourist sites similarly take the form of organised group trips, for example through the Indonesian Heritage Society, as I describe below.

The situation of expatriates, however, deviates from that of tourists in a crucial aspect. Ethnic artefacts, while they speak of a journey, can be substitutes for personal experiences of a culture that the tourists have not had. In the expatriate context, this issue becomes especially urgent precisely because they are also residents in Indonesia, even though only for a limited period of time. Hence, they may be expected by friends or family at home and indeed themselves to have more than a tourist experience of Indonesian culture. One could thus interpret the propensity of

expatriates to decorate their homes with Indonesian ethnic artefacts as a response to these expectations. There may even exist an inverse relation between the prominence of ethnic artefacts in an expatriate house and their engagement with their immediate Indonesian environment. Ethnic artefacts play an important role in the fashioning of expatriates' 'cosmopolitan' identities as people who have not only physically lived abroad, but have taken an interest in and acquired knowledge about local cultures during their stay. These objects therefore become vehicles not just of self-expression (Lunt 1995), but of their self-making of identity.

At the same time, however, expatriates' relations with material objects not only resonate with that of tourists, but also with that of migrants. There is an intriguing correlation between the length of time that expatriates have spent on the international circuit, living outside of their home country, and the kind of objects with which they tend to decorate their houses. More specifically, the shorter the time that people have been living abroad, the more likely they are to display ethnic artefacts, and the longer they had been away, the more numerous and prominent objects become that are associated with their native country.

One example was Kristin, an American married to an Indonesian, who had been living in Jakarta for eleven years, after previous stints as a volunteer in Java in the 1970s. The couple had three children, and Kristin, who considered herself an expatriate, was working in various capacities with international firms and as a freelance writer. Their children attended Indonesian schools, and the family's visits to the United States were limited, mainly due to financial reasons. In Kristin's modest house in an Indonesian neighbourhood, there were hardly any 'ethnic Indonesian' objects on display. Instead, many artefacts were reminiscent of her life in the US, her hometown, and were related to her identity as a Christian. For example, at the wall over the kitchen dinner table hung a handmade, framed cross-stitching that read 'God Bless America'. In the living room, there was a brass plate with an engraved view of her hometown in Texas, where her mother lived, and Christian crosses were displayed in various places around the house.

Another similar case was the place of a German woman, Dagmar, who was married to an Indonesian and had lived in Jakarta for nearly a decade. The couple had two school-age children. Dagmar also considered herself as an expatriate, and was an active member of the German women's association. Many of the objects in her house evoked 'Germany' in multiple ways: as I was visiting their house in the month of May, there was a miniature Maypole in their living room, complete with a wreath and blue ribands. There were numerous German-language books, including children's classics on the bookshelves, and a magazine rack with a pile of slightly out of date copies of a German women's magazine, *Brigitte*. On the walls hung several oil paintings depicting European-style scenes, such as Alpine landscapes and sailing ships. On one occasion, when Dagmar hosted a committee meeting at her house, the conversation turned to where she thought her home was, and she responded: '*When we go to Germany, we're just having a stressful time, but home is here, in Jakarta*'.

Tolia-Kelly, in her study of British Asian homes, discusses 'different migrant communities and their valuing of domestic artefacts as stores of cultural narratives and memorialized biographical narratives' (Tolia-Kelly 2004:315). As indicated in Chapter 2, expatriates can be considered as transnational migrants insofar as they

maintain close social relations with their native countries, visit regularly, and return there eventually. This means that different from diasporic or exiled populations, expatriates, even if they have lived abroad for a long time, do not necessarily feel a distinctive sense of loss regarding their native country. I suggest, though, that there is a feeling among some expatriates that their national identities and their connections with their homelands are under threat. This sentiment may increase the longer they stay abroad, or the more they become immersed in local social networks, for example through marrying an Indonesian partner. Both Kristin's and Dagmar's situation suggest that as ties with their native countries become looser, domestic artefacts become important not just for mediating memories of life there, but also for the recreation of the particular 'home' culture that seems to become elusive.

The identity practices I have described here – relating to a 'tourist' and a 'migrant' identity respectively – are not polar opposites, but constitute a continuum along which expatriates' experiences are situated, and which can overlap and exist simultaneously. Furthermore, as I have argued above, expatriates also perform an identity as 'expatriates-in-Indonesia'. This becomes manifest for example in their pronounced interest in artistic representations which directly reflect this, for example the drawings of Ken Pattern. This is a Canadian artist who has been living and working in Jakarta since 1989. He also maintains a studio in Vancouver, Canada, and regularly returns to work there for a few months at a time. He and his wife initially came to Indonesia because of his wife, who worked there as a development consultant. After spending some time in Beijing, which he found artistically unrewarding, his art has flourished since coming to Indonesia. The body of work he has produced during this time can be roughly divided into three groups. One comprises idyllic, luminous landscape paintings in acrylic on canvas, depicting scenes on Java and Bali. A second group includes more abstract, surreal and symbolic imagined landscapes and labyrinths reminiscent of the work of the Dutch artist M.C. Escher. The third group is a series of meticulously executed drawings and lithographs of Jakarta cityscapes which are characterised by an almost photographic attention to detail. These are the focus of the following discussion.

Over a period of six years during the 1990s, Ken Pattern produced almost one hundred of these drawings, mostly depicting scenes from Jakarta *kampungs* [neighbourhoods], and chronicling the change of the urban landscape in the rapid economic development of what was considered the 'boom years' of the mid-1990s. While he was initially only interested in these rather 'traditional' scenarios, he soon realised that they were fast disappearing to make way for high-rise constructions of glass and steel, especially in the area which is now known as the Central Business District. On one occasion, when he returned to a particular place in central Jakarta where he had worked before, he found that the houses had been destroyed. As he recounts, this incident prompted him 'to begin recording traditional scenes across the city. I was on a mission' (*Tempo Magazine*, February 10, 2003).

This mission led him, over the next few years, to develop a distinct style, capturing the stark contrasts between old and new, 'traditional' and 'modern' buildings that made up Jakarta's inner city district. His drawings document the gradual replacement as well as the resulting juxtaposition of run-down, poor, ramshackle *kampung* settlements with luxurious, imposing office buildings,

apartment blocks and hotel towers. In 1997, the financial crisis that disrupted several national economies in Southeast Asia brought these developments to an abrupt halt, as did the ensuing political crisis in Indonesia. Just before these events, however, Pattern felt that he had sufficiently explored this particular theme, and since then has returned to rather abstract, symbolic paintings in which he aims to express what he sees as the alienation between humans and nature, environmental concerns, and the seemingly unstoppable ‘McDonaldisation’ not just of Indonesia, but of the developing world.

To illustrate the images of the third group, I take three typical examples: one is called ‘Penthouse’ (1997), another ‘Ground Floor’ (1999), and one entitled ‘The Road to Shangri-La’ (1995). In all of them, the foreground features a ramshackle *kampung*-style house comprised of one or two-storeys, with a sagging roof of brick tiles or corrugated iron, washing hanging on a line, tilting telephone masts and dropping lines, a rugged palm tree, and domestic clutter. Immediately behind these houses appear modern buildings, towering over the scenery. In the drawing ‘The road to Shangri-La’, the background is provided by the Shangri-La hotel, which is visually separated only by a layer of foliage from the dilapidated hut in front, which is surrounded by piles of rubble. Pattern describes that it was the closeness of these disjoint spheres that captured his imagination: ‘You have all these glass and steel towers hovering above all the little orange roofed buildings which surround them. What an incredible city... I’d been in cities before where all the slums are in one place and the rich people in another. Here it was all just thrown together’ (*The Jakarta Post*, June 26, 2003).

Ken Pattern’s work is relevant because of its prominence in the Euro-American expatriate community. Pattern has been regularly exhibiting in major hotels and galleries in Jakarta and abroad, including an annual fundraising exhibition for the Canadian women’s association, and recently received the Canadian Ambassador’s Award in recognition of his contributions to the promotion of Canadian-Indonesian relations. I first came across his work in the homes of expatriates I visited, where ‘Ken Pattern Wall Calendars’ and other reproductions of his work were displayed in hallways or near telephone tables. Posters and postcards of his drawings can be found in many art and craft shops which specifically cater to expatriates, and prints of his works are often given as Christmas presents.

I suggest that the popularity of his work is partly due to the fact that his drawings represent an immediately recognisable reflection of expatriates’ own perceptions of their environment, in particular with regard to the stark contrasts between poverty and affluence with which they are faced. The images which juxtapose traditional *kampung*s and modern high-rise buildings speak to expatriates because they express a set of contrasts and contradictions that are fundamental to their lives in Indonesia. These disparities concern not only the material differences between traditional and modern buildings, but also more symbolically between squalor and luxury, the ‘local’ and the global, the ‘Indonesian’ and ‘the Western’, which provide the setting for expatriates’ daily lives. Maybe unsurprisingly, the inspiration for these paintings arises from the artist’s own experience of Jakarta, which resembles that of many expatriates. Pattern explains that when he first came to Indonesia, he was struck by the contrasts as he ‘lived in a gated and walled house with a swimming pool inside.

But outside the wall, it was just a regular kampong and my house was like that of a rich person' (*The Jakarta Post*, May 26 2005).

Alongside expatriates' consumption of ethnic artefacts in relation to their 'tourist' identity as discussed above, there seems to be a discernible appetite for art such as Ken Pattern's, which is not exclusively about the other, the exotic, or the traditional. Instead, his images offer expatriates representations of a different kind of authenticity, that is, a reflection of their own lifeworlds and local environments in Jakarta. This emphasis on locality and recognisability is underscored by the fact that many of Patterns' drawings feature well-known landmarks, for example the Shangri-La hotel described above, or a prominent street corner in South Jakarta before it was demolished, as in a work entitled 'Disappearing Jakarta'.

I have earlier emphasised expatriates' sense of living in a 'bubble', and have described their lives as being simultaneously characterised by the construction of boundaries and by attempts to leave the confines of this 'bubble'. I suggest that the use of Pattern's work can be instrumental in the latter. Specifically, it signals an acknowledgement of the political and economical disparities which underlie the existences of expatriates in Indonesia, as symbolised by the ramshackle *kampung* houses in the foreground of his drawings. In this sense, Pattern's images do not reflect the inside of their expatriate 'bubble', but the contrast between the inside and the outside that expatriates are often painfully aware of themselves.

I argue, however, that expatriates' relationship with Pattern's images is not just one of recognition, and is not a simple acknowledgement of the inequalities that surround them. The context in which his images are marketed and sold, for example as Christmas Gifts, or under the patronage of the Canadian Women's Association, and the way they are displayed in expatriates' homes, suggests that these images aim to please rather than to formulate an incisive, acrimonious social commentary. I therefore suggest that they fulfil a more complicated function for expatriates, insofar as they take up issues of inequality that expatriates are, more or less guiltily, aware of, and transform them into an aesthetically enjoyable experience. One could suggest that the nature of the images produces a comforting distance between the social realities that they hint at and expatriates as viewers, who, as actors in the global economy, are implicated in these inequalities. Ken Patterns images may thus provide a rather comfortable way of expressing underlying feelings of guilt through presenting them in a visual form that is inoffensive.

Although they display a photographic-like quality in regard to the meticulous attention to detail, they are highly stylised representations of actual Jakarta scenes. In the first instance, the particular vistas that they present carefully most likely exclude more disordered surroundings which would detract from the strong divisions presented in the image. The scenes are also characteristically devoid of people. These contrasts are further emphasised through details which signify the 'traditional' and the 'modern' respectively. For example, outside the *kampung* houses washing is hung out to dry, there are random wires crossing the foreground, a birdcage, and sandals left outside a door, which may all symbolise a traditional society on the verge of modernity. In contrast, the buildings rising above these dwellings bear the insignia of modernity, such as a huge satellite dish on a rooftop or the prominent display of initials of a major banking corporation. Finally, the titles of the images,

which often include verbal puns, underline the stylised character. 'The road to Shangri-La' for example foregrounds a dilapidated shack, while a luxury hotel of the same name is seen in the distance. The drawing called 'Penthouse' juxtaposes the rickety top floor of a house with the top floors of an exclusive hotel and apartment building behind it. One could therefore argue that the contrastive character of the images merely supports expatriates' dichotomous sense of a world that is inevitably divided between rich and poor, Western and Indonesian, traditional and modern, and confirms their own position in it.

Contact Zones and Cosmopolitan Identities: The Indonesian Heritage Society

I have argued that the images of Ken Pattern are popular partly because they reflect aspects of the particular lifeworld of expatriates. As mentioned earlier, however, expatriates frequently feel uncomfortable with inhabiting this lifeworld, and seek to leave their 'bubble' behind. Such sentiments are expressed for example in the statement of a young American woman, Tammy, who considered one of the main problems of her life in Jakarta '*being separate from Indonesian society*'. As she put it: '*it is, like, watching television ... you see all these cultures going by but you don't really know the people who are living them*'. Consequently, some expatriates, and women in particular, attempt to make forays into their Indonesian environment. I suggest that they prefer these forays and possible encounters with Indonesians to take place in a 'safe', controlled fashion, without risking being exposed to unsettling places or behaviours. While a few individuals venture out on their own, many others therefore make use of a rather unique institution, the Indonesian Heritage Society (IHS).

IHS is a non-profit organisation set up by expatriates in 1970. Although membership is open to all regardless of gender or nationality, most of the active members are expatriate women, partly due to the fact that most of their activities are conducted during daytime hours. Its stated aim is to '*promote understanding and appreciation of the rich cultural heritage of Indonesia*'. The society pursues its objectives through organising study groups, volunteer work in the National Museum, training Museum guides, as well as offering tours and a public lecture series. It also runs a popular 'Explorers' programme, which aims to give expatriates insights into different aspects of Indonesian culture through weekly tours in and around Jakarta. The objective of this programme is to explore, in their words, '*traditional ideas, customs, skills and arts of the Indonesian people*'. The tours include museums, batik or silk factories, walks through historic areas of Jakarta, visits to botanical gardens, handicraft studios, as well as attending ceremonies and performances. While longer-term members tend to focus on museum work and study groups, the so-called 'Explorer' tours offer tailor-made ways of encountering Indonesia especially for newly arrived expatriates, which they would not have embarked on by themselves.

As a British woman, Gillie, told me: '*We just moved to Jakarta, and I do not have a clue, but there is no way I would venture out by myself. So I think this is a good opportunity to get to know the culture a bit.*' This rather commonplace statement alludes to a more significant dimension: the Heritage Society provides a 'contact

zone' where expatriates can encounter Indonesia within a Western institutional framework. I take the term 'contact zone', coined by Pratt (1992), to connote a space which does not wholly belong to either Western expatriates or Indonesia, but which constitutes an in-between space where interactions between expatriates and Indonesians can take place. Moreover, the notion of contact zone is pertinent here as 'a contact perspective emphasises how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other' (Pratt 1992:7). This is evident in the situation of corporate expatriates, whose Western identities are often challenged by their move to Indonesia and are reconstructed in relation to other expatriates as well as Indonesians.

I have argued above that for almost all expatriates, the relocation to Jakarta brings about a change of their former identities, and that the loss of identity is especially marked for expatriate women who come to Jakarta as 'trailing spouses'. Women's reactions to this are diverse; and not all feel comfortable with spending their social life within the confines of the national groups described earlier. At the same time, as many live in rather secluded housing arrangements, and their contact with Indonesians is sometimes limited to their domestic staff, many women have a sense of being cut off from Indonesian society. As a response, some women aspire to a more cosmopolitan expatriate identity for themselves. In using the term 'cosmopolitan' here, I am thinking of its more common-sensical dictionary definition referring to an open-minded attitude towards other cultures and an ability to think and act beyond the confines of a national consciousness. This is a somewhat pared-down version of Hannerz' conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism, for example, which involves free-floating individuals who in their globalised lives sample local cultures with the attitude of a connoisseur (Hannerz 1990, 1996).

While more limited in scope, the cosmopolitan ideal of expatriates principally involves transcending the boundaries of national communities, as well as establishing a connection with Indonesia. Motivated by their desire to leave the Western 'bubble' that many inhabit, some women join the Indonesian Heritage Society. The Society as a contact zone offers expatriates a space to gain social capital and cultural competence, as well as displaying open-mindedness with regard to their Indonesian host country. It is important to point out, however, that the Society presents an acceptable space for encountering Indonesia precisely because of its emphasis on 'heritage'. This particular concept of heritage is closely linked to Euro-American notions of culture. It implies that expatriates' engagement with Indonesia mainly takes place on Western terms of reference. While the framework of the Heritage Society orchestrates encounters between its members and Indonesia to some extent, individuals inhabit this contact zone in different ways, which a few sketches illustrate.

At one Explorer tour I met Brenda, who had given up work to follow her husband to Jakarta, while her grown-up children remained in the US. Brenda spent much of her time with the American Embassy Recreational Association (AERA); both she and her husband worked out in the AREA gym two to three times a week, and usually had dinner there afterwards. They lived in a housing compound owned by the oil company that Thomas worked for. Many of Brenda's daytime activities were undertaken together with the wives of Thomas' American colleagues, or were otherwise linked to the American expatriate community. Her contacts with Indonesians were thus, like many those of many women in her position, limited

to their domestic staff. She was somewhat dissatisfied, however, with the scope of her activities, and had decided to join the Explorers to '*get more of an idea of Indonesia*'.

While she acted with great confidence within expatriate settings, Brenda seemed more nervous in her interactions with Indonesians. A key feature of the Explorer's programme, though, stipulated that everybody who wanted to take part in their excursions was required to organise and prepare, in a small group, one of the outings themselves. Although this may not appear too onerous, the expectation to liaise with Indonesian institutions, and even merely acting in an English-speaking environment was found to be so intimidating – for example by some German women – that they refrained from joining the Heritage society altogether. Although Brenda may have had similar misgivings, once she had decided to embark on the Explorers' programme, she soon found herself in the position where she was involved, together with two other women, in organising a tour to the Museum Purna Bhakti Pertiwi, which mainly displays gifts to the former President Suharto. To make matters worse, these women later dropped out of the project, so that Brenda was forced to take over and organise the trip herself.

After initial hesitation, she managed to establish contact with the appropriate museum officers, made an advance visit, planned the tour together with them. On the day, she led the sizeable group of 'Explorers', chatted casually with the museum guides, and afterwards led the group to a lunch at a venue that she had similarly researched and arranged. Possibly surprising herself, she had produced a very enjoyable experience for all, and declared afterwards, with a sigh of relief, that '*this wasn't so bad after all*'. While this effort might seem unremarkable, it constituted an achievement for Brenda. Dealing with Indonesian institutions was not something she had felt comfortable with before, and something that she had not been required to do, since many aspects of their life were managed by her husband's employer. The space that the Heritage Society provided, however, had enabled her to successfully reach out and interact with Indonesians in a way that she might not have attempted by herself.

Kathrin, a German art teacher in her late forties and mother of teenage sons, had also followed her husband to Jakarta, who worked for a large chemical company, and had gone on sabbatical from her teaching job in Germany. Kathrin had joined the Heritage Society and followed an 'Explorers' season during her first year in Jakarta, but had since become part of a study group which focused on Indonesian art. The members visited galleries and exhibitions, and met for discussions with artists. Their latest project was to provide English-language explanatory texts for an upcoming art exhibition. Kathrin's outlook exemplified some of the issues I touched on above in relation to the national orientation of women's associations. While Kathrin saw herself as open-minded and sophisticated, she also was also a dedicated member of the German women's association, being especially instrumental in publishing their monthly newsletter.

Her relationship with the wider expatriate community, however, was characterised by a certain ambivalence. On the one hand, her decision to join the English-speaking Heritage Society was seen as quite brave by some of her peers, who did not feel

confident enough to socially interact in such an international arena, even though they would admit to this only in private. While being a member of IHS thus gave Kathrin a certain kudos, she did not always feel entirely confident or comfortable in the company of its members. She was, for example, slightly worried about having to produce English-language texts for the art exhibition. And while she had invited several non-German IHS members to her home one evening, she told me afterwards: *'there were some Australian women, I don't know. How they behave – is somehow different. Maybe that's the way Australians are, but somehow I cannot quite relate to them'*.

Nevertheless, her impetus to reach out did not stop with the international expatriate community, but went further, as she declared that *'I don't want to spend all my time with German women; it's Germany day in, day out; but after all, we're here in Indonesia!'* Her curiosity about Indonesia had therefore most recently led Silvia to visit an auction of contemporary Indonesian art, and she had acquired a large painting, which now hung prominently on her living room wall. *'My husband and sons don't like it'*, she declared, laughing with both pride and uncertainty, *'but I think it's great. It's much better than the perennial Batik sofa cushions!'* Although she did not feel assured of the painting's artistic value, it seemed a visible statement of her ability to engage with Indonesian culture. While others would stick to 'ethnic' sofa cushions, she had ventured further and, through the mediation of the heritage society, had introduced potentially contentious Indonesian art into her home. In this sense, the Heritage society had helped her to turn her own house into a contact zone between Western and Indonesian artistic cultures.

It was not only Western expatriates, however, who utilised the Heritage Society to affirm their cosmopolitan identities. While the majority of the members were Euro-American expatriates, the society also had Indonesian members; some of these were women married to foreigners. One of them was Siti, an Indonesian lady in her seventies, who had lived abroad for much of her life, in the course of following her American husband and his work. Western members of the Explorers group tended to cherish Siti; new members were told of how wonderful she was, and how much she could tell about Indonesian culture. Siti happily joined Explorers' activities such as a *gamelan* [ensemble of Indonesian musical instruments] workshop. One week, she hosted an Explorers' event at her home, where a young Indonesian professional gave a talk about her recent experience of her pilgrimage to Mecca. During the event, Siti proudly pointed out wall-mounted photographs of her extended family and herself on their worldwide sightseeing tours. Expatriates marvelled at her experiences, her flair and personality; she presented a sophisticated face of a society expatriates often experienced as poor and uneducated. Their significance of Siti lay not only in her personality, but she was a proof that expatriates could appreciate Indonesians. But if their acquaintance had symbolic value for expatriates, this was also the case for Siti. She clearly enjoyed her status as a household name, gracefully chatting with and entertaining expatriates. While confident of her Indonesian background, the marriage to her American husband also established her connection with the world of expatriates. For Siti, the Heritage Society offered a contact zone for a continued involvement with expatriates, thus sustaining her own cosmopolitan identity.

Kampoeng Wisata

A final aspect of expatriates' engagement with Indonesia becomes visible in the actual Explorers' trips. One of the trips featured a newly established 'Kampoeng Wisata', which literally means 'tourist village'. Located on the outskirts of Jakarta, it was presented as an alternative 'tourist village', which aimed to maintain the existing social and work relations within the village, while opening it up for visitors, and demonstrating traditional farming methods and handicrafts to them. After arriving at the venue mid-morning in chauffeur-driven cars, the 'Explorers' – dressed for hiking in shorts, walking shoes and sun hats – were given a guided tour of the fields. They were shown cassava and groundnut plants, and were told about traditional rice-harvesting methods while watching some village women husking rice by pounding the stalks on a wooden frame. The group was then led through the village to visit some home industries. In a small, dark, airless hut several Indonesian women were sewing polyester tracksuits for the Indonesian army. The expatriate women filed past the narrow doorframe and took off their sunglasses in order to catch a glimpse of the women working inside. One of the next stops included a recently emptied fish pond, where village men and children were looking for leftover fish hidden in the mud, an activity that elicited much excitement among the visitors. The tour finished with a 'traditional Indonesian Lunch', after which the women got into their cars, so they would be back in time for the drivers to pick up their husbands from work.

What makes trips to places like Kampoeng Wisata significant is that they provide a much more explicit kind of contact zone which is designed to create a safe encounter between expatriates and 'Indonesia'. While anthropologists may critique the authenticity of such representations of 'culture', for the expatriate Explorers such questions seemed to matter less, possibly because authenticity was taken for granted. Instead, the wish to 'get in touch' with Indonesia was most relevant, even if it meant 'Indonesia' as selected and presented by the Heritage society and the village management. Embedded in the institutional framework of the Heritage society, such trips offer a way of breaking out of the 'expatriate bubble' in which many feel enveloped, and allow for an encounter – however mediated – with Indonesian culture that marks expatriates as cosmopolitan rather than parochial.

The case of IHS demonstrates how expatriates use elements of 'Indonesian heritage' in their quest to establish cosmopolitan identities. As illustrated by several examples, some expatriates leave the boundaries of their national communities and join the Indonesian Heritage Society in order to increase their multicultural sophistication as well as displaying their engagement with Indonesia. While the Indonesian Heritage Society represents a particular example, it shows more generally that the use of heritage is not limited to, for example, disenfranchised indigenous communities in contestation with an oppressive nation state, but that corporate expatriates as members of a rather privileged group also draw on indigenous, Indonesian cultures in their search for identities. The heritage society crucially offers expatriates the opportunity of a 'safe' encounter; it is debatable whether its framework precludes any more genuine exchanges between expatriates and 'Indonesian culture'. Although its explicit aim is to '*take Indonesian culture seriously*' [IHS introductory leaflet], it nevertheless seems to cater to the need of

expatriates for an exposure that does not expose them too much, or one which might seriously challenge their identities and sense of security.

In this chapter, I have explored the performances of different kinds of expatriate identities, representations of self and Other, and the boundaries that are drawn around and within expatriate communities. The discussion is based on the concept that identity is constituted through an Other, and that racial, national and social boundaries define what lies on either side of them. I have identified the performances of a national habitus, of essentialised forms of national identity, and being an 'expatriate-in-Indonesia' in the context of the institution of the Coffee Morning and the celebration of the Day of German unity. I have then explored expatriates' identities both as tourists and residents in Indonesia through their display of 'ethnic objects' and those reminiscent of their native countries in their houses. I have considered in more detail their penchant for the art of the expatriate artist, Ken Pattern. His drawings, which capture the contrasts of the city of Jakarta, are popular partly because they reflect expatriates' experiences of their environment, but they also aestheticise a potentially guilt-inducing situation. In a final section, I focused on expatriates' desire to leave the confines of their 'bubble', and to explore Indonesian culture through trips organised by the Indonesian Heritage Society. I argue that the society provides a kind of 'contact zone', in which controlled encounters can take place, and which fulfils expatriates' wish for more 'cosmopolitan' identities. Further, these encounters also illustrate the permeability of the membranes of the 'bubble' which expatriates feel they live in.

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Chapter 7

Young Expatriates, Alternative Lifestyles?

The Jakarta Ultimate Frisbee Club meets on Sunday afternoons at an outdoor sports complex in central Jakarta. The crowd of young Western professionals consists mostly of men, many of them American or Canadian. There are a number of players who are serious about the sport, and their team participates in Ultimate Frisbee competitions across South East Asia, such as in Bali, Hong Kong or Singapore. One Sunday, people enthusiastically play a series of games despite the scorching heat, while two of the players' Indonesian girlfriends stay on the sidelines, looking on. In the breaks, people gather, drink large amounts of water, and chat. *'I almost didn't make it to Beijing'*, says Sam, who has been working in the region for a few years, *'they wouldn't give me a visa, and I barely got there in time'*. Other people had similar problems. Kate, a financial journalist and one of the few women players, is going to Hong Kong in a few weeks to start a new job. She has been in Jakarta for two years, which she considers *'ages'*, and is going to join her partner there, who is also a journalist. *'What about the housing market in Hong Kong'*, she enquires, *'is it really bad? What are the rents like?'* After several more games, as the sun starts to descend, people change their drenched T-shirts for fresh ones, and slowly walk through the sports complex, past tennis courts occupied by middle-class Indonesian men, to a branch of TGI Friday's, an American restaurant chain. As it slowly becomes dark, and the last rays of the sun hit the oak wood interior, people settle around the bar and order barbecued ribs and French fries, nacho chips and guacamole together with Mexican beer. Fabio, an Italian and the main organiser of the club, is mulling about the turnover in the group, and wonders what has become of previous members: *'A lot of people pass through. One year, two years at most, and they are gone again'*. Many, but not all are journalists, working as freelancers or for news agencies, others work for banking corporations or management consultancies, such as Fabio, who is a consultant for an oil company. *'I wouldn't say we are expatriates'*, he says, pointing at the sweaty crowd gathered round the bar: *'I would say, we are something like international managers'* (Fieldnotes, June 2000).

In the previous chapters, I have mainly discussed a particular segment of the foreign population in Jakarta, namely the generation of 'family expatriates'. This refers to the group of 'traditional' corporate expatriates, where the husband, usually the main breadwinner, is posted to Jakarta, as part of his career within a multinational corporation, accompanied by his wife and often children. 'Family expatriates' are typically aged between 35 and 59, and the husband's job is often on the middle or senior management level. He receives a generous 'expatriate package', which includes a high salary and other benefits. Within this concept of expatriation, some locations, often including Jakarta, are considered 'hardship posts', which require those who are sent there to be compensated accordingly. In line with this view of

expatriation as a strenuous and somewhat forced endeavour, many expatriates and their families do not necessarily want to live abroad. They may not be particularly interested in the country the husband is posted to, and often, on being told where they are about to move to, have to locate the country on a map first. The husband's assignment abroad is seen as a necessary phase of his career trajectory within the company; and while some keep moving from posting to posting for several years, for many it remains a singular experience. Both the husband's career perspectives and the family's social lives are therefore, at least initially, strongly orientated towards their home country. Family expatriates tend to socialise within their national community abroad, and their contact to Indonesians can be limited to their domestic staff or work colleagues. I have therefore argued that family expatriates often live in a 'bubble', which separates them from other national expatriate communities as well as from Indonesian society.

One question arising is whether it is at all possible to avoid living in a 'bubble' as a foreigner in Indonesia, and whether there are alternatives to the kinds of lifestyles described so far. I will therefore consider two groups whose members emphatically distance themselves from the 'family expatriates', and ask in what ways they differ from the latter, specifically with respect to constructing a 'bubble' around themselves. These are the firstly the younger generation of professionals, who live and work in Jakarta, and secondly the Western foreigners living in Yogyakarta, a medium-sized university town in Central Java. In the first part of this chapter, I will discuss the young professionals, and in the second part turn to those living in Yogyakarta.

Alongside the older generation of family expatriates, more recently a new one has emerged, which could be called 'young global professionals' or 'GenXpat', the title of Malewski's self-help manual targeted at this group (2005). The author, who counted herself as part of this group, defines a 'GenXpat' as 'a member of Generation X, born between 1964 and 1981, who is also an expatriate, or expat; that is, one who decides to live and pursue a career abroad' (Malewski 2005:3). Although Malewski does not discuss this in more depth, her terminology arguably relates to a significant phenomenon. In the present context, I refer to them as 'young global professionals', both men and women, who typically originate from either Europe, North America or Australia, who are between 25 and 40 years old, university-educated and unattached, and who, at least for a certain period, pursue a life of working abroad.

They are characterised by their highly itinerant work and life patterns, frequently change employers and places of residence of their own initiative, and take up a series of jobs in various countries. These may be assignments within a particular transnational corporation, or they may be hired locally for a particular project, but in any case receive a globally competitive salary. Their salaries, however, do not necessarily include comprehensive expatriate packages such as those of family expatriates. This is partly related to the fact that young professionals consider working abroad not as a forced operation, but as something that they explicitly set out to do. This is not only to gain international work experience, but because a 'global' lifestyle is seen as attractive and exciting. Unlike their older counterparts, who often regard a foreign posting as a necessary evil, for young professionals this constitutes a desired part of their future career. Some of them thus purposefully embark

on university degrees which will enable them to work abroad, such as those relating to international management, marketing, accounting, or development.

Their mobile lives therefore engender social and cultural practices that differ markedly from those of the older generation. Rather than being focused on their national communities, their social networks are comprised of nationally and professionally mixed groups of young Europeans or North Americans who are in similar personal situations and share their general outlook. In this sense, the attitudes of young professionals appear more open-minded than those of family expatriates. While the older generation often seeks to recreate their respective national cultures with regard to social activities, food, and entertainment, young professionals seem to aspire to more international, 'global' lifestyles.

These snapshot characterisations suggest a clear-cut divide between the young professionals and those of family expatriates. Also, while individual contacts between members of the two groups exist, their social lives generally rarely overlap. This situation resonates with a strong sense among many young professionals that they constitute a new generation, or a new 'global tribe', as one of them suggested to me. I therefore want to examine in more detail the claim of young professionals that they are wholly distinct from the older generation, and tentatively suggest that despite manifest differences, there are also significant similarities between them, particularly with respect to 'living in a bubble'.

In particular, I pursue three interrelated issues. The first concerns the kind of 'culture' which these young professionals create. If they, as I suggest, also live in a 'bubble', albeit a 'Western international' one, how is it constructed and maintained, and whom does it include and exclude? This leads to a broader question concerning the often-invoked 'global' nature of their lives. As with many such claims, it is not always clear what being 'global' exactly entails. I therefore attempt to provide more fine-grained ethnographic data to critically examine these claims. Finally, the principal conditions that structure the lives of 'family expatriates' are the economic, political and social inequalities between them and their host society. One could ask to what extent this also applies in the case of young professionals. I consider these issues and explore the culture of this alleged new 'tribe' with regard to their relation to localities, their social lives, and their use of the Internet. In order to ground the following discussion, I present two of my informants, Dominik and Gabi, who are in many ways exemplary of the group I am concerned with here.

Dominik is in his early thirties, and has grown up in Switzerland. After completing a degree in economics, he has joined a multinational pharmaceutical company, working in the finance department. One of the reasons for choosing to work for this particular company was that he was keen to gain international work experience, and during his career with the firm so far, he has worked on various postings abroad, including two years in Latin America, before he came to Jakarta, where he holds a high-ranking and highly responsible job as finance director. Although Dominik enjoys working abroad, he was not particularly interested in Indonesia as a country when he arrived. He receives a generous salary and lives in an apartment in a high-rise tower, with large glass fronts offering stunning views of the city.

A typical day for him involves getting up around 6am, going to the gym in the basement of his apartment tower, and setting off for work at 7.30. A driver picks him

up to bring him to his office, which is located a few kilometres away in the Central Business District of Jakarta. His working hours are long, and the work challenging, which he nevertheless enjoys. After work, a driver usually brings him home; due to his long hours, leisure and social activities are reserved mainly for the weekend. He likes to go running, if he finds time, and owns a large collection of running shoes, although he laments that going for a run outside is not very easy due to lack of green spaces. On some Sunday mornings, he plays golf with his boss and their business clients; he dislikes having to participate in client entertainment events that include visits to seedy clubs, and the expectation to return home with one of Indonesian 'bargirls' they meet there.

He prefers to spend time with other young professionals, eating out, and has formed good relationships with his neighbours, who live on the same floor of his apartment tower. He does not speak much Indonesian, nor gets to see the city of Jakarta much due to his working hours. Some of his friends are Indonesian graduates, whom he has met through work. They mostly have degrees from US universities, and hold similar job positions to his. He sometimes flies to Bali for a short break, and regularly travels to Switzerland for work-related reasons; he is not planning to return there anytime soon, however, but instead is looking forward to live abroad for the foreseeable future.

Gabi is also in her early thirties, she grew up in Germany and gained a social science degree from a German university. After completion, she embarked on a course in Development at a university in the United States. Her final thesis concerned education issues in West Africa, and after her studies, she began to work for the World Bank as a consultant, specialising on education-related projects. While she did not seem to have any particular interest in the countries she worked with, she was nevertheless keen to pursue a career in the development sector. After having been selected for a traineeship with a major international NGO, she was sent to Jakarta for a period to work on an education project for two years.

Gabi was ambivalent about Germany insofar as she was very critical of its education system and the labour market. She regarded them as not dynamic enough, too bureaucratic, not open to enterprising individuals, and saw the mood in the country as being too pessimistic and focused on problems rather than solutions. Living and working in the US suited her much better in that respect. She was keen, however, to stay in close contact with her friends and family who still lived in Germany. Otherwise, she took full advantage of the lifestyle that New York had to offer, and of her international group of friends and colleagues. In Jakarta, she also made immediate efforts to establish contacts with other young professionals. Like Dominik, she lived in a serviced high-rise apartment in central Jakarta. In her free time, she learned to scuba-dive, took tennis lessons, and joined the 'Forum for Executive Women'. Her contact with Indonesians was mostly limited to her work colleagues. She disliked the traffic and pollution in Jakarta, was rather worried about personal safety issues, and despite attending a language course paid for by her employer, did not speak much Indonesian. While she tried to make the most out of what she saw as the limited social and cultural opportunities in Jakarta, she was looking forward to returning to her flat in New York and to 'civilisation', as she put it, before embarking on a new assignment.

Beaten Paths and Shared Localities

Young professionals frequently employ the term ‘global’ to refer to their lives, for instance with regard to their ‘global’ outlook, mobility and social networks, and sometimes describe themselves as ‘global nomads’ or a ‘global tribe’. I suggest, however, that the term obscures a rather specific way of engaging with localities. One aspect of being member of this ‘global tribe’, and a prerequisite for participating in its attendant discourses, is the knowledge of a set of very particular localities. In contrast to Western backpacking tourists, who attempt to gain social capital through seeking out ever more remote and obscure destinations, among young professionals it is the shared experience of certain airport lounges, restaurants or bookstores which confirms their membership of this ‘global tribe’. Their itineraries thus include more or less regular visits to such ‘nodes’ in their global networks, which can be particular airports, holiday resorts, hotels, shops, or metropolitan bars. As people pass through them en route to work assignments, home visits, or leisure travel, a common repertoire of places is formed.

In order to illustrate this, I present here a typical but fictive conversation between a group of friends, all young professionals, who have gathered for drinks and dinner at one of the more fashionable restaurants in Jakarta. The following is a composite of many such conversations that I heard during my fieldwork. Dominik is about to go on a business trip to Singapore and exclaims: *‘Ohh, I am really looking forward to a Starbucks Iced Moccacino at the Airport Cafe, and also going to Borders bookshop on Orchard Road’*. The others nod understandingly; the absence of Western coffee chains as well as English-language bookstores in Jakarta is sorely felt. Gabi, the German development consultant, asks: *‘Have you ever stayed overnight at Changi airport? Their hotel is actually not bad, you can check in or leave in the middle of the night, if you’ve got an odd flight schedule’*. Her friend, Yasmeen, has just returned from a visit home to London. *‘I’ve found that special checkout counter in terminal four; it’s a lot less hassle than the others!’* The talk then turns to collecting air miles, comparing the benefits offered by various schemes, and how they are going to use them. *‘I’m taking mine to go to Bali for a weekend break’*, declares Dominik. *‘Where are you staying – Ubud?’* Gabi inquires. *‘I usually go to Casa Luna when I’m there. Their grilled tuna salad is great. Or their sun-dried tomato ciabatta’*. *‘I’m probably going to Ubud’*, said Dominik, *‘although I was also going to check out some diving spots off the East Coast’*. The three discuss shopping for European food items in Jakarta. *‘I mean, Sogo is alright’*, volunteers Yasmeen, referring to a Japanese department store in one of the central malls in Jakarta. *‘I can see you like them’*, laughs Gabi, pointing to Yasmeen’s stylish Sogo carrier bag next to her chair, which she has brought back from a recent trip to Tokyo. Yasmeen admits: *‘I just love shopping there. I’ve brought lots of little things back. And also, it reminds me of Takashi’*, referring to her former Japanese boyfriend, a long-distance relationship which had recently fizzled out. The others smiled, but tactfully did not inquire any further. *‘Alright then’*, ventures Dominik, *‘shall we share a plate of Thai starters? And who wants another Vodka Tonic?’*

Apart from the exclusivity engendered by such discourses, the shared references to localities also become significant for the creation of social bonds. Many of the

young professionals find living in Jakarta, at least initially, isolating insofar as they are removed from their established social networks. In addition, Jakarta, while not a 'hardship location' for them, is not regarded as a metropolitan city with an extensive, readily available Western infrastructure in terms of shopping, entertainment and social life in contrast to Singapore or Hong Kong for example. In this situation, talking about places which are part of the 'Western world', and which are invested with their individual memories can provide a sense of comfort and of mutual recognition between strangers. An example from Gabi's life illustrates this.

As described above, Gabi had obtained a degree from a university in the US and subsequently worked for several years in New York before coming to Jakarta. She often emphasised how much she enjoyed the international flair of her workplace and of the city of New York. She said: *'one of my bosses was from Togo, the other from Sweden, and their working styles were entirely different. I had friends from all over, from India, Hungary, the US, and my boyfriend was Spanish.'* In Jakarta, Gabi quickly established a group of acquaintances that included Australians as well as Americans and Europeans, but hardly any Indonesians. At the same time, she maintained world-wide social networks: they included people working in the development sector who were currently staying in different parts of Asia and Africa, as well as her friends from university in the United States, and even from her German high school. Considering her globally distributed social networks, one could ask what importance localities held for her.

Gabi did not particularly enjoy Jakarta as a city. She disliked the lack of green space, the restricted movement, always being stared at in public spaces and generally being treated like a foreigner. At the same time, other places she had felt close to in the past now became important to her as and when she could share her memories of them with other young professionals she met in Jakarta. For instance, one evening at a drinks gathering in a hotel bar, she was seated next to an American, Donna. During the conversation, it emerged that Donna had attended the same university as Gabi and had also lived in the same neighbourhood in New York for some time. The two immediately began reminiscing about the university, how much they liked a particular independent bookstore in their area, and their favourite cafe: *'I love it! That place is just so cool!'* declared Donna, and Gabi agreed: *'I know. Whenever I'm back, I have to go there'*. They also shared news of the building in which their department had been housed: *'What, they changed the layout of the whole library floor? I can't believe it!'* exclaimed Gabi. Although they had not lived in the city at the same time, and had no common friends, their shared familiarity with these places seemed tremendously significant for them in the context of living in Jakarta. Such recollections are, perhaps invariably, tinged with nostalgia. Quite possibly, on her return to Washington Gabi would as animatedly share memories of places in Jakarta with new acquaintances, while she may not have been as enthusiastic about them while she actually lived there.

It may be an indication of the sense of social dislocation that comes with being a globally mobile person that the communal recollection of particular places and localities related to one's previous life sparks such excitement and affection. One could speculate whether this is further exacerbated if one feels slightly alienated and separate from one's present environment, Jakarta, as in Gabi's case. These shared

discourses, whether they refer to hotels, department stores, or favourite cafes, which are replete with personal memories, furthermore play a role in the performance of their exclusive international or global identities. In the following, I explore how this exclusiveness appears in other areas of their lives, such as in their ways of socialising and food consumption. I argue that while young professionals are dismissive of what they see as the narrow-minded national orientation of family expatriates, they are, like family expatriates, often similarly remote from local, Indonesian culture.

‘Global’ Lifestyles

While young professionals are thus not moored in the national communities that characterise the lives of many family expatriates, I suggest that they create instead a ‘Western international’ bubble, which is defined by a set of Western practices and tastes. This means that local practices can become part of a ‘global lifestyle’ only through their incorporation into this canon. Their ‘global’ lifestyles may indicate a broader change, as one could argue that young professionals constitute an emerging class. The foundation of this class would be economic capital, but also, crucially, cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). Conceptualising young professionals as a class would acknowledge the structures of global economic and social inequality underpinning their lives, a feature that is similarly relevant in the case of family expatriates.

As is apparent in relation to the discourse on localities, becoming a member of this group is predicated on possessing the prerequisite economic and cultural capital. These are linked since leading a mobile life and having sophisticated tastes is made possible in the first place by financial resources. It is thus partly the economic advantages of being Westerners that enable young professionals to acquire the cultural capital that finds its expression in their ‘global’ lifestyles. In this sense, being a ‘global tribe’ masks a form of exclusivity which is based on fundamental economic and cultural power imbalances. However, it also potentially reconfigures boundaries of race or ethnicity. While membership of this class is not *a priori* based on ethnic criteria, it excludes in fact the majority of Indonesians due to their lack of income. Members of the wealthy Indonesian elite can join young global professionals, but only to the extent that they have acquired the requisite Western cultural capital.

That an increasing number of Indonesians succeed in acquiring both the economic and cultural capital to partake in such lifestyles is evinced in the membership of the Forum for Executive Women (FEW). This is a Jakarta-based organisation that was founded by professional women, includes both Indonesians and non-Indonesians. It is important to note that many of the younger Indonesian members have similar educational backgrounds to their Western colleagues, such as degrees from North American or Australian universities, and they often hold jobs and receive salaries that are not distinguished depending on whether they are ‘Western’ or ‘local’ employees. Such conditions thus enable the inclusion of young Indonesians into a ‘Western international’ class independent of actual nationality or ethnicity.

Young professionals’ social lives illustrate the cultural capital that marks them as members of the class of ‘young global professionals’. They typically regard

themselves as having an international outlook with regard to their professional and social lives which is unencumbered by national boundaries. This does not necessarily translate into a greater engagement with Indonesia, however. On the contrary, one could argue that their globally oriented lives allow them to disengage themselves from their current place of residence, or more precisely, not to engage with it in the first place. It seems that transcending the boundaries of national identities in this case does not lead to a more generally inclusive attitude, but is instead supplanted with a 'Western international' outlook, which is similarly exclusive.

An emblematic event for these kinds of lifestyles are the 'Spaghetti Nights', informal social gatherings organised by Louise, an American woman in her mid-thirties, who was working for a development agency in Jakarta. This institution was carried on from her time as a peace corps volunteer in Mali a few years ago. There, volunteers would organise regular dinner parties in the form of a so-called 'Spaghetti Night'. As Louise explained, '*basically, we just got together and cooked spaghetti, which is quite a special dish when you're in the middle of Africa!*' In Jakarta, the Spaghetti Nights took place in Louise's flat in a rather luxurious apartment block. Louise had been working in the development sector for a number of years, including periods in countries such as Bhutan and Mali. In Bhutan, she had acquired two cats, which she had brought with her to Jakarta. She commented that: '*I had to take them along, because my neighbours in Bhutan told me that it would mean bad karma to leave them behind.*' As a consequence, the Bhutanese cats now lived on the 7th floor of an apartment tower and were often sitting at the floor-length windows and were facing its panoramic but hazy and smog-filled views of Jakarta.

Although Louise did not consider herself particularly religious, she was drawn towards Buddhism. In her bedroom, she had erected several shrines adorned with Buddha images and statues, in order to ward off bad energies, as she explained. She also regularly visited a particular temple in Bali, known as the 'mother temple', because it offered 'good vibrations', which she found especially helpful at times when she needed to gather new energy. From these visits, she brought back holy water, which she kept in a glass carafe in a corner of her bedroom. While working in West Africa, she had also become interested in black magic. '*When you first get there, you think this is all nonsense, but I tell you, as soon as you find the first bloody chicken hanging upside down from a tree in the bush, you know there is something going on!*' Since arriving in Jakarta, she had found a woman who acted as her 'spiritual mentor'. In Louise's words, '*as soon as I met her, I knew there was something special about her. Basically, she helps me with the psychic energies that I have to deal with here in Jakarta, and especially in my workplace!*' In this sense, Louise had not been entirely detached from 'local' beliefs and practices during her time abroad, but rather had incorporated elements of local religions into her Western-oriented lifestyle.

At the Spaghetti Nights, several American colleagues from Louise's office were gathered, as well as friends of hers such as a Gabi, Dee, an Australian diving instructor, and another development consultant, Yasmeen. Dee ran diving courses in a resort based on an island just off the Java coast, which was a popular weekend retreat among young expatriates. '*It was great last time round,*' Gabi said, '*we*

must get people together again for another trip soon. Once you're into diving, you just get hooked!" Scuba diving, along squash, tennis and golf, were among young professionals' favoured sports activities. As people were helping themselves to spaghetti from giant pot, Yasmeen, whose parents had migrated from Bangladesh to the UK, was preparing margaritas: *'My favourite drink, but you absolutely have to get the mixture right. Of course I'm Muslim'* she added, *'but I'm not very practising. I'm a London girl.'* The conversation then turned to on the upcoming Buddhist holiday, *Waisak*. *'It will be great to have a day off,'* declared Yasmeen, *'I've already booked myself a couple of hours at my salon.'* *'Creambath?'* asked Louise. *'Creambath, waxing, manicure- the whole do. I am really looking forward to it – I've had such a hard time at work lately.'* From the balcony, one could see the nearby railway station and illuminated signs of a McDonald's outlet. Yasmeen had just returned from a business trip to London, where she also checked on her London flat, which she was renting out. *'It's strange to say this,'* she admitted as she was overlooking the night skyline, enjoying the breeze: *'but I am actually a bit of a poverty specialist ... and isn't that funny, we are here in Jakarta, in the middle of Asia, and what do you see when you look out of your bedroom? McDonald's.'*

Susan, an American friend of Louise's, came out onto the balcony. She worked in the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington, and had come to audit a development project related to Louise's office. Louise and Susan had met while working in Africa. Susan enjoyed being in Jakarta, but was keen to return to Washington to be with her little son and her husband, who was originally from Cameroon, and whom she had met during one of her assignments. *'Lucky you'*, said Louise, *'he's a really nice guy. Because most of the expat men you meet in Asia are bastards – they seem to become like that here.'* Louise's last boyfriend had left her just as they were due to get engaged. *'Working abroad has lots of advantages, but finding a man isn't one of them'*, Yasmeen agreed. *'If you're looking to find someone here, you're in the wrong place. But look at us'*, she said, nodding towards the little crowd inside the flat, turning her margarita glass between her fingers: *'where we are, how we live – we have become a new crowd, like a global tribe.'*

Events like this give an impression of the atmosphere among young professionals; more specifically, though, these sketches exemplify what it means to be member of a 'global tribe'. Their lives, adopting Jakarta as a temporary backdrop, are characterised by frequent travel, keeping in touch with people world-wide, adopting elements of local spirituality or beauty treatments at their convenience, and socialising in serviced apartments with views of a third-world city. One of the enduring features of such a world, however, is its exclusiveness, as the boundaries of this particular bubble may not easily be transcended.

'Global' Tastes

In Chapter 5, I discussed food as a way of marking boundaries mainly between Western expatriates and Indonesia. Apart from this, food consumption can also emphasise differences in terms of lifestyles, and constitute a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984:186). I suggest that food choices of young professionals,

especially with regard to eating out, reflect their ‘global’ tastes, and thus distinguish them from family expatriates as well as from Indonesians. In the first instance, the food practices of young professionals merely appear as a continuation of those they had in their home countries – such as preparing quick mid-week pasta dishes or weekend barbecues, having dinner parties for friends or going to restaurants. I argue, though, that in the context of Jakarta these practices take on a different significance. While they may be an expression of their ‘global’ lives, they also implicitly emphasise the boundaries between them and the older generation of family expatriates, and indicate their somewhat distanced relationship with Indonesia.

One example was Sergio, an Italian journalist who had been working in Indonesia for over a year. He generally enjoyed living in Jakarta, but explained:

Sometimes I go to *warungs* [street food stalls], but I also go to very *bule* places with *bule* menus. Especially in such a polluted and overpopulated city like Jakarta you sometimes need to go to a five star hotel and meet a friend for coffee and pretend you are in *buleland*. You drink a cappuccino, read the *Herald Tribune*, create a *bule* environment. Then after two hours you are back in a *Prestasi* [a local taxi firm] taxi. All my *bule* friends, NGO people, do that. Even if they want to be here and feel safe and everything, they need the refuge, the escape. Like five-star Sunday buffets at the Shangri La [hotel] for brunch, or hanging out for an afternoon at a swimming pool at someone’s apartment – with *bule* food, too.

Just as family expatriates often try to source the necessary ingredients for preparing dishes resembling their German, French or American national cuisines respectively, many young professionals continue their food habits with respect to eating out, especially in restaurants serving ‘ethnic’ foods. This is made possible by the wide choice of eating places in Jakarta, which include not only staples such as Italian, Chinese and Indian restaurants, but also French, Turkish, Brazilian, Thai, Lebanese, Japanese and Korean ones.

In comparison to these, Indonesian food seems rather unattractive to young professionals, and neither does it usually feature in more ‘upmarket’ restaurants, although there are few that specialise in Indonesian food. Otherwise, it appears that if one wanted to have Indonesian food, one might as well go to a cheap local eatery or let one’s *pembantu* [domestic helper] cook at home – but visiting a restaurant for that purpose does not seem an attractive thing to do. Instead, when choosing a restaurant, many young professionals prefer other kinds of ethnic cuisines. Two examples of restaurants offering such food are *La Na Thai* and *Hazara*, both located in central Jakarta. While *La Na Thai* offers ‘authentic Thai cuisine’, *Hazara* specialises in Indian food. Both places are highly popular with young expatriate professionals as well as with wealthy young Indonesians. Typically, an Internet review describes the *Hazara* as follows:

Upscale indian restaurant that takes its modern mogul style’n splendour to the max. Next to the popular resto there’s a nice new age lounge upstairs for pre or after dinner fun... the interior is spacious and has a smart balance of oriental and western styles (<http://www.superfuture.com/city/reviews/review.cfm?id=2927&lang=EN>, accessed August 2006).

This kind of review style gives a good impression of the ‘sophisticated Western international’ atmosphere that both *Hazara* and *La Na Thai* aim to create. Both restaurants feature dark wooden interiors, dimmed lights and spacious bars, which produce an ‘ethnic’ ambiance with ‘Western’ comforts. Little about these places gives away the fact that they are located in Jakarta, rather than any major European or American city. Yet, it is their location in Indonesia which furnishes them with a very particular meaning. Sergio, who is a regular at both places, describes like this: ‘*I am always shocked at the juxtaposition of the outside of the Hazara and inside – it makes people feel special when they go there. And with La Na Thai, it is fun playing with the thought of Jalan Sudirman and Jalan Thamrin [two major thoroughfares] being just outside – but when you go inside, you enter another world.*’

It is worth considering the role of ‘ethnic’ restaurants in this context. As specific ethnic cuisines such as Thai, Japanese, and upmarket Indian food have become part of a Western repertoire of sophisticated eating, they are incorporated into young professionals’ food habits, enlarging their cultural capital. This only applies to particular ethnic cuisines, though. While Chinese and Indian food have become almost staples in some Western countries, Thai food still appears to have a more exotic flair, as does Japanese food. Furthermore, while Indonesian food is surely an authentic Asian cuisine, it seems to lack the ethnic kudos that is attributed to others. Unless it becomes part of a Western international canon, Indonesian food thus remains unfashionable ‘local’ cooking.

One could argue that places like *Hazara* and *La Na Thai* in some ways function like the coffee mornings and national day celebrations described in the previous chapter: they create ‘inside’ spaces, which provide refuge and relief from an Indonesian outside environment which is seen as stressful, rough, and possibly uncivilised. Instead of the national cultures recreated during coffee mornings for example, visiting ethnic restaurants performs a ‘Western international’ culture. Although young professionals tend to be very dismissive of family expatriates, and anxiously avoid being associated with performances of national cultures, they, like family expatriates, pursue a very particular lifestyle. Having dinner at places such as the *Hazara* may thus constitute an instance of life in a ‘Western international’ bubble.

Globally Connected: The Role of the Internet

Young professionals’ lives, to a much greater extent than those of family expatriates, are characterised by an extensive use of the Internet. Here, I outline the relevance that the Internet has for them and the continuities it enables in terms of their social lives, but also for obtaining goods, news, and information. I suggest that all of these enable their existence in a ‘bubble’. At the same time, their email use also reflects the relevance of their current place of residence. Most importantly, using the Internet enables young professionals to maintain their existing social networks that they have built up over a number of years of leading a mobile life. In addition, many feel at times dislocated and lost in their lives abroad; Yasmeen for example described herself and her friends as ‘orphans’. In this situation, personal exchanges

through email become especially meaningful. For Gabi, the woman introduced at the beginning of this chapter, having access to email was crucial. She declared: *'I'm hooked. I am a complete Email junkie. It's my favourite drug. I suffer from withdrawal when I'm unable to check my mail for two days. It really is my social support system'*. Similarly, her friend Dominik said: *'Email makes me feel connected and happy. When staying abroad, it certainly helps a lot.'* Stefan, a German working as a management consultant, put it even more drastically: *'Without Email, my current life would not be possible – in practical terms, but also emotionally'*.

Gabi explained in detail how Email provided her with a social support system when she had just moved to Indonesia:

It influenced my life in Indonesia in that I spent 3–4 hours nearly every day online, writing e-mails or chatting online. It helped me to maintain my balance. Without access to Internet I would feel cut off. It diminishes the feeling of isolation. E-mail was important to me before since it was the main channel to keep in touch with my friends all over the world, but its importance to me increased dramatically when I moved to Indonesia. It became my lifeline and my support system. Later, at the end of my stay, this diminished somewhat, but it's still a key priority.

Her friend Yasmeen described her relationship with Email as follows:

Our life is not normal in Jakarta in the sense that we are all orphans. There are no commitments to go see your parents at the weekends, you're cut off from friends and family. It is not a totally normal life. I get at least two personal emails a day and I am quite upset when I do not. It gives me a really good feeling to be in touch with someone I really care about. But on a day where I get no personal Email it is terrible – I think people have forgotten about me. My life evolved along with email, and it has changed it a lot. At the beginning, when I was just travelling, I didn't have email, and it didn't bother me. But now, it really matters. I remember once I was in Guatemala for work, I couldn't get to Email for two weeks, and I was going mad.

Many young professionals emphasise how maintaining personal relationships thus eases the disruption created by spatial distance and long absences. As Monika, a German working at a cultural institute, found:

When I came back to Germany after a year away, I didn't have to pick up things with my friends where we left them a year ago, because we had been in contact all the time, we picked them up from where we were at the moment.

A lack of such personal continuity in one's life is felt sharply, and a sense of shared past can be paramount. Yasmeen describes as such:

Some days I feel, I am in a place where nobody cares about me. They may want to go out and party with you, but who is there to really worry about you? In these situations writing Emails makes me feel good, because my friends and I share lots of references to the past and people that we know.

Although they choose to be globally mobile, many young professionals do not necessarily appreciate the transience that subsequently shapes their lives, and they

often attempt to limit the social disruptions it causes. They variously emphasise that Email allows them to ‘create a balance’, an ‘equilibrium’ or a ‘sense of home away from home’. Being connected through Email provides an invariant backdrop to their frequently changing places of residence. As Yasmeen put it, *‘wherever you are, you can open your mail and find letters from all over’*, or, in Dominik’s words: *‘my Email address will always be the same, no matter where I am- in that sense, home is where my Email is’*.

As some of the above quotes above illustrate, life in Indonesia can be experienced as isolating. As a response, many young professionals turn to their globally distributed networks rather than engaging with their immediate environments. The use of Email may therefore intensify the feeling of living in a ‘Western international bubble’. In a similar way, online shopping can contribute to this through providing goods which many consider integral to their lifestyle. Karen, an American in her early thirties, explains: *‘Internet is important for me because I can still live out here and have certain luxuries, like my favourite face creams or make of clothes, or good books at a reasonable cost.’* This continuity engendered by the Internet also concerns their professional development. As Gabi realised,

Without access to Internet I would feel cut off from what is going on in my professional field. But since I am not totally excluded, I feel more comfortable living far away from Washington where I had easy access to information.

Similarly, Sergio, the journalist working for Italian newspapers, keeps abreast of events in Italy. He says: *‘I read two Italian newspapers every day on the Internet, but also two Southeast Asian newspapers, like the Jakarta Post and the Straits Times.’* Furthermore, news from their home countries enables continuous exchanges with friends at home. Monika explains:

Email facilitates communication when I am on home leave – because I am always up to date with what has been happening there. I can take part in political discussions without people having to explain everything to me.

While the use of the Internet thus creates a sense of being globally connected, this may be a disincentive to getting involved with people locally. When asked whether Email helped her live in Jakarta, Yasmeen responded:

Maybe it is quite the opposite. If I knew I couldn’t communicate with people abroad, I would have to focus more on being here. Maybe you go through a transition – you have an initial period where you need Email because it is like a lifeline, but it also makes you miss everything more – it is a two-way thing.

There is evidence, however, that living in Indonesia does have an impact insofar as it makes communication with other expatriates who are living in Indonesia more important. As Monika describes it:

The focus of my Email partners has changed over the last few years. Increasingly, Email addresses in Indonesia become important, because sometimes it is very difficult to describe

experiences that happened here to people in Germany, so that I'd rather talk to people in the same situation.

Yasmeen has recognised similar changes in her Email use:

I have different folders for emails from the UK, from Indonesia and elsewhere and Indonesia is now the biggest. My mailbox from Indonesia far outweighs anything else, it is about 3–4 times as much. The next biggest is from friends outside the UK, and then comes the one with friends in the UK.

The Internet and Email thus play an ambivalent role for young professionals: on the one hand, they sustain life in a 'bubble', further distancing young professionals from their local environment; on the other hand, the fact that they are living in Indonesia does have an impact, as reflected for example in their increased Email communication with other expatriates living in Indonesia or in the South East Asian region.

As the above scenarios illustrate, while the lifestyles of young professionals differ from those of family expatriates in many aspects, they do not necessarily facilitate a greater involvement with Indonesian society, but rather generate other forms of exclusivity. Instead of living in a 'family expatriate bubble', young professionals create a 'Western international bubble', as becomes apparent in their social lives, food choices, and their use of the Internet. While their 'bubble' is less marked by performances of national identities, their 'global lives' are defined in terms of a Western repertoire of localities, discourses and consumption practices, which similarly often disregard the 'local'. One could suggest that this marks the emergence of a new class, whose powers are based on the twin bases of economic and cultural capital. This modifies the claim of young professionals to being a 'new tribe' distinct from the older generation of expatriates, and responds to the issue raised at the beginning of the chapter as to whether their lives represent an alternative to the family expatriates' cocooned existences in Jakarta, since their lives are similarly predicated on inequalities of wealth and power.

Living in the Gap: Western Foreigners in Yogyakarta

So far, I have focused on younger and family expatriates in Jakarta who invariably seem to adopt exclusive lifestyles. In order to explore whether these dynamics are inevitable, I now turn to non-corporate expatriates living in the city of Yogyakarta, or 'Yogya', as it is commonly referred to. These are mostly people who were not posted to Indonesia, but have come on their own initiative, and range in age between 20 and 60 years. Coupled with their decision to live there is often an attitude towards Indonesia that differs from that of corporate expatriates, insofar as many of these 'independent expatriates' have a more genuine interest in the country and its people. They are often quite competent in terms of local cultures and Indonesian language, and many are determined to establish close working relationships with Indonesians, sometimes even with the aim to blend into a local community. Armed with this motivation, a question arises as to whether these attitudes result in the successful avoidance of living in a 'bubble'. In recognition of the fact that they

tend to dissociate themselves from the notion of ‘expatriates’, I refer here to them as ‘foreigners’, even though they might similarly be described as expatriates in the sense of being nationals of Western countries living abroad. In order to give an idea of their lifestyles, I first introduce two of my informants, Sven and Lily.

Sven, a Belgian in his early thirties, had a degree in environmental studies and always enjoyed travelling. After completing his degree, he began to work occasionally as a travel guide, leading walking tours in the Himalayas, in India and Southeast Asia. In the course of his work, he had already visited Indonesia several times, when he was asked to become involved in setting up a travellers’ café in Yogyakarta. After the successful start-up period, he considered staying on a more permanent basis, and an opportunity presented itself to set up a small business in the furniture export sector. Over the course of a few years, his company grew, and he also began manufacturing Javanese-style furniture to the specifications of customers in Europe and the US. Sven speaks Indonesian fluently, lives in a comfortable house in central Yogya, employs a *pembantu* [domestic helper], and spends several weeks each year in Europe. He has experienced ups and down with respect to his Indonesian business partners, and he has had relationships with both Indonesian and Western girlfriends. He spends his free time mainly with other foreigners who are in a similar position as himself, and whom he has come to know over the years of their semi-permanent residence in Yogyakarta. They eat at local restaurants, sometimes visit the cinema, and spend evenings drinking Indonesian beer in open-air bars. Sven says that he occasionally misses ‘*sitting on a market square in an old town in Belgium on a Sunday morning, having breakfast with friends, or a good coffee and just reading the newspaper*’, but seems otherwise happy, at least for the time being, to focus on his work in Indonesia. He admits that it would not have been possible to build a business like this in Belgium, and is keen to exploit the opportunity, despite occasional setbacks and sometimes difficult professional relationships. In private, however, he resents that a former fellow tour guide accuses him of having become a ‘capitalist’, and thus betraying the values they shared in their early days of tourguiding. Sven is dismayed at such criticism, and points out that through the people working for him and their extended families, he provides the livelihood for more than a hundred people in the area, thus making a substantial contribution to Indonesian society.

Lily, an American artist in her mid-fifties, has been living in Indonesia, with lengthy intermissions, since the early 1990s. She first came into contact with Indonesian art in the late 1970s, taught herself *batik* (Indonesian cloth dyeing technique), and sold batik T-shirts on Venice Beach in Los Angeles. She first came to Indonesia in the early 1980s to explore what she saw as the ‘*motherland of batik*’. She remembers this initial encounter with great fondness:

somehow, it all seemed possible then. We were a group of young Western women, and we were introduced to all the artists and batik masters here. There was a great atmosphere of collegiality. Some of us began relationships with Indonesian guys, some got married – and later divorced (she adds with a laugh)

While she spent most of her time in Yogyakarta, she was introduced to the ‘expatriate scene’ in Jakarta by her brother, who happened to be working there at the

time. She recalls: *'to me, that was weirder than anything I had seen in Yogya. They were trying with great care to maintain their little worlds, the whole thing was dinner parties and who owes whom a dinner party. I went to my first oriental party there, with servants and everything'*. Although she had fallen in love with an Indonesian, she returned to Los Angeles, but found that she could not easily enter the art world there, and *'felt lost'*: *'I had a string of strange jobs, and wasn't really pursuing my artwork, and I wasn't really involved with anyone'*. After a decade of living in California, Lily eventually returned to Yogyakarta, began a relationship with an Indonesian, and set herself up as an artist there: *'When I came back to Yogya, it was a shock to see what had happened in ten years. A sleepy little town had burgeoned into a busy life. I had romanticized the place, art as a part of life, all that shit which is partly true and partly not... but being here, I had no more excuses. I am not that driven, but here I had to focus on my art'*. Although her relationship ended some years ago, Lily continues to live in an inconspicuous house in an Indonesian neighbourhood, and the relatively low cost of living allows her pursue her artwork at her own pace without having to face a highly competitive and financially challenging environment such as that of Los Angeles. She travels occasionally to the US or Australia to run *batik* workshops, and has a network of Western women friends in Yogyakarta. She enjoys close relationships with several Indonesian children in her neighbourhood, who often visit her house. As she explains, *'I play educational games with them, they eat here, and I am really a tante [auntie] to them ... so we all get something out of it'*.

The stories of Sven and Lily, though obviously not representative, share some features with those of other foreigners in Yogyakarta, including the circumstances of their arrival, their way of making a living, and their attitudes towards Indonesian society. These foreigners are a heterogeneous group and engage in a range of activities, some of them income-generating, others not. They include small-scale entrepreneurs who produce and export handicraft or furniture, or who run guesthouses, restaurants, bars or internet cafes. There are language teachers, people working for NGOs and cultural institutes, artists, students of Indonesian language or arts, academic researchers, and others who simply stay for extended vacations of several months duration. A considerable number are not engaged in paid work, but pursue their own projects, be they artistic or charitable, and have established a lifestyle that provides them with the time and space to develop their individual interests.

Compared to expatriates in Jakarta, they mostly live in modest accommodation, which, while more expensive than the homes of average Indonesians, is still cheaper than accommodation in their home countries. What also sets them apart from family expatriates are their itineraries, as they frequently travel back and forth between Indonesia and their home countries. Their social circles are therefore characterised by people constantly coming and going, as they make trips to Jakarta, Singapore or their home countries for work, social or visa reasons. This apparent transience, however, disguises a more long-term form of stability: usually people do not leave for good, but keep coming back to Yogya, and while they are away, maintain contact with those who are still there. However, settling in Yogyakarta is usually considered a temporary choice, which can be reconsidered and revoked later. Regarding their initial contact with Indonesia, most of them came for the first time as tourists or to visit friends. Often they had simply chanced on Indonesia as a travel destination.

While staying in Yogya, however, meeting some of the foreigners there, and upon realising what kind of lifestyle possibilities the place offered, they decided to come back for longer.

Given these circumstances, I suggest that the position of many foreigners in Yogyakarta can be described as 'living in a gap'. This means that they nestle rather comfortably in, and benefit from, the differentials in power, money and status that exist between them as citizens of Western countries and Indonesians. They live in a 'gap' as they are not necessarily integrated into local communities, while at the same time being distant from their home countries. The 'gap' signifies a state of symbolic belonging, as well as a material and social position which affords them increased personal opportunities through carving out an existence in Yogya. The image of the 'gap', rather than a 'bubble' also acknowledges their efforts to engage with Indonesia. While their greater economic power allows them to lead comparatively comfortable lives there, the social and cultural differentials provide advantages which may not be available to them in their home countries.

Such advantages arise from being white Westerners, and thus often being considered superior to Indonesians – a notion sometimes held by Westerners and Indonesians alike. The idea of superiority is based on several issues: greater political and economic power; belonging to industrialised countries that are the origin of 'high technology'; a high standard of education; high standard of living; countries marked by efficiency, hard work and success. This often seems the basis for the admiration of foreigners; it endows them with a certain prestige and ensures a great deal of attention, which invariably influences their everyday lives. At the same time, foreigners are also considered inferior in many ways, as they lack Javanese social, cultural and linguistic competence, spiritual power and morality, as well as politeness and personal restraint. They are sometimes regarded as 'children' who behave inappropriately but cannot be expected to know any better. While there are a multitude of attitudes among Javanese towards foreigners, regarding them as superior in some ways while inferior in others, I focus here on the effects of their perceived superiority.

One question is how foreigners themselves relate to these issues. While their attitudes vary, quite often the idea of the superiority of white foreigners as such is, at least outwardly, rejected. What might sometimes be retained, or maybe reinforced, is the idea of foreigners having certain qualities such as inventiveness, organisational skills, and a long-term planning perspective. Some claim that, while differences exist, no value judgements are attached to them. Sven for example stated that: *'We are different, but not any better,'* a statement that would be quite typical of their self-representation. To what extent these are actual beliefs, or whether they are tributes to political correctness, is not always evident. These perceived social differences are not limited to increased social status, but comprise a better education and professional training as well as personal skills and intercultural knowledge, that is, the ability to successfully interact with, and mediate between Indonesians and the Western world.

Their perceived superiority thus opens up professional opportunities for foreigners insofar as they can obtain jobs and start businesses which would not have been possible for them in their home countries. This holds especially for small-

scale entrepreneurs. That they have these chances is partly due to the fact that the capital and knowledge required to set up a business venture in Indonesia is much smaller than in Europe or the US. Many of these foreigners have not run businesses at home, and do not necessarily have any relevant experience or qualifications – still, they often succeed. Sven for example thought that: *‘in Indonesia, you can afford to make mistakes without losing your business immediately’*. Since everything takes place on a smaller financial scale, at least initially, mistakes are less costly. As Sven found, *‘to be successful in Europe, you need to be very smart. Here, you only need to be half-smart.’* This is partly attributed to the low competition from Indonesians in specific sectors, but also to the better starting position that foreigners have in terms of general education, higher motivation and organisational and planning skills. These advantages also extend to those who take up a job in their original profession. Franziska, a German business administration graduate who was doing an internship at a chamber of commerce, explained as follows:

in Europe, there is lots of competition and all my friends have to work hard to be successful. Here in Indonesia, I have advantages from the start because of my better education and it is much easier for me to get into and maintain a good position.

Apart from professional sphere, there are also personal gains. The increase in social status experienced by foreigners can function as an ‘ego-boost’, one consequence of which is an apparent increase in their romantic and sexual attractiveness. For foreigners, female or male, it can be relatively easy to establish a relationship with an Indonesian man or woman, if they wish to do so. That their attractiveness is also related to their perceived financial prowess is probably obvious. Although these relationships may have different meanings for foreign men and women respectively, there are also some similarities. As mentioned in Chapter 3, having a relationship with an Indonesian partner often provides the foreigner with increased agency. It appears, for example, that both men and women make efforts to ‘educate’ their partner – for example in the form of paying for their partner’s language course or university degree. Women in particular seem to make efforts to increase their partner’s life chances, which is perhaps less common in Western countries. Hence, these relationships allow the foreigners to become breadwinners, and often the decision-makers in a relationship. The fact that such increased agency is welcomed by both men and women is related to the changing gender situation in many Western societies, where Western men may feel their status as sole provider has been eroded, while some Western women find that there are too few possibilities for them to take on the role of the main breadwinner (for a further discussion of such relationships see Schlehe 2000, 2002).

In addition to these benefits, living in Yogya also offers possibilities for personal growth more generally. For example, Anna, an English woman in her twenties, had decided to move to Yogya for an indeterminate period. Living with her Indonesian boyfriend, she explained:

since my money goes so much further here, I can pursue my personal interests – like doing creative things, learning the language, doing music and dance, without having to do a shit

job like I would have to in London. The pressure isn't there, which gives me the time and space to think about things.

Foreigners thus realise that their capital – financial, cultural or social – yields much more profit in Indonesia, as not only their money seemed to go further, but also their knowledge, efforts, and personality.

In spite of this situation, foreigners in Yogyakarta tend to assume the moral highground when compared to their Jakarta counterparts, such as indicated in Linda's comment on the 'oriental parties' that she witnessed in Jakarta. They tend to strongly distance and distinguish themselves from corporate expatriates, for example through pointing to their greater competence in Indonesian language and culture. One could argue, though, that they merely represent the dominated fraction of the dominant class (Bourdieu 1984:260–317), in the sense that their lack of economic capital, compared with that of corporate expatriates, leads to a greater emphasis on their cultural capital, such as their knowledge of and participation in Indonesian society. This situation resonates with Bourdieu's claim that 'the structure of the distribution of economic capital is symmetrical and opposite to that of cultural capital' (1984:120). While they are proud to differ from corporate expatriates, their attitudes are also somewhat ambiguous, as Yogyakarta foreigners on visits to Jakarta are simultaneously fascinated, repelled, and often seduced by the luxurious lifestyles entertained by their corporate counterparts there.

Their assumption of a morally superior position is further undermined with regard to their relations with 'Indonesian culture' which they often invoke to distinguish themselves from corporate expatriates. When asked whether they were drawn to Yogya because of its cultural heritage, such as traditional music, dance or mystic practices, it emerges these aspects did not necessarily play a major role in attracting foreigners in the first place, nor in their decision to stay there. As Lily, the American artist, described it: *'Most of my friends here are not madly in love with Indonesian culture ... but you realise that your money goes so much further here, and it gives you the space to do things that you cannot do at home.'* Although quite a few acquire some knowledge of Javanese culture, become quite fluent in Indonesian language, and develop close working relationships with Indonesians, this does not always imply a greater appreciation of these, but is certainly recognised as being useful in terms of one's interests, be they business-related or otherwise.

Returning to the initial question whether Yogyakarta foreigners are able to avoid 'living in a bubble', I have argued that their lifestyles are more adequately described as 'living in a gap'. In accordance with their motivations for staying, their personal interests and intercultural competences, foreigners certainly do not live as secluded and exclusive lifestyles as expatriates in Jakarta do, as the narratives of Lily and Sven illustrate. Although their lives appear much more integrated into local communities, their comfortable existences rely on differentials in terms of income and social status between themselves and Indonesians just as those of expatriates in Jakarta do. The lifestyles of Yogya foreigners, however, do not mark these disparities as conspicuously, and they strive to ameliorate them in substantive ways as well as in terms of their public image.

In this chapter, I have focused on ‘expatriates’ who do not consider themselves as expatriates, or at least regard themselves as very different from the family expatriates I have discussed so far. I have argued, however, that the ‘global lifestyles’ of young professionals more specifically represent a form of ‘Western internationalism’, which reveals the persistence of dominant ‘Western’ cultural practices, even as they are presented as being ‘global’. They find their expression in people’s relation to localities, social lives, food consumption, and their use of the Internet. In contrast, foreigners in Yogyakarta rather pride themselves on their moderate lifestyles and greater involvement with Indonesian society. Although they do not live in a ‘national’ or ‘Western international’ bubble, their lives and social encounters are still marked by the same kind of inequalities, even if they may make efforts to minimise them, and to transgress social, cultural or ethnic boundaries. While these groups relate to Indonesia in distinct ways, neither is able to, or ultimately interested in, escaping the consequences that arise from these power imbalances.

Chapter 8

A Peculiar Tribe

I began this book with a quote by Crocombe, who lamented that expatriates as a group who had *'such exotic customs, such irrational beliefs, such complex social organizations, and such tremendous power'* (Crocombe 1968:76, cited in Cohen 1977:5), did not receive the academic attention that they deserved. This concluding chapter, which is divided into two main parts, focuses on some of the themes which characterise expatriates as such a peculiar tribe. In the first part, I take up the issue of expatriates' 'irrational beliefs', and specifically the role of stereotypes, myths and metaphors in their lives. I argue that these take on a particular significance in the context of expatriates being dislocated, and their content and functions offer key insights into how expatriates view themselves and the Indonesian Other. In the second part of the chapter, I return to a set of issues that I have partly touched on before, adopting a historical perspective; the questions of whether expatriates constitute a diasporic group or a cosmopolitan elite; and some considerations regarding their future.

Stereotypes, Myths and Metaphors

At the outset of this study, I pointed out that the popular discussion and perception of expatriates is characterised by clichés and stereotypes, and that part of the challenge of researching expatriates is therefore to establish a more complex picture than these stereotypes suggest. As different ways and aspects of being an expatriate have hopefully emerged, I now want to return to the role of such discourses. The issue here, though, is not to assess their truth value, but to explore more generally the role of stereotypical discourses, myths and metaphors in expatriates' lives, insofar as they relate to expatriates' perceptions of themselves, as well as to the Indonesian Other whom they encounter. These discourses concern not only the popular images of expatriates, but, more pertinently, how expatriates relate to such discourses, and how they are produced and reproduced, and with what effect, within expatriate communities.

I do not suggest that the relevance of pre-existing discourses for people's perceptions of themselves and others is in any way unique to expatriates. Several aspects, however, make this phenomenon particularly interesting in this context. First, through their relocation to Jakarta, many expatriates are bereft of certain kinds of knowledge that they would ordinarily draw on in order to navigate everyday life. Such basic information may concern climate, housing, traffic, shopping facilities and other practical issues, and related queries thus feature prominently on websites such as 'Living in Indonesia' (www.expat.or.id). Crucially, this also includes information

about Indonesia's culture and society, and how to cope with an expatriate lifestyle. One could therefore argue that their relocation precipitates an increased demand for orientation and information than would be the case during expatriates' lives in their home countries. This demand is met by a variety of sources, including popular literature, websites, newcomers' groups, and informal communication within expatriate communities.

As suggested in Chapter 1, even a cursory glance at the popular literature written about or for expatriates shows the extent to which the notion of 'expatriates' is linked to clichés and stereotypes. Casual remarks such as 'being an expatriate – that means a life of gin and tonics by the pool' appear in everyday conversations among non-expatriates, as well as in media reports on expatriate life. Similarly, O'Reilly notes the prevalence of stereotypes in relation to British expatriates, mostly retiree migrants, living on the Costa del Sol in Spain (O'Reilly 2001). Significantly, she portrays these expatriates as victims of stereotypical representations, especially by the mass media in Britain, and finds that during her research, expatriates expend a considerable amount of energy distancing themselves from such images.

In contrast, I suggest that the attitudes that expatriates in Jakarta take towards these representations are more complex; expatriates cannot be considered as pure victims of these representations, but relate to them in a variety of ways, including negotiating and adopting them, making them part of their identity, and crucially, actively and playfully reproducing them. For instance, websites designed for expatriates present humorous lists entitled '*You know you are an expat when ...*' which contain a range of presumed characteristics of expatriates, which are then enlarged by the contributors to these sites. For example, the 'Living in Indonesia' website lists the following features which are considered typical of expatriate children growing up in Asia:

- You flew before you could walk ...
 - You can't answer the question, "Where are you from?" ...
 - You have a time zone map next to your telephone
 - Your life story uses the phrase "Then we went to..." five times...
- (<http://www.expat.or.id/info/asiapats.html>, accessed August 2006).

Being or identifying as an expatriate inevitably involves confronting these stereotypical ideas, or at least relating to them in one way or another. One question is therefore how expatriates themselves conceptualise their lifestyles, as they are presented to them as 'proverbial' in discourses within and outside of expatriate communities. This quandary is exemplified in the title of a Singapore-based publication, which reads 'Expats Magazine: Doing the obvious. Differently' (Expats Magazine, 2006). While the title acknowledges the inevitably stereotypical nature of expatriates' lives, at the same time it claims the possibility of variations of how individuals inhabit them, irrespective of how diffuse or illusory such aspirations for difference may be.

One possible response, apart from embracing such stereotypes, is attempting to refute them. For example, the British expatriate Marie, whom I have mentioned before, once insisted when I met her at a fashion show, that '*despite of how it looks, you know, expat life is not all gin and tonics by the pool*'. Although she did not

specify which aspects of expat life she was referring to, her assertion links to the sense of victimhood discussed in Chapter 3, which some expatriate wives draw on in order to counter suggestions that their lives represent pure enjoyment. Similarly, it was remarkable in interviews I conducted with expatriate wives how many were at pains to tell me how difficult and how far removed from the stereotypes their lives really were. An expression that repeatedly surfaced in these conversations was that *'life here is not all it seems'*, indicating that this was indeed a matter of some concern for them.

Another common response to these clichés, however, is to adopt a self-ironic or satirical attitude. For example, one of the books written on expatriate life by Richard Mann, a British author living in Indonesia, is entitled *A hardship post* (Mann 1997a). The title suggests a tongue-in-cheek poke at the tendency of some expatriates to overemphasise the trials and tribulations of their life abroad. The short stories collected in the book paint a gently satirising picture of incidents and challenges encountered by expatriates in their everyday lives. A further example is *Asia Comic* (Brandt 1998b), a comic which represents the life of corporate expatriates in cartoon format, taking a less gentle approach. One image for instance, which depicts an embassy reception, portrays embarrassingly flirtatious expatriate wives, lecherous development consultants, executives bragging about their swimming pool sizes and first-class air travel experiences, while a poor expatriate is shown stuffing his pockets with imported sausages from the buffet.

While expatriates are occasionally confronted with such rather ugly portraits, it is important to note that they themselves reinforce some of the stereotypes surrounding their lives. An article in a city magazine entitled *Expats in Jakarta – a Motley Crew* (Dewa Nur Hakim, alias Daniel Ziv, *Djakarta!* 2002) includes several tables with the suggested characteristics of different groups of expatriates. One of the categories listed is 'What they tell folks back home' versus 'What they're really doing'. For the group of diplomats and executives, it reads: 'Well to be honest ... I'm engineering one of the largest corporate mergers in Southeast Asian history', while, it is suggested, they are in fact 'struggling to stay relevant and employed in the face of the regional economic recession'. These kind of exaggerations can be interpreted as expressions of the 'ego-boost' that especially male working expatriates experience as they receive higher salaries and greater professional responsibilities during their posting abroad. At the same time, they can also be regarded as functional, insofar as posted expatriates may feel the need to convince themselves, their family and their employers at home just how onerous and demanding their job is, and that therefore classifying Jakarta as a hardship posting is justified, as indeed is the financial compensation they receive.

Expatriates thus also produce such arguably exaggerated versions of their lives for consumption in their own community. One such example is what could be called 'myths of impossibility', as mentioned in Chapter 1. These are narratives of what is seen as 'impossible' to do in Jakarta. They circulate among expatriate women rather than men, and become particularly noticeable during newcomer's gatherings. These are events are held by women's organisations where long-term expatriates offer advice and support to newly arrived ones. In the course of these sessions, views are inevitably being aired regarding, typically, the necessity of servants, or the possibility

of driving a car. At one such meeting at the American Women's Association for example, a recently arrived woman casually mentioned that she was not planning to hire any domestic staff. She considered it unnecessary, and she thought herself capable of managing the housework herself. On this announcement, some long-term expatriates exchanged glances, and while nobody contradicted her outright, she was later carefully advised that 'it was not possible to run a house without servants', and it was predicted that she would change her mind sooner or later, which she did.

A related myth concerns driving oneself in Jakarta. Some companies explicitly prohibit employees and their spouses from driving their company cars, and force them to make use of a local driver for safety and insurance reasons. Among those expatriates who had no such restrictions put on them, however, driving did not seem to be problematic for men, but more so for their wives. There was a strong sense among many wives that it was impossible, or at least unadvisable, to attempt driving oneself, due to the density of traffic and in particular the behaviour of Indonesian motorists, which was regarded as chaotic and dangerous. Few of the expatriate wives I knew in Jakarta had therefore attempted to drive themselves, although several remarked on how much they missed being able to do this.

Similar myths related to a whole range of behaviours and practices, for example that it was not possible to use public transport, take a taxi alone as a woman, eat food bought from street vendors, have a house without air conditioning, or to go out after dark. The sense of what was considered possible by these women was occasionally challenged by their younger counterparts, and by expatriate women living in the provinces, who engaged in some or all of these practices on a daily basis. As the contact between expatriate wives and other expatriate women was often limited, however, these challenges rarely needed to be acknowledged or discussed within the women's groups in Jakarta. In some ways, these myths can be regarded as functional, as they reinforced certain norms of behaviour within the expatriate community. They also contributed to a construction of the outside as a chaotic, dangerous place, and legitimised certain amenities, such as domestic staff, private cars, air-conditioning or the consumption of imported Western foods not as luxuries, but as necessities. In this sense, these discourses formed part of a particular expatriate 'culture', which causes some to experience 'expatriate culture shock', which I will return to below.

Metaphors

In addition to myths and stereotypes, I suggest that certain figures of speech, in particular metaphors, assume a different, perhaps more pronounced significance for expatriates while they live abroad than they would while in their home countries. Metaphors can therefore function as heuristic devices to shed light on the nature of expatriates' experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors not only represent forms of language, but forms of thought, which play a key role in defining people's everyday realities: 'the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor' (1980:3). Consequently, metaphors have experiential as well as theoretical significance: while they capture expatriates' sentiments, a closer examination of the qualities associated with them

also provides conceptual insights into the spaces they describe. This is not to suggest that metaphors provide a privileged way of understanding expatriates, but they present a form of access that is socially conspicuous and not sufficiently explored in the expatriate context.

At the same time, metaphors may also shape expatriates' behaviour through their prominence in discourse. As expatriates suddenly find themselves in an alien and unknown environment, they may rely to a greater extent on existing discourses to form their opinions and guide the decisions they make concerning their lifestyles in Indonesia. This is related to the fact that becoming an expatriate for many means that their identities are being unsettled. In this situation, which is characterised by a feeling of 'strangeness' (Erik Cohen 1977:15), metaphors that capture their situation become particularly important not only as a way of understanding what they encounter, but also as a form of shaping their behaviour. Lakoff and Johnson, in their book on *Metaphors we live by*, describe their formative role:

Metaphors have entailments through which they highlight and make coherent certain aspects of our experience ... Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:156).

Metaphors can also constitute discursive or symbolic boundaries. They are relevant in the context of expatriates' lives as they are indicative of, as well as productive for, the making and negotiating of boundaries. Many of these metaphors are thus linked to the main theme of boundaries that underlies the previous chapters. The most conspicuous of those metaphors is probably that of the 'bubble'. Several authors draw on the image of a 'bubble' to describe aspects of expatriates' lives. Erik Cohen for example refers to the 'environmental bubble' in which many expatriates find shelter abroad (1977:16) and, similarly, Kurotani writes that the task of Japanese corporate wives in the US is to 'create a bubble of Japaneseness in the middle of foreignness' (2006:12). Few of these authors, however, pay systematic attention to the significance that the 'bubble' and related metaphors hold not only in terms of expatriates' experiences, but also in terms of their analysis.

In this study, I have employed the metaphor of 'living in a bubble' as characterising expatriates' lives. This metaphor was frequently used by expatriates themselves to express their experiences in Jakarta. Its conceptual significance lies in the fact that it captures what I regard as a key feature of expatriates' lives: that is, the existence of boundaries. The image of a 'bubble' embodies precisely that. A 'bubble' creates a bounded Inside that is sheltered from an Outside. The image also suggests, though, that the membrane which separates Inside and Outside is also artificial, fragile, and permeable. Its versatility means that the bubble is an iconic image capable of signifying expatriate life as a whole. My use of this metaphor to elucidate theoretical issues was thus informed by the fact that the 'bubble' is a metaphor that expatriates live by.

Apart from the 'bubble', other boundary metaphors frequently employed by expatriates include those of living in a 'golden cage', 'ghetto', or a 'Disneyland'. I

will briefly discuss each of them in turn. In relation to expatriate wives, one of the most prominent metaphors is the 'golden cage', which captures their sense of living a life of luxury as kept women, surrounded by material affluence, from which they can not escape. This image tallies with some women's sense of victimhood, and the myths of impossibility mentioned above, which in turn serves to maintain the feeling of being constricted in their movement and behaviour. At the same time, however, other wives also invoke the image of being on a 'frontier'. This suggests Jakarta as a place on the border of civilisation, where resources are scarce and where women's task is to manage this hardship existence as well as possible. The metaphor thus transforms them into pioneers, whose daily quests, for example to source Western foodstuffs, can be understood as a heroic struggle.

Further, there are a range of images, such as a 'bunker', 'ghetto' or 'hothouse' which evoke the closed, and potentially claustrophobic, nature both of their physical dwellings and of expatriate communities as social groups. Janet for example, a long-term British expatriate, described her life in the early 1970s in a compound owned by an oil company in the following words: '*When I think back to living in Malaysia, I would say it was a bunker atmosphere. It was a very closed environment*'. This atmosphere, one could imagine, also intensifies the circulation of rumours and gossip, given the often small size of these communities, and the close relations between their members. These aspects were summed up in statement by the headmaster of the German International School, who characterised the situation as follows: '*Living in Jakarta is a ghetto life, an island life, an expat village gossip life*'.

Significantly, the sense of living in a somewhat artificial environment did not only concern family expatriates, but also the younger generation. For example, one evening, I was standing with Marc, a young professional, on the roof-terrace of his high-rise apartment building, looking across a roof-top, kidney-shaped turquoise swimming pool with an adjacent bar, staffed by uniformed Indonesian waiters. Behind the bar, the sprawling city stretched out almost as far as one could see. Taking in this scene, Marc sighed, '*Look at this ... such a Disneyland*'. His immediate Jakarta surroundings, like the serviced apartment in which he lived, for him had the look and feel of a well-maintained theme park, thus being not quite real. Although it differed in size, shape and colour from that of family expatriates, Marc nevertheless felt that he was living in a bubble.

Culture Shock

Lakoff and Johnson have argued that metaphors not only reflect people's views of their own situation, but also create realities, and thus may influence their actions and decisions. One rather influential genre that provides such metaphors and narratives are what could be called 'expatriate manuals'. These are books partly designed for and often written by expatriates and provide introductions to the culture of a particular country, such as *Culture Shock! Indonesia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Hall and Draine 2000). There are also guides on how to do business in Indonesia (Sinjorgo 1999, Brandt 1998a), as well as those published by expatriate associations which focus mainly on practical issues, such as *Introducing Indonesia*:

A Guide to Expatriate Living (American Women's Association Jakarta 1999). There exists literature on how to successfully manage expatriate marriages and families during postings abroad, such as Robin Pascoe's *Living and Working Abroad: A Wife's Guide* (2000b), which I mentioned in Chapter 3 in relation to the 'expatriate wife's ideology'. While these manuals are rich repositories of various kinds of metaphors, I focus on an exemplary one here, namely that of culture shock.

While I do not aim to discuss the concept of culture shock from a psychological perspective (Ward, Bochner and Furnham 2001), I suggest that 'culture shock' can become a metaphor for expatriates through which they understand their experiences when they first arrive in Indonesia. Such a model therefore not merely identifies, but potentially produces the sentiments and states of mind that it describes. Models of culture shock commonly identify a honeymoon period or a stage of 'stimulation' at the beginning of a stay abroad, which is characterised by 'hope and excitement', and a 'positive outlook mixed with enthusiasm for the relocation' (www.kwintessential.co.uk/cultural-services/articles/expat-cultureshock.html, accessed August 2006). This stage is followed by culture shock, when behavioural differences lead to a dislike of the host culture. Symptoms of culture shock can comprise 'homesickness, boredom, lethargy, irritability, and hostility' (ibid.). Eventually, it is suggested, people reach a stage of adjustment, when they understand their new environment and become empathetic towards it.

Irrespective of how psychologically accurate such models are, they often make a significant impression on expatriates, and the term 'culture shock' is commonly referred to in casual conversations among them. Some expatriates recounted their life in Jakarta in ways that very closely resembled the guidebook models. One such case was a young Canadian expatriate, Ben, who had been living in Jakarta for more than a year. He shared a shared house with other young American graduates, worked for a management consultancy, and generally enjoyed his time there. When asked about his first months in Jakarta, he told me with some satisfaction that he had gone through exactly the stages as they were laid out by the book he had read beforehand: '*at the beginning, I had a honeymoon period, which lasted a few weeks. Then, there was a bad patch, when things were not going so well, and afterwards, it levelled out, like it said it would*'. Ben thus drew on metaphors such as culture shock to interpret, and perhaps conceive of his own experiences, illustrating the productive power that such discourses may have.

Several women, however, suggested to me that if anyone was to experience culture shock, it was likely to be expatriate women rather than men, because it was the non-working women, they argued, who encountered what they called the 'real Indonesia'. It was women who had to deal with everyday issues such as shopping and managing household staff. In contrast, as men were driven to and from their offices by a driver and spent most of their day in an English-speaking environment they were seen to be insulated from culture shock to some extent because they had even less exposure to Indonesian society than their wives. Taking this argument further, one could argue that all expatriates, especially those with a corporate lifestyle, had such limited contact with Indonesia that they were able to avoid being confronted with a different social and cultural environment, and hence avoid a fundamental questioning of their identities. As I have illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5, however,

this situation is rarely as straightforward. Although people may expend considerable energy creating such a safe ‘bubble’, they are not entirely secluded from their Indonesian surroundings.

It is worth noting that not all expatriates were reliant on these kinds of discourses to interpret their lives. A young British woman for example, Paula, who had recently become an accompanying wife after working as a medical doctor in the UK, described her experience of coming to Jakarta: ‘*I certainly did not get culture shock coming to Indonesia. Being with Asians was fine. What did give me culture shock, though, was the expatriate community! Especially the women’s groups. They took some getting used to*’. Paula’s views were further elaborated on a separate occasion by an American psychotherapist who specialised in the counselling of expatriates. She emphasised that most of the cases of adjustment problems that she encountered in her practice were not triggered by encountering Indonesian culture, but by the particular environment created by expatriate communities. Especially the social climate within women’s associations, including their particular norms and expectations of behaviour were apparently a source of such stress, especially for expatriate wives on their first posting. The role of the metaphor of culture shock, as presented in expatriate manuals, thus varies; while some accept it as a description of the inevitable unfolding of their life abroad, others adopt a more sceptical attitude, and relate the model critically to their own particular circumstances. In either case, such metaphors create conceptual frames of reference through which expatriates may orientate themselves.

Myths of the Other

Even though I have argued that many expatriates live in a ‘bubble’ that shelters them to some degree from the Indonesian outside, they are nevertheless engaged in conceptualising the Indonesian Other. Leggett (2005) has suggested that corporate expatriates understand their experiences in Indonesia – in his example, those linked to political terror – through the idiom of a ‘colonial imagination’. As mentioned in Chapter 2, positing such an imagination as a unified concept is problematic, as it obscures the variety and complexity of what are multiple colonial imaginations. Instead, it may be more useful to assume that expatriates’ understandings are shaped by a range of narratives which may include aspects of such colonial imaginations. These are produced and modified in various sites, including the expatriate manuals described above, online discussion forums, newcomers’ meetings and informal conversations within expatriate communities. One such exemplary narrative is the ‘myth of the lazy native’.

In his article, *The myth of the lazy native*, Alatas (1977) examines notions of Javanese held by Dutch colonials and their role in colonial ideology. He argues that the Dutch cultivated a ‘myth of the lazy Javanese’ (1977:61) in order to justify the exploitation of Javanese labourers. He suggests that such a notion was not very prominent in the early stages of colonization, between the 17th and early 18th century. Alongside the increase of forced cultivation of cashcrops in the 1830s, however, as the need for moral justification for the treatment of the labourers increased, this

myth was deliberately promoted and later became embedded in colonial discourses. While Alatas maintains that this myth had no grounds in reality, others thought that it did, but that this ‘laziness’ was product of a colonial system of exploitation. Eduard Douwes Dekker for example, a 19th century Dutch author and outspoken critic of Dutch colonial politics, seemed to endorse the view that the Javanese were ‘lazy’. He did not identify this as an essential, natural trait, however, but suggested that the apparent apathy of the workers was a reaction to their oppression by the Dutch, who effectively treated them as indentured labourers (Douwes Dekker 1987 [1860]).

These debates notwithstanding, I suggest that the relevant aspect is here not the truth value of such metaphors, but their functional roles. One could, for example, argue that the propensity of contemporary expatriates to portray Indonesians as lazy is prompted by and intertwined with their own particular interests. For many expatriates, at least initially, both their status in Indonesia as ‘experts’ and their employment of domestic staff can be a source of unease. This includes often half-articulated doubts about whether expatriates are ‘worth’ their high salaries, or whether they deserve to be tended to by several Indonesian staff. In this situation, a devaluation of Indonesians, whether in the office or at home, may serve to alleviate such feelings of guilt and unworthiness. Such discursive strategies may be seen as a complement to the tendency of expatriates to exaggerate their own importance and expertise, as discussed above, which furthers the correspondent ‘myth of the expat expert’, as it might be termed. A contributor to the ‘Living in Indonesia’ website sardonically attacks such an attitude that was manifest in a previous posting: *‘How could Indonesia survive without moronic foreigners making egotistic statements about their own worth, whilst branding all Indonesians as incapable of tying their own shoelaces without your help?’* (posted by freeman_shine@usa.net, 15/9/2000).

The contemporary equivalent to the ‘myth of the lazy native’ as described by Alatas can take many forms. Stories about the purported laziness and incompetence of Indonesians, especially domestic staff, frequently appear in conversations among expatriates at coffee mornings, dinner parties, or newcomers’ meetings. The following incident, related by an American expatriate woman at an informal gathering, is emblematic of such discourses. She complained to her friends about the cleaning practices of her maid:

What really drives me mad is that she only does the absolute minimum. Like, on our toilet [cistern], there is always a spare toilet roll. And what does she do? She wipes around it. She never picks it up. When I check, there is a circle of dust underneath.

Such stories are often met with nods of agreement and remarks signalling understanding by other expatriates. Related narratives are also produced about Indonesians working in offices, which concern their lack of initiative, their inability to plan for the future, as well as emphasising the need to closely supervise them, thus enlarging the role of the expatriates. Hilary for example, an American textile manager in her early thirties, explained her view of the Indonesian employees that she was working with:

They have no initiative ... there is this total lack of urgency to address whatever is the issue. Because of their attitudes, you can be less reliant on staff ... micro management is

the thing, even supervising little things that you're not really supposed to supervise and at home you would delegate. And when we do evaluation once a year or so, it turns out that nobody goes above and beyond their goals.

When asked about the reasons for such behaviour, Hilary suggested:

Well I guess there are climate reasons, because there are no seasons, and everything is always growing, there is no need for storage and invention. So there is no need to plan ahead, no incentive to learn. Also, it might be fatalistic; maybe they think, what if I work harder, my life is still not going to improve, so what is the point.

Also, some expatriates squarely attributed what they saw as 'laziness' to the peculiar character of Indonesian culture. Robert for example was a German business graduate who was completing an internship for a chamber of commerce. When asked about his work experiences, he responded:

My main impression was, everything is very different here. You catch yourself being very judgemental, for example about the laziness, the slovenness ... but the background for this is a whole culture of doing-nothing, the maintaining of harmony and the status quo. The people here show no initiative, they don't want to disturb the harmony, everything is quite passive, especially here in Java, because if you do something, then that could have negative effects on the overall harmony, and you don't want to risk that.

Whether expatriates trace back the origins for the laziness of Indonesians to their climate or to their culture, it appears that the 'myth of the lazy native' is still as prevalent as it might have been in colonial times; and while the political circumstances have changed, it is safe to assume that the complex distribution of power and privilege between Indonesian and expatriate workers retains a key role in the production and reproduction of such narratives among contemporary expatriates.

Intimate Narratives

In addition to metaphors concerning the character of the Indonesian Other, there are also a wealth of stories told within expatriate communities which revolve around the relations between expatriates and Indonesians. I suggest that both the content and the functions of these narratives indicate of some of expatriates' anxieties. Although they touch on a range of issues, many notably focus on three interconnected areas, namely childcare, sexual relations, and adultery. The three stories that I present here are characteristic insofar as they reflect expatriates' fears related to the domestic domain, in particular to the intimate relationships that may exist between Indonesian women as maids or 'concubines' on the one hand, and European children and men on the other.

Ann Stoler argues that the realms of the domestic and the intimate were crucial for the production of colonial authority and European bourgeois identity (Stoler 2002). Specifically, she suggests that the attitudes of Europeans towards their Indonesian servants were highly ambivalent, especially towards those involved in caring for European children, such as nannies or nursemaids. She notes that servants

were often identified ‘as the “uncivilized” and “immoral” source of child corruption’ (Stoler 2002:136). Children’s contact with servants was thus regarded as a site of potential contamination and contagion, and Europeans apparently harboured fears for their children’s’ moral wellbeing which included, but were not limited to, the risk of sexual depravity (2002:136).

Although the situation of Dutch colonials and contemporary expatriates differ in many aspects, Stoler’s analysis can nevertheless be applied to the following tale, which was told at a dinner party at the home of a British family. It concerned a British woman who, one morning, had gone out to attend a social event, and had as usual left her small child in the care of her Indonesian nanny. Soon after leaving the house, however, she realised she had forgotten something and came back unexpectedly after a short time. It was then that she found the nanny ‘*in the bathtub, with the child, naked!*’ which she found deeply shocking and disturbing. This story was met with murmurs of disapproval. Although it did not become clear on this occasion exactly which aspect of the scenario people perceived as most problematic, one could surmise that the kind of anxieties described by Stoler played a key role, and that the direct bodily contact between child and maid evoked deep-seated fears regarding the child being put at moral risk.

A related, similarly contested area which was steeped in political debates and moral anxieties was that of concubinage (Stoler 2002). In the earlier stages of colonisation in the 19th century, concubinage was often not just condoned but actively encouraged, since it was seen to have beneficial effects on European men, and thus ultimately served the interests of empire. By the early 20th century, however, it was regarded as undermining rather than fortifying colonial rule. Local women were now regarded as the ‘primary vectors of sinister influences on physical and mental health’ (Stoler 2002:168). The increased presence of European women in the Dutch East Indies was linked to a different regime of morality, and while they were subsequently accused of destroying comfortable and close relations between European men and local women, they became part of the political strategies that branded concubinage as undesirable and dangerous and which aimed at extinguishing such practices.

As a result, relations between European men, Indonesian women, and European women were highly contested. One strand of sentiment that is perhaps overly emphasised in the colonial literature is the purported jealousy that European women felt towards local women. Comparable sentiments were undoubtedly also present among contemporary expatriate women. Perhaps as a complement, however, there existed also prominent narratives that stressed the predatory manner of the modern equivalent of concubines, that is, Indonesian women who had sexual relations with married European men. These narratives surfaced in particular in conversations between expatriate women. The following story, which was told at a social gathering of British expatriates, is one example.

The story referred to a British expatriate man whose wife had gone on home leave to the UK during the summer months. In her absence, her husband had begun an affair with an Indonesian woman. She had then more or less moved into their house to live there with him. Shortly before his wife was due to return, however, the husband ended the affair and expelled the Indonesian woman from the house. After the wife had come back, she started to receive phone calls from the Indonesian

woman, who threatened the wife, and unsettled her by given her details about the affair she had had with her husband, including their use of the couple's marital bed. This story, as others in a similar vein, was cited to illustrate the ruthless nature of Indonesian women and the danger they presented to expatriate marriages. Although the political circumstances surrounding concubinage, as discussed by Stoler, are considerably different in a contemporary context, this story aptly illustrates how sexual relations between male expatriates and female Indonesians remain a highly charged arena in present times as well.

Finally, I present a narrative that strikingly combines expatriates' fears regarding relations between Indonesian servants, European children, and sexual contamination in the 21st century. It is significant that this particular story, due to its salacious nature, was discussed on a website for expatriates, thus allowing the participants to voice their opinions anonymously. It was also typical insofar as discussion forums for expatriates are a rich repository of these kinds of stories, and one could assume that they appear on these websites perhaps more frequently than in personal conversations. It did not become clear to what extent this story was based on facts, but this is not of crucial relevance in the present context, since the mentioned anxieties may be condensed precisely in such fictitious stories, or 'urban myths'. The following are excerpts from the discussion on the 'Living in Indonesia' website.

sayamalaikat@hotmail.com

Subject: A couple of years ago...

...there was real devastation in an expat family. Seems the 16 & 14 yr old sons were screwing the maid, to make a long story short, all 3 were found to have HIV.

shekelle@biology.wustl.edu

Subject: not that i doubt your veracity ...

... but that also sounds like it COULD be an invention to keep young expat boys from screwing the maids.

greeneyed_weirdo@musician.org

Subject: I heard that one too.

It's the sort of scare story that goes around the Mums coffee mornings.

seu2@dnet.net.id

Subject: Re: A couple of years ago...

Yup, that was a true story. Those kids attended the most prestigious international school here in Jkt. They were declared HIV positive in Singapore.

sayamalaikat@hotmail.com
Subject: More of the facts.

The mother of the 2 kids said ... that they told the kids at the supper table that the maid had come up HIV positive and then they got scared and confessed to screwing the maid, they were promptly sent to Singapore and the rest is history.

bigharley69@telkom.net
Subject: Well it is quite common for the expat to screw the servant...

Especially after a few beers and if she is young and pretty. . . but that also sounds like it COULD be an invention to keep young expat boys from screwing the maids.

shekelle@biology.wustl.edu
Subject: not that i like getting in the middle of a fight but . . .

... i think there are still a few mysteries worth looking into, particularly because this story has the general look and feel of an urban legend ... anyway, if it really did happen, then it is a hell-ish nightmare for two families at least, and not worth making fun of. if it is an urban legend, at least it has the right moral.

While the participants in this discussion emphasise the story's potential function as a moral tale, it is not made explicit what the content of that moral would be. One could suggest that it aims to protect Indonesian domestic staff from sexual abuse from their European employers' teenage sons; it might carry the message that having sexual relations with one's servants is undesirable according to a more bourgeois morality with its associated notions of 'proper', socially acceptable relationships; or it could be a rather concrete warning to abstain from such relations because of the risk of contracting a disease. Carrying these multiple meanings, the story may serve to reinforce expatriates' notions of moralities, but at the same time, it also speaks of fears of sexual, and possibly racial, contamination. These fears become even more pronounced in this case because the affected males are not adults, but teenagers and may therefore invoke a sense of vulnerability, lost innocence and family tragedy. It is also worth noting that the gist of the discussion was based on the notion that it had been the maid who had passed the disease on to the sons, rather than the other way round. Indeed, one contributor to the forum presented a different version of the story, which suggested that the sons had first contracted HIV/Aids after repeatedly visiting a brothel which was located opposite their international school. This version was dismissed by others, though, as 'not credible', and thus maintained the focus on the Indonesian maid rather than the European boys as the source of contagion.

As this last narrative illustrates particularly starkly, the myths, metaphors and stereotypes that matter for expatriates tend to crystallise around the key differences of

race, class, gender, and their own and other 'cultures'. I have argued that their relocation to Indonesia, and confrontation with an often alien social and cultural environment means that narratives and figures of speech assume a particular significance with respect to expatriates' self-image, notions of the Other, and the relations between them. In contrast to O'Reilly (2001), I do not only consider expatriates as being on the receiving end of popular stereotypes, but I also discuss the 'myth-making' that takes place in expatriate communities themselves. This concerns exaggeration of their own professional and social status vis-à-vis Indonesians, but can also be used to enforce social practices within those communities, such as through upholding 'myths of impossibility'.

Following Lakoff and Johnson (1980), I have stressed that metaphors have heuristic value insofar as they both reflect and shape people's experiences, as in the case of having 'culture shock'. The use of metaphors is often implicated in a political context, such as demonstrated for the 'myth of the lazy native', as well as being expressive of anxieties relating to racial and sexual contagion. It is worth noting that the importance of such discourses is not confined to the present, but was equally relevant in colonial times (Macdonald 1994, Haddour 2000). I therefore begin the second part of this chapter with a return to the pertinent issue of viewing past and present expatriates in a comparative frame.

European Colonials and Expatriates

Although I have so far repeatedly drawn on historical analyses of colonial Europeans in order to illuminate the situation of contemporary expatriates, the actual and conceptual relations between these two groups are far from clear. Returning to this question, which was raised at the beginning of this study, I here want to pick up on these initial comments regarding the relevance of a historical perspective for the study of contemporary expatriates. When I began researching 'expatriates', and as I was sifting through the literature on transnational migration, it seemed exceedingly difficult to identify any concepts or even ethnographic data that could be usefully related to the study of expatriates as skilled migrants. Looking at accounts of colonial expatriates, however, I was immediately struck by some descriptions and analyses which seemed to perfectly fit contemporary expatriates, such as those of Ann Stoler (2002), Elisabeth Locher-Scholten (2000), William Glover (2004) and Rudolf Mrázek (2002), writing on the Dutch colonials in the East Indies, whose works I have repeatedly made use of here.

As the list of authors could be continued, it became clear that despite the obvious similarities between colonial and contemporary expatriates, there was a considerable discrepancy between the abundant literature on colonial expatriates, and the scarcity of material on contemporary ones. I have suggested in Chapter 2 that one of the reasons for this might be the reluctance, at least of anthropologists, to 'study up'. One would have to add, however, that there exists no such reluctance as far as historical material is concerned; on the contrary, judging from the ever-burgeoning literature, the academic interest in colonialism remains vibrant. It seems, though,

that this interest is reserved mainly for past colonials, while studying expatriates, as their possible modern-day equivalents, seems comparatively unpopular.

Given the relevance of concepts used in colonial studies for thinking about contemporary expatriates, the question arises how one might go about relating the two. One problem, in the first instance, is the status of these colonial concepts themselves, and in particular the question which frames of comparison are employed in the field of colonial studies. Ann Stoler notes that there are few comparative colonial analyses to begin with, perhaps because it is not clear which units of analysis could productively be compared. As a consequence, she suggests, 'students of colonialism engage less in comparison than in parallel play' (Stoler 2002:209). She argues that:

At least part of the problem might be sought in how we fashion analytic frames in ways that freeze postcolonial concepts and colonial categories as shortcuts, what Bernhard Cohn once referred to as 'summary statements', that preclude rather than promote further historical analysis (2002:206).

Rather than taking these concepts, such as 'metissage', for granted, and drawing on them in the comparison of colonies, the aim would be to 'identify the "grids of intelligibility" that were operating and that allowed specific comparisons to be made when they were' (Stoler 2002:209). This means to interpret categories such as 'white prestige' as working concepts, and to interrogate them; not to view them as analytical tools or as stable signifiers, but to ask what kind of work they did, what kind of social relations they enabled, and to what effect (cf 2002:208). Under such conditions, Stoler suggests that comparative efforts would not entail a denial or erasure of difference between colonies, but would capture points of correspondence: 'colonial studies scholarship identifies striking similarities in policy and practice ... But no one would argue that the former Dutch East Indies, British India, French Indochina, and the Belgian Congo looked everywhere and from anywhere the same' (2002:209).

The question of the units of comparison, and the use of colonial categories, is being complicated as contemporary expatriates are inserted into the picture. One question would be not only which 'grids of intelligibility' may operate with regard to different colonial or contemporary expatriate populations respectively, but crucially, how and which colonial concepts could be productively related, as 'working concepts', to the discussion of contemporary expatriates. In Stoler's sense, these would be provisional concepts that open up issues rather than close them, concepts to work with, and which do work as they are able to unsettle established narratives (cf 2002:206). Such concepts could include the 'myth of the lazy native' (Alatas 1977), various forms of the 'colonial imagination' (Leggett 2005), the idea that women were the ruin of the empire (Knapman 1986), the notion of 'white prestige', management practices used in colonial and now in development administration (Cooke 2001), the discourse of the 'containment' of fluids and fluidity (Mrázek 2002), the structure of the colonial bungalow, and of colonial architecture in a broader sense (Glover 2004). Although I have not systematically pursued it here, such a historical approach promises to be rather productive, especially if the units of analysis are such 'working concepts' rather than too generic frames of comparison.

A Diasporic Group?

While attempting to locate expatriates in historical as well as contemporary contexts of movement, one could ask whether they can justifiably be regarded as a kind of diaspora. Steven Vertovec, for one, seems to have no doubts that ‘the diasporas of old have become today’s “transnational communities”’ (Vertovec 1999:449). The term ‘diaspora’, understood in its widest possible sense, might be taken to refer to groups of people living outside their native country. One contemporary example would be the Indian diaspora, comprising Indian citizens residing, for example, in the United States, who are also described as ‘non-resident Indians’. In this sense, European or American expatriates, as I have discussed them here, would certainly qualify as members of a diaspora. They could be considered as a diasporic group in the age of global capitalism, as they congregate in national communities, are driven by a sense of nostalgia for their native country, engage in the re-creation of national or regional cultures in their host country.

Safran (1991), however, has argued against an understanding of diaspora that is too broad, and has instead emphasised the centrality of several key characteristics, such being dispersed from a specific origin; the existence of a collective memory regarding their homeland; and a continuing commitment to and relations with that homeland, as well as the myth of eventual return there. To these features, Tölölyan (1996) adds the existence of a diasporic consciousness as typical of a diasporic population. Given these criteria, O’Reilly finds British expatriates in Spain, being mainly retirement migrants, ‘hardly warrant the label of a diaspora’ (O’Reilly 2000:159), although she concedes, based on Robin Cohen’s (1997) definition of imperial diasporas, that they may be considered part of a post-imperial British diaspora.

One could thus maintain that corporate expatriates cannot reasonably be considered as a kind of diasporic community insofar as their homelands are not ‘lost’, and they have not been forcibly relocated. Their movement abroad is to a large degree voluntary and temporary, and most of them will return to their countries of origin, or at least leave the expatriate circuit at some point during or after their working lives. This is not to say that there may not be a distinct sense of their culture being at risk during many years lived abroad, and possible feelings of dislocation and alienation even after only short periods away. It may therefore be more appropriate to recognise that these sentiments are also shared by privileged transnational migrants, rather than categorise them as a diasporic population as such.

Similarly, Erik Cohen seems to agree that expatriates are not marked by a sense of exile and loss. He therefore reasons that ‘my usage of the term ‘expatriate’ is ... strictly speaking, a misnomer. The original meaning of ‘expatriate’ referred to a person who was driven away or banished from his native country’ (1977:6), which, it is implied, is not the case with expatriates. Although the absence of explicit or physical force in their relocation is obvious, I suggest that some expatriates nevertheless harbour semi-conscious feelings of resentment for having being posted by their company – admittedly with their consent – to a country where they never particularly wanted to live. This is indicated in a sub-title of the Singapore-based *Expatriate Magazine*, which reads ‘living well is the best revenge’ (*Expatriate Magazine*,

2002), suggesting that revenge is needed for the forced relocation expatriates have to endure.

Especially among expatriate wives, there seemed to be an understanding that they had not come to Jakarta of their own volition, but because of loyalty to their husbands. Hence, it seemed hard for them to comprehend that I had decided to be in Jakarta without any such apparent necessity. Their attitude also became apparent at a social lunch after a committee meeting of the German women's association. The conversation turned to rumours about recently introduced legislation by the Indonesian government that imposed heavy fines on foreigners who overstayed their residence permit. '*Yeah, right*', commented one of the women, Ulrike, with barely contained sarcasm, '*as if we all loved this country so much that we would want to stay here anyway!*' This comment was met by nodding and approving murmurs by her peers.

While one might want to point out that their 'hardship' is usually well remunerated, it is interesting to note that some expatriates might well feel that they are living in exile, if in a somewhat voluntary and rather luxurious one. The meaning of the term 'expatriates' as people being banished from a homeland, and hence being part of a diaspora might be, in their eyes, quite appropriate. To contextualise this, however, one also needs to consider the existence of a 'hardship ideology' among expatriates, which I mentioned in Chapter 1. Such an ideology – which would resonate with the sense of suffering as part of a diasporic consciousness – can be embraced by expatriates as a way of assuaging feelings of guilt, which complicates the self-portrayal of expatriates' sense of being victims of a forced corporate dispersal.

A Cosmopolitan Elite?

A further frame of reference which is frequently and implicitly assumed for expatriates is their position in a new global class system, even though the precise significance of the category of 'class' in a transnational setting has yet to be determined. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a tendency to assign mobile professionals to a 'transnational capitalist class' (Sklair 2001), or to an 'elite', at the top of a global hierarchy (Friedman 1999). Further, this elite is often portrayed as being inherently cosmopolitan (Micklethwait and Woolridge 2000). These assumptions, however, need to be critically examined rather than taken for granted.

In particular, I argue that the term 'elite' is unsuitable for the group of family expatriates I have described here. Without attempting an overview of recent debates on elites (Shore 2002), the notion that expatriates constitute an elite is usually based on their higher incomes, their elevated social status and comfortable lifestyles, especially in the case of Western expatriates living in a developing country. Even if they could be considered an elite on these grounds, it has to be recognised that this status is situational and temporary, insofar as they often did not possess it before being posted, and they are likely to lose it as soon as they are being repatriated. This is evidenced by the significant psychological effects of these shifts, which are referred to as experiencing an 'ego-boost' during their time abroad, and in contrast, a 're-entry shock' or 'repatriation shock' when they return to their home country.

Furthermore, if the notion of 'elite' is associated with educational achievement and professional excellence, the status of expatriates as an elite has for example been questioned by host country nationals who work with or for expatriates. In particular, they criticise the concept of the 'expat expert', that is, the assumption that Western expatriates are considered a priori to be more competent with regard to a particular job than host country nationals. Consequently, in surveys among Indonesian employees one of the most common grievances cited is the arrogance of their expatriate superiors, their perceived lack of competence, especially at the beginning of their posting, coupled with what is seen as their refusal to recognise this. Similar views are also occasionally aired by Westerners. For example, a British academic who had done a stint as a corporate expatriate some years earlier, once commented to me: '*An elite? You must be joking! The expatriates I met in the Gulf were the most mediocre, red-faced, beer-swilling bunch I've ever encountered!*'

On these particular grounds it seems unwarranted to view the kind of expatriates discussed here as an elite. These issues link to an emerging debate about whether and how the category of class can be applied to transnational populations. For example, Fiona Moore has critically commented on Sklair's model of a transnational capitalist class (Moore 2002). In a related but different vein, Weiss has argued that mobile professionals are more appropriately described not as a transnational elite, but as a transnational middle class (Weiss 2005, 2006). These considerations can be understood as a differentiation of the concept of transnationalism, as the notions of 'transnationalism from above' and 'transnationalism from below' (Smith and Guarnizo 1998) are complemented by a 'middling transnationalism' (Smith 2005). Some of the transnational migrants who might casually describe themselves as expatriates, such as New Zealanders living in London, may be considered as belonging to the 'middle tier' of transnationalism. The presumption that expatriates necessarily constitute an elite is therefore likely to be replaced by more nuanced descriptions.

What unites the approaches of these and other authors, though, is that they seem to adhere to the notion that mobile professionals can justifiably be regarded as belonging to a single 'class', even if this is a 'transnational middle class' rather than an elite. This assumption contrasts with ample evidence of the internal differentiation of expatriates in terms of class. I have argued in Chapter 6 that the internal social structure of expatriate communities can be highly diverse and stratified, and that their particular shape is closely connected with their location. This issue is highlighted by the article in the city magazine *Djakarta!* entitled 'Expats in Jakarta: A Motley Crew', from which I quoted above. It divides the expatriate population in Jakarta into 'Teachers and Students: The Expat Working Class', 'Journos and Activists: The Expat Middle Class', and 'Diplomats and Executives: The Expat Elite', and describes their respective habitats, dress, leisure activities, language proficiency and self-image (Dewa Nur Hakim, alias Daniel Ziv, *Djakarta!* 2002).

If there exist considerable differentiations and distinctions between them, one might question the adequacy of describing expatriates as a single class. Also, it seems peculiar that models of a single class are proposed with regard to this contemporary transnational group, while the literature on colonial expatriate communities has demonstrated their internal differentiations. Furthermore, as Ann Stoler argues, class

distinctions within colonial communities were not attenuated, but sharpened over time (Stoler 1995:103). While becoming an expatriate makes people more similar to each other – as Whites, as Westerners, as wealthy people – in the eyes of many Indonesians, it can also intensify expatriates' desire to be recognised as individuals. This becomes manifest in their resistance to being called *bule*, as discussed in Chapter 4. Rather than postulating the existence of a single transnational class, it seems more appropriate to ask how the move abroad differentially affects the social positioning of mobile professionals, as perceived by themselves and others.

A further attendant assumption is that expatriates, as members of a transnational elite, are also cosmopolitan (Micklethwait and Woolridge 2000). As has emerged from the previous chapters, members of the generation of 'family expatriates' cannot necessarily be described as uniformly having cosmopolitan attitudes. As I have illustrated in previous chapters, the expatriate sector in Jakarta is, for many purposes, organised along national lines, and the lives of some expatriates take place entirely within national communities. At the same time, as discussed in Chapter 6, some of them certainly aspire to becoming more 'international' or cosmopolitan, as apparent in the participation of women of different nationalities in the Indonesian Heritage Society. Also, while members of the younger generation might consider themselves more cosmopolitan, and maintain internationally oriented social networks, these often do not include Indonesians. As I have argued in Chapter 7, while their lifestyles could be described as 'Western international', their engagement with 'local', Indonesian culture is similarly limited. The association between both younger professionals and 'family' expatriates, and cosmopolitan identities is therefore rather more tenuous than suggested, and certainly cannot be taken for granted.

Expatriates' Futures

In his article on *Expatriate Communities*, Erik Cohen ponders possible changes in the status of expatriates, in particular of those living in developing countries:

on the one hand opposition to and hostility towards expatriates grows as they become identified as symbols and maintainers of a relationship of structural dependence ... On the other hand, the privileged status of expatriates may become threatened by legal encroachments and economic and political pressure, while their colonial demi-god image gradually loses much of its glamour (Cohen 1977:80).

Such local opposition, he suggests, may become more pronounced, and will be voiced especially by the 'younger, nationalist elites' (1977:80). Although it is debatable how much of the 'glamour' of expatriate life has been lost thirty years hence, it is worth considering Cohen's prediction relating to the opposition of younger elites. Based on the case of Jakarta, I argue that while Indonesians' attitudes towards expatriates may be as ambivalent as ever (Elson 2006), a significant development of the last decades is the emergence of young Indonesian 'globally mobile professionals'. These are members of the Indonesian upper- or upper middle class, who have obtained degrees from universities in the United Kingdom, the United States or Australia, and have subsequently taken up jobs with multinational

corporations. Even if they are employed by such companies in Indonesia, they often hold the same positions as their Euro-American counterparts, and there is some indication that their salaries, paid in US-Dollars, are becoming comparable. These changes in education and employment structure might contribute to a merging of the 'classes' of young Western and young Indonesian professionals.

Although there exist significant differences between them, I suggest that there are also considerable overlaps between those groups, such as in terms of career outlook and lifestyles. One social arena where this becomes visible is the 'Forum for Executive Women', where young Indonesian professionals and those of other nationalities mingle and socialise. Instead of outright opposition, as suggested by Cohen, it seems that the attitudes of these Indonesians towards young Euro-American expatriates are more complex, and could partly be described as a process of convergence into a shared identity as globally-oriented professionals. If such a globally mobile generation, or class, materialised, where belonging was not predicated on possessing Euro-American nationality but rather on professional status, this would also mean that boundaries of ethnicity or race would be reconfigured, and partly overcome, by boundaries of class. These changes might create a situation where young Euro-American expatriates no longer live in a 'Western international bubble', but interact with their Indonesian counterparts on a more comprehensive, equal basis.

The possible emergence of such a group is also relevant in another aspect, that is, the future of the 'traditional' kind of expatriates which I have mostly been concerned with here. Erik Cohen was rather pessimistic about their future in 1977, and in the years since reports have been mounting which suggest that this model of expatriation is too expensive, and that the future belongs to other kinds of mobile working (Doyle and Nathan 2001). Similarly, a recent survey noted a shift away from long-term assignments towards other alternatives in order to reduce expenses (GMAC Global Relocation Services 2004:5). I suggest, however, that a younger, multi-ethnic, globally mobile generation might gradually replace the traditional 'family expatriates', who used to take up their foreign posting with little interest in working abroad. This shift could be paralleled by changing employment practices. The concept of the 'expatriate package' might become less common as multinational companies pay their employees US-dollar salaries, irrespective of their nationality. The model of 'expatriates' may thus be replaced by one of mobile professionals. The sense of being members of an emerging group is already being expressed by young professionals themselves. One of them, Sergio, suggested that *'we're part of a global tribe – at home anywhere and nowhere; the only thing that remains the same in our lives is our Email address'*. Future research could critically investigate such claims.

Taking a critical and ethnographically detailed approach to the study of expatriates has been one of the main aims of this book. In several ways, it set out to examine, dismantle, but also to make use of the preconceived notions and metaphors that surround expatriates. These are located on many levels: the first challenge in studying expatriates may be confronting 'expatriates' as a cliché and a caricature in the popular imagination, including their own. In a theoretical sense, a key objective has been to argue against the 'myth' of global fluidity, a world in movement, where boundaries do not matter anymore. This is closely related to what could be called

the fictions of globalisation theories, whose imaginary landscapes are populated by figures such as managerial jet-setters and members of a cosmopolitan elite. In contrast to these narratives, this study has demonstrated that boundaries such as those of race, gender and class crucially shape the everyday lives even and especially of people such as corporate expatriates. Further, the study has attempted to replace uniform notions of a supposed 'transnational capitalist class' by more complex and nuanced descriptions of such privileged migrants.

Finally, one of the central concepts I have drawn on in order to make these points was the metaphor of 'living in the bubble'; firstly, because it was the most salient and recurring image which expatriates invoked in order to describe their own lives; and secondly, because the particular qualities of the metaphor of the 'bubble' illustrate some of their key characteristics. These qualities suggest that life inside the 'expat bubble' is sheltered, glittering, but also fragile; an existence that never quite touches the ground, but always hovers above it; to some extent, an artificial world, with its own particular atmosphere inside that can become suffocating. A bubble, being transparent, also allows a panoramic view of the outside world, while being largely protected from its concrete, unpleasant materialisations. It also renders people inside it vulnerable to the gaze from the outside, and can turn them into a spectacle for others. The membranes of the bubble, however, are not hermetically sealed, but permeable; the Outside is seeping into the bubble, as much as expatriates make attempts to extend or transcend its boundaries, while avoiding bursting it altogether.

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Index

- affair 11, 157-158
American Women's Association 10, 90, 105,
107, 150, 153
Ardener, S. 29, 40
artist 1, 5, 8, 48, 51, 52, 116, 117-18, 122-
123, 125, 136, 141, 142, 145
- beauty 83-86, 96-98, 100-101, 135
Beaverstock, J. 17, 31
boundary viii, 25-29, 35, 60, 80, 86, 99,
101, 113, 151
Bourdieu, P. 107, 133, 135, 145
British Women's Association 10, 37, 43, 47,
88, 90, 105, 106, 109, 110
bubble vii, viii, 17, 28, 41, 53, 63, 65, 68,
70, 71, 81, 84, 98, 101, 119-21, 124,
125, 128, 129, 133, 135, 137, 139,
140-46, 151-54, 166, 167
bule 8, 71, 74-80, 136
- Callan, H. 29, 39, 40, 43
capitalism 3, 22, 28, 34, 80, 162
charity 13, 48, 50-51, 99, 105-108
children 2, 9, 26, 33, 37, 41-42, 45, 49-50,
53-56, 64, 68, 74, 93, 99, 106, 108,
110, 112-113, 116, 121, 124, 127,
142-143, 148, 156-158
class viii, 6, 13, 21-23, 26, 29, 34, 38, 49,
56, 61, 80, 85, 87, 109, 113, 127,
133, 140, 145, 160, 163-167
 capitalist 22, 29, 34, 80, 105, 163, 164,
167
clothes 33, 86, 99-101, 103, 106, 139
coffee morning 1, 13, 45, 51, 69, 72, 85, 88,
103, 105-10, 125, 137, 155, 158
Cohen, E. 27, 28, 104, 105, 147, 151, 162,
165, 166
colonial vii, 1, 2, 12, 19, 27-35, 39, 40, 61-
65, 78, 80-81, 84-85, 87, 90, 94, 96,
98, 100, 109, 113, 154-61, 164, 165
community viii, 5-6, 10, 13-15, 25-28, 33,
41, 44, 47, 50, 90, 94, 99, 104-105,
109, 110-113, 118, 121-23, 128,
140, 149-50, 154, 162
- contact zone 120-25
cosmopolitan 10, 22, 29, 72, 81, 85, 88, 91,
101, 105, 116, 120-25, 147, 163-67
Csordas, T. 34, 59, 60, 83, 86
- De Certeau, M. 25, 60, 63, 70
diaspora 117, 147, 162-63
domestic 2, 8, 11, 14, 30, 31, 32, 33, 41, 64,
81, 85, 87, 91, 94, 95, 100, 105, 114,
116, 117, 118, 121, 122, 128, 136,
141, 150, 155-56, 159
- elite 13, 22-24,, 35, 38, 56, 64, 133, 147,
163-65, 167
email 37, 52-56, 137-140, 166
embassy 54, 100, 109, 111-13, 121, 149
ethnicity 6, 7, 26, 34, 38, 61, 85, 133, 166
exhibition 48, 113-114, 118, 122, 123
exotic 1, 50, 72, 84, 95, 98, 101, 119, 137,
147
expatriate associations viii, 1,2,3, 6, 10, 14,
15, 33, 37, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49,
69, 88, 89, 91, 94, 103, 105-110,
114, 118, 119, 121, 122, 150, 152-
154, 163
 package 2-4, 8,9, 13, 17, 33, 41, 51, 62,
88, 107, 127, 128, 166
- Favell, A. 17, 22, 23, 24, 26, 34
food vii, viii, 2, 4, 8, 17, 26, 31, 34, 49,
68, 85-91, 94, 95, 97, 99, 100,
101, 106, 107, 111-112, 129, 131,
133, 135, 136-137, 140, 145, 150,
152
Forum for Executive Women 10, 130, 133,
166
- gender vii, viii, 6, 9, 10, 13, 17, 24, 26, 27,
29-35, 37-40, 48, 52, 56-57, 73, 85,
113, 120, 144, 160, 167
German Women's Association 6, 10, 43, 45,
49, 69, 72, 90, 91, 103, 105, 107,
108, 109, 110, 116, 122, 163

- Glover, W. 27, 62, 64, 65, 90, 94, 160, 161
- Hannerz, U. 20, 24, 25, 26, 81, 121
- Hardill, I. 32, 41
- hardship 3, 4, 14, 20, 44, 127, 132, 149, 152, 163
- housing viii, 2, 4, 10, 12, 13, 14, 23, 27, 63-66, 83, 121, 127, 147
- hygiene 1, 31, 64, 85, 90, 91-95, 97, 100
- identity viii, 4, 10, 11, 20, 24, 25, 27, 32, 43, 44, 45, 71, 72, 73, 77, 84, 85, 95, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 111-17, 119, 121, 123, 125, 148, 156, 166
- Indonesian Heritage Society viii, 10, 14, 105, 110, 115, 120-25, 165
- internet 4, 13, 14, 15, 37, 52-56, 74, 92, 95, 129, 136, 137-40, 142, 145
- jamu* 97-98
- kampung* 50, 63, 65, 66, 67, 70, 75, 97, 98, 117, 118, 119
- Leggett, W. 28, 32, 61, 62, 154, 161
- Lévi-Strauss, C. 86, 87, 99
- liberation 20, 21, 38, 61, 66, 79
- Living in Indonesia website 14, 15, 17, 62, 68, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 92, 105, 147, 148, 155, 158
- McClintock, A. 29, 39
- metaphor 166
- migration vii, viii, 15, 17, 19, 20-23, 31, 32, 34, 37-39, 48, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60-62, 80, 81, 83, 160
- mobility 21, 23, 38, 46, 83, 131
- motherhood 41, 44, 46, 49, 55, 72, 116, 122, 159
- Mrázek, R. 27, 62, 63, 80, 84, 160, 161
- myth 147-150, 152, 154-156, 158, 159, 160-61
- Nader, L. 18
- native 1, 6, 19, 63, 65, 84, 87, 90, 99, 104, 108, 110, 113, 116, 117, 125, 154-56, 160-61, 162
- O'Reilly, K. 17, 148, 160, 162
- organisation 10, 12, 14, 33, 52, 66, 69, 73, 105, 111, 112, 120, 133, 149
- community 5, 6, 14, 105
- orientalism 39, 73, 96, 98, 100, 136, 142, 145
- performance 10, 11, 32, 55, 105-108, 111, 114, 115, 120, 125, 133, 137, 140
- posting 3, 15, 22, 30, 40, 41, 43, 47, 51, 53, 55, 61, 68, 72, 78, 80, 128, 129, 149, 153, 154, 155, 164, 166
- race vii, 7, 22, 24, 26, 29, 30, 31, 34, 39, 48, 61, 64, 75, 77-79, 133, 160, 166-67
- racism 15, 21, 29, 30
- school 7, 8, 9, 14, 31, 41, 42, 47, 49, 105, 110, 116, 132, 152, 158, 159
- sexuality 29, 108
- Sklair, L. 22, 81, 105, 163, 164
- space vii, viii, 13, 17-35, 45, 48, 59-81, 83, 84, 94, 95, 121-122, 130, 132, 137, 142, 144-45, 151
- sport 42, 69, 70, 106, 109, 127, 135
- stereotype 1, 28, 77, 147-160
- Stoler, A. 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 84, 85, 87, 88, 92, 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 101, 109, 113, 156-58, 160, 161, 164, 165
- traffic 13, 62-63, 68, 106, 130, 147, 150
- transport 13, 14, 59, 67-69, 150
- visa 9, 41, 46, 127, 142
- white 1, 7, 8, 18, 28-29, 34, 60, 62, 71-79, 87, 94-95, 103, 104, 106, 108, 143, 161, 165
- whiteness vii, 8, 18, 71, 76-79, 87, 104
- wife 32-33, 37-57, 68, 72-74, 89, 92, 109-113, 157-58
- expatriate 30, 88
- incorporated 29, 30, 33, 40
- Yogyakarta vii, 7, 9, 12, 14, 54, 128, 140-46
- Ziv, D. 149, 164