MAKING THEMSELVES AT HOME: EXPATRIATE WOMEN AND SPACES OF BELONGING IN BUDAPEST

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore home making among expatriate women involved with International Women's Club Association and North American Women's Association in Budapest. Instead of home being a singular dwelling place or an ideal state of belonging, the relational process of making and living through homes is constantly mediated by cosmopolitan discourses of expatriation and of the local space of Budapest. I conducted ethnographic fieldwork with two popular expatriate women's organizations in Budapest, the International Women's Club Association and the North American Women's Association from January 2007 to May 2007, in order to investigate how voluntary, transnational women carve out spaces of belonging among the local space of Budapest. Community space provides a site in which women articulate codes of belonging bridging the global with the lived locality of Budapest, actively claiming that they are, indeed, at home. Through both discourses of distancing themselves from an imagined, ideal expatriate and their navigation of material attachments as vessels for carrying their senses of home with them, expatriate women actively produce intimate geographies of belonging at home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The immersion of a self in a locality is not simply about inhabiting an already constituted space (from which one can simply depart and remain the same). Rather, the locality intrudes into the senses; it defines what one smells, hears, touches, feels, remembers. The lived experience of being-at-home involves the enveloping of subjects in a space which is not simply outside them: being-at-home suggests that the subject and space leak into each other, inhabit each other.
Sarah Ahmed, 1999: 341

In this age of increasingly mobile lifestyles, boundary transgressions, and negotiated belonging, what and where is "home" and how is it practiced?   Be it a few weeks spent studying Spanish in Costa Rica to a transnational career lasting 25 years or more, people now more than ever are residing in places other than those in which they grew up. The many variations on global migration do not always make a binary distinction between home and away; however, a rapidly moving world does not do away with the human drive for attachment and meaning in places. Instead, home is simultaneously a constantly reformulated ideal as well as a physical space where one strives to feel comfortable.   Most often taken for granted, home can be conceptualized as a vessel for things in the physical sense and a vessel for emotions in its symbolic and imaginative conceptualizations. Furthermore, in both the emotive and physical sense, our geographies of "home" encompass various tensions: between the internal and external, the mental and physical, security and liminality, and familiarity and otherness. This thesis explores how transnational women expatriates make and feel home in Budapest to understand the variety of experiences and attitudes about the cosmopolitan practices of homing present in this elite, yet marginal social group.

Much contemporary research on the practice of "homing"[1] by mobile individuals offers vague abstractions of transient homelessness concerned with flow, movement, and detachment that devalue the connection to a specific place or dwelling (Chambers 1994; Hannerz 1996). This highlighting of

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[1] Concept borrowed from Avtar Brah, 1996.*Cartographies of Diaspora*:*Contesting Identites*. London: Routledge

such postmodern flux is becoming cliché, with seemingly anyone who travels or relocates becoming "nomadic:" the bourgeois pose as bohemians, the settled as the marginal, and the assimilated as hybrid (Chapman 2001).

Other research on homing employs a distinction between roots and routes; such a linear way of conceptualizing migration takes a discrete 'root' as a given (Anwar 1979; Gustafson 2001). The corresponding ideas of a necessary right of return to a homeland, or a singular place that one feels most attached to, may be true for certain individuals or groups. Taken as a theoretical model for home-making, however, it leaves much to be desired. In addition to fundamentally denying attachment to specific place, this view denies a mutually constitutive relationship between mobility and stasis, thus failing to recognize home as a constant process which is renegotiated as one moves from place to place (Clifford 1997; Rapport and Dawson 1998; Walsh 2006).

In order to avoid replicating the popular discourse of elite nomadism that places the academic jet-setter on par with displaced refugee, homing research must specify exactly who is making and living in the homes we study (Pels 1999:72). In the case of this project, I chose to "study up," doing ethnographic fieldwork with elites: expatriate women who participate in specific expatriate women's organizations.

By focusing on a self-identified subset of transnational home-makers, many of whom have been expatriating for 15 years or more, this project offers an exploration of relational home making practices among privileged individuals who move within transnational networks of social capital. These self-organized, voluntary organizations provide a window into a dynamic, yet marginal, elite that chooses mobile lifestyles for themselves and their families, differing from forced migration,

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travel, and short term work or study abroad. According to Hannerz, home mediates relations between identity and space; it is a "contrastive concept," as it is capable of producing a spectrum of homes, from deeply felt belonging in a specific geographical place to a more abstract connection to a faraway place (Hedetoft 2002::xxviii). By grounding research on homing through exploration of specific practices of making and feeling home within the local space of Budapest, my project will recognize individual experiences and the influence of organizational discourses as they interact to inform a complex sense of transnational belonging. Instead of relating to Budapest as a blank space on which to perform a cosmopolitan identity, these elite women navigate preexisting, complex discourses about expatriation and Budapest as well as who they, as elite transnationals, *should* be.

As a major capital city in the Central and Eastern Europe region, Budapest, once seen as the gateway to the east, supports a large, diverse expatriate community. In addition to the diplomatic sector, many are employed in managerial positions in banking, the hospitality industry, and other multinational corporations. Attitudes such as that of Ken Layne, a writer for a popular expatriate relocation website still resound: "here the opportunity and unfettered capitalism of the new East meets the relative stability of the West, creating the ideal business environment" (Layne 2005). Rapidly westernizing since 1989, Budapest competes with other regional capitals such as Prague and Warsaw for corporations' regional offices. Almost immediately after arriving in Budapest, expatriate women begin engaging with specific urban spaces as they learn the route to their children's schools, the location of the best restaurant in Buda, and where to get their hair cut. Often times, forays into this initially foreign urban space are guided by others recommendations. Much of the city of Budapest remains unknown to members of these communities, and perceptions of these spaces are unmistakably shaped by dominant expatriate discourses.

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Expatriate women's organizations specifically attempt to bridge the transnational lifestyles of members with localized, everyday, highly gendered practices, offering a model of cosmopolitanism as a practice-oriented mode of belonging. Through showing they recognize and accept or discard the community's codes for belonging, women negotiate a belonging infused with desire. Belonging, as suggested by Elspeth Probyn (1996), is not a given but instead an embodied, specific achievement that is always colored by the desire to be a part of a community. Additionally, communities' physical and social common spaces are marked by the familiarity and anticipation of behaviors, repetitive bodily experiences, and an emotional affiliation that is often deeply engaged with, creating a kind of home in itself (Hannerz 2002). Primarily, home is a well mapped space of expected behaviors and promises of community (Hannerz 1996, Ahmed & Fortier 2003). Expatriate women's organizations are in a continual process of creating a relational cosmopolitan identity for adoption and consumption by their members--weaving it out of the social landscape, promoting international styles, and, most importantly, by remaking what they have in common (Ahmed 1999).

To frame my ethnographic fieldwork, I consider the idea of home as a highly relational set of *practices,* often shared with others, that accompanies a set of stories that, in turn, infuse home space in Budapest with emotional intimacy. For women who participate in expatriate women's organizations, home-making engagements with Budapest both shape and are shaped by established discourses. By examining their relationships to the discourses through which they engage with the space of Budapest, I discuss the variety of way in which expatriate women imagine themselves at home in relation to the city--as an elite, yet marginal group.

This paper contains five chapters. Following this introduction, I discuss current research on home and belonging, beginning with narratives of homing and attachment, moving to works treating

community and belonging, then surveying cosmopolitan practices, and finally addressing global and local consciousnesses in community settings. After this discussion, the methodology chapter elaborates how and where I conducted my fieldwork. The analysis is presented in Chapter Four, where it is divided into five subsections. Within my analysis, I analyze how informants relate to Budapest, I address the community as a site of belonging, I explore the narratives of home and belonging, I discuss the attachments which characterize home, and, finally, I explore resistance to cosmopolitan community practices. This section is followed by a conclusion that summarizes and addresses the limitations of my research.

2. THEORIZING HOME AND BELONGING

I feel home, and that's just what I feel
'Cause home, to me, is reality and all I need is something real
O.A.R.

2.1 READING HOME AS A TEXT

To attempt to more fully encompass the dynamics of home, one must move past a linear trajectory of past and present homes as neatly distinguishable and ever present entities. Sarah Ahmed (1999:330) posits that home is here, where we carve out the intricacies of our own belonging in relation to our surroundings, both physically and emotionally. She proposes we move away from the security of place as a determining factor for homing, instead moving along a circular, emotional-spatial journey where there are multiple and varied homes, without a fixed root or route to structure one's path.   The resulting circular reformulation of home allows research to consider home both as a dwelling place of sharing and interaction as well as an emotive identification within a mobile self, one that feels home through movement (Rapport and Dawson 1998). Some go one step further;

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suggesting that we should think without home, instead embracing a generalized notion of migration takes one across and around multiple reference points without carving out belonging and familiarity in any of them (Chambers 1994:2). In considering this post-home mentality, the importance of grounding narratives of home and home-making comes to the forefront. In ontologies of homing, the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves combine with material attachments and community encounters to foster a sense of being at home, which is in itself a relational identity.

One way home can be conceptualized is as a series of narrated, intimate encounters. Stories of physical and emotional journeys through transnational space situate identities within life journeys, realizing the diversity of identities felt in our own lives as we engage with the world (Ahmed 1999). Individual narratives of home-making serve to provide a window into the many creative trajectories of homemaking at work in specific times and spaces. Narratives can also reveal how subjects envelop themselves in various homes and aways, participating in negotiations of self, belonging, and place that are often far from neat (Ahmed 1999). As Avtar Brah notes, the specificities of migrancy are not floating abstract concepts; instead, the very real negotiations and tensions of transnationalism can converge on a point in time and space in order to shape communities in real time (1996:183). The unpredictable and intertwining paths that characterize migration itself in some ways parallel the multiple trajectories of identity, as discussed by Ahmed (1999). Both migration and identity encompass macro—and micro— levels of engagement with sociospatial landscapes, a parade of translations through which an individual expresses belonging in the world.

One theorist who explores belonging in a global era, Ulf Hedetoft (2002), suggests that the world itself is our open space of opportunities, not an end point on a movement trajectory leading to a sense of ideal belonging or a stable identity. However, for Hedetoft, there are three ways to examine

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the issue of belonging in a global world: alternatively as a curse of rootlessness, a blessing against possible restriction, or an opportunity laden with the promise of progress. Alternatively, I contend that these three ways of conceptualizing belonging are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. Furthermore, as correctly articulated by Brah and Ahmed, the actual mental and physical engagement with belonging is informed by a multiplicity of factors, and the imaginative and symbolic aspects of homing cannot be underemphasized.

In addition to considering the paths one travels physically and emotionally in order to be at home, we must also acknowledge the critical interactions between the global and local levels of homing, also discussed by Hedetoft (2002). Taking this interaction a step further, the local and vernacular can be thought of as dialectically related and mutually constituted with the global and cosmopolitan (Calhoun 2003:542). Expatriates, as one category of migrants, are capable of doing much more than compiling a cultural bricolage or flâneuring their days idly away. Instead of passively absorbing their surrounding, communities create patterns of engagement with the city that convey the values of their community to both themselves and others.

In order to ground the focus on flux, right of return, global/local, and aimless migration that characterize current homing literature, I focus on embodied practices of homing, or what we *do* and *feel* with our bodies to become at home in a place. Firstly, exploring transnationalism as a global phenomenon as it is adopted and enacted locally by expatriate women requires the performance of individual identities vis-à-vis banal practices, such as choosing where to purchase groceries. Avtar Brah offers a useful guiding distinction between home as a 'simultaneously floating and rooted signifier' and as a site of significant people and familiar, intimate practices (1996:4). She offers a critique of fixity as it relates to the origins of home, instead identifying a *homing* desire that guides

migrants into situating themselves and navigating the complexities of identity (1996:183). Importantly, home is not given, but constructed through one's engagement with the world. As such, the recognition of a homing desire is integral when exploring expatiate women's homemaking in Budapest. A homing desire encompasses both relational attachments to previously lived spaces and negotiation of home in a new place, as well as mediating tensions between stability and change. Importantly, recognition of this desire frames how I explore how women perform a desire to belong, or to feel at home in Budapest, through what they do.

Processes of change are fundamental to distinguishing between home and away, according to Chapman (2001:136). He sites a home of supposed security as existing primarily in one's imagination, with the reality of home as experience as built upon the necessary condition of change. Furthermore, he suggests that home should be a readable site, a text with which to attempt to understand how people engage with place (2001:138). Ahmed furthers this dynamic conception of home with her suggestion that home provides contours to one's belonging space (1999:330). By attempting to "read" how people situate themselves within the space they inhabit and how they speak about other homes through ethnographic fieldwork, my research can fill in, at least partially, the complex notion of home with everyday practices and feelings of being at home.

One fieldworker who provides a model for reading homes, Katie Walsh (2006), grounds home-making practices and focuses on narrative accounts of doing "home." Walsh (2006) distinguishes between the ideal sense of home as belonging and the actual physical space of the home itself. She, like David Parkin (1999), considers physical home possessions as actors, not simply symbolic expressions. Instead, possessions (and the act of *possessing* itself) are involved in a mutually constitutive process of negotiation of a belonging self in a specific place. Following Walsh, I realize

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that belonging is not easy or a given (2006). Instead, it is an emotional project that is negotiated as one moves from place to place. Walsh answers a much-needed call to consider expatriates' material possessions as sites of emotional investment, or even, a symbolic kind of storage for "home" (2006:270). Through her focus on intimacy, foreignness and negotiation of belonging in domestic spaces and possessions, with a focus on attachment, Walsh's innovative research provides a clear path to grounding the heterogeneity of homemaking among expatriates in practice. Importantly, practices of those making homes are not inherent, but can instead be seen as a form of performing belonging with a community in relation to the space itself as well as the discourses of expatriation in general.

2.2 PERFORMING COMMUNITY

The performative aspect of belonging, as articulated by Vikki Bell (1999), does not imply that making homes is a continually fluctuating project. For Bell, who builds on Judith Butler's theories of performativity, identity is a result of performing complex engagements as one negotiates various sociospatial landscapes. Instead of pure chaos, there are a set of norms to be learned and subsequently "cited" repetitively as one expresses her or his belonging with a community (1999:3). Embodied, everyday practices are important for practicing belonging in community settings. By keeping in mind that mundane practices are also learned and performed, even if not usually conceptualized as performance, the intricacies present in how individuals negotiate belonging are highlighted. By presenting and re/presenting oneself to the group within the established language of norms, community members establish their competency and, later, flaunt their fluency in communal space. Communities result from a process of collective symbolic imagination and distinction of self from the idea of the other, is also a mix of the imagined and the real. By thinking through the practices employed to separate a community from outsiders, one can focus on individual and

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collective constructions of what is outside the community and how members engage with and speak about this otherness.

Importantly, community has a goal. It promises things. Often times, it is its own start and end point, with the sets of practices it encompasses providing ways of performing (or imagining) itself into being. The fostering of group identity usually creates a relational, we/them symbolic identification where to be *with* the community can often be construed as one both liking and being liked by them (Ahmed and Fortier 2003:251; Featherstone 1993:176). In this way, community building is like the writing of true fiction, put together piece by piece as a collage of imaginary attachments that manifests itself in embodied sociospatial practices (Tonkiss 2003:302).

One integral vehicle of performing community is in community dialogues and discourses. It is here, in addition to focusing on practices of members, that how to be 'one of us' shines through most clearly. Community is both strategic and synthetic. (Tonkiss 2003:302). Community discourses provide members with a structured guide to appropriate group participation, illustrating precisely what they are to act against if they don't care to follow the model for community. Through practices and discourses that imagine and re-imagine community, organizations promote values of reciprocity, group responsibility, and group attachments (Ahmed and Fortier 2003).

Through the promotion of an "us," community discourses can often, but not always, be seen as working against marginalization through inclusiveness and accessibility. With expatriate women's organizations in Budapest, themes such as consumption, travel, beauty and family continually resurface, reminding members of several avenues onto which they can project their belonging. Through such points of access, community provides a space within which members perform

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belonging through adopting cosmopolitan practices, "citing" community values (Probyn 1996) to support their collective orientation and cut through the initial anonymity of group membership (Tonkiss 2003:305). Pre-existing discourses for relating to other spaces, individuals, and groups precede community formation and help shape the imperative for the collective project of creating a "we." Such discourses also provide an ever-present imperative to perform as a group member, to become part of the collectively created "we." The sense of community fostered is an effect of interaction and everyday performance of belonging it is not a preexisting grounds on which community is built (Ahmed and Fortier 2003:254). It is beneficial to consider both the virtual and physical spaces of community as sites that are lived through and colored by individuals' desires to relate to a space as "theirs," reminding us of the desire for belonging that underlies the performativity inherent in the creation and maintenance of communities.

2.3 COSMOPOLITANISM AND (OR AS) BELONGING

One way that community members perform belonging is through adoption of practices and attitudes central to the community, such as the adoption of an everyday cosmopolitanism. Adopting all or part of a brand of cosmopolitanism shapes both an individual's identity as well as both the real and virtual space of community practice. Similar to Calhoun's call to recognize the dialectics of global and local in mundane practices, Ulf Hedetoft (2002: xix) calls for a focus on the everyday engagements with the world, reminding his readers of his view that although we can open our home to the globe as cosmopolitanism advocates, the globe cannot become our home. His theoretical paradigm keeps home as a site of focus instead of attempting to think without home, as Chambers (1994) advocates.

Current debates about cosmopolitanism often explore its place in relation to globalization, postmodernity, and capitalism, as well as further pondering and debating what exactly cosmopolitanism is. In addition to its use as a political philosophical term, it can also be a useful concept for exploring transnational lifestyles. Sheldon Pollock proposes it in a historical sense, as a practice that opposed the vernacular, valuing freedom from boundaries and affiliation with the world more than local identities and influence (2002:18). Cosmopolitanism specifically highlights the multiple experiences that a single individual can take part in; it is a postmodern project that denies a bounded definition (Pollock et. al 2002:1). More specifically, Pollock proposes cosmopolitanism in terms of literary communication that moves great distances without the interference of boundaries. However, he notes that even more important than the lack of boundaries is the *self-conception* as one that lacks boundaries and has open access to global sphere, not only bounded localities (2002: 20).

In a similar vein, Hannerz's (1996) definition implies "first of all an orientation […] a state of readiness, a personal ability to make one's way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting, and reflecting" (103). He is careful to articulate that cosmopolitanism carries with it a inclination for narcissism, for incomplete understanding, for consuming attractive parts of a given culture and discarding less appealing or familiar aspects. He proposes that the expatriate as a social form is the epitome of cosmopolitanism, cautioning that not all expatriates are cosmopolitan. Usually, however, expatriates "are people who can afford to experiment, who do not stand to lose a treasured but threatened, uprooted sense of self" (Hannerz 1996:106). Firstly, to become a cosmopolitan expatriate, one must embody a suitable orientation. Hannerz's (1996) text provides the seminal definition of the cosmopolitan orientation as "a willingness to engage with the Other" (103). Interestingly, Hannerz does not elaborate on where this orientation comes from, except that it comes from within; it is conceived of as a personal, voluntary choice, a "mode of managing

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meaning" (1996:102). It could be that the orientation stems from a sense of entitlement, as Beverly Skeggs suggests (2004). Such an orientation could alternatively be a more Durkheimian sense of common humanity (1995) or Kantian moral political outlook. However, neither of these more traditional views of cosmopolitanism are necessarily the catalyst for contemporary incarnations of cosmopolitan belonging. Instead, cosmopolitanism can be practiced as a stylish way of exhibiting fluency outside one's locality.

Instead of losing a self-identity associated with being home in a particular location, expatriate women usually arrive in a new location unfamiliar with the city and knowing no one, which result in a certain degree of anonymity. The social networks of home are irrelevant for social life in this country. This is an opportunity to remake one's identity; to practice *doing* cosmopolitanism among women of similar orientations. Building on Hannerz's (1996:104) suggestions of noncommittal cosmopolitanisms, Mignolo contributes a rethinking of cosmopolitanism as a "set of projects toward planetary conviviality" (2002:157). Interestingly, adoption of such a definition frees the cosmopolitan from a fixed responsibility to a local or home culture, instead promoting selective adoption of elements from both one's primary home culture as well as others one encounters. His choice of the word "project" further suggests that cosmopolitan is not something one becomes, but something one *does* or *performs,* furthering Bell's performative dimension of belonging (1999).

To further this, there can be many reasons why one adopts a cosmopolitan lifestyle. In a more practical conception, some (e.g. Binnie 2006; Pecoud 2004) argue that cosmopolitanism is not only a chosen global outlook that is most often accompanied by a prescribed set of social values, activities, and interests, but that the skills and attitudes endorsed by this brand of cosmopolitanism are actually fundamental tools for success in business and social endeavors. In this case, such seemingly

outwardly-focused worldliness is actually a standard, practical necessity instead of a personal choice. Interactions with individuals of various backgrounds, social classes, and languages are inevitable in the city, and a cosmopolitan orientation presumably equips the transnational with the social capital to respond sensitively and effectively to the multiplicity of urban experiences. In practice, however, the guise of cosmopolitanism most often does not translate into justice-oriented, sensitive, eager participation in cultures as wholes; rather, the shape that cosmopolitanism takes in practice is often leisure oriented and consumption-driven, as noted by Craig Calhoun (2001).

Such pleasure-oriented, fluid, temporary attachment under the title of cosmopolitanism is addressed by Calhoun, who suggests that cosmopolitanism often misrepresents its base, effectively masquerading as resting on universal ideals but instead promoting the agenda of specific, privileged, socioeconomic classes (2001). Intellectuals, people who travel frequently, those from high socioeconomic statues—all of these can be expected to want to behave as a "citizen of the world" (2001:3). But, Calhoun argues, we cannot neglect the presence or absence of feeling a home in a locality. If ties to local communities are completely broken in favor of a global orientation, cosmopolitanism is predisposed to become a "very elite affair" (2001:4). Particularly in urban spaces, where the range of goods and services often caters to cosmopolitan tastes as a result of how power translates into space asymmetrically, a normative, socially constructed brand of cosmopolitanism is often expressed through conspicuous consumption. This pattern strays from the conception of cosmopolitanism as a vehicle for strengthening the links between localities and a global civil society. Such a global orientation can actually pull women away from their localities into a more non-localized sociosphere that multiplies points of reference and meaning across space (Hannerz 1996). Women engaging with expatriate organizations are practicing urban life within an extended milieu, a realm of practices that have become familiar that they can take from locale to

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locale as a sort of mobile home (Durrschmidt 2000:3). Accordingly, cosmopolitan practices can be interpreted as a mode of carving out a sense of belonging in the interstices between global and local.

In order to explore cosmopolitanism and its limits, Craig Calhoun calls for more focus on social solidarity and what forms senses of interpersonal attachment, focusing on the production of common culture through shared practices and cautioning against misunderstanding cosmopolitanism as "consumerist cosmopolitanism" (2001). However, consumerist cosmopolitanism, even if it cannot properly be called cosmopolitanism in a traditional sense, is an example of a very central shared practice that creates social solidarity among elite expatriate women. By adhering to or disregarding organizations' recommendations, individual home-makers shape their engagement with the urban space of Budapest. Although narrow, Castells' (1994) conception of the dual city, in which transnational urban elites occupy powerful spaces and locals work defensively to protect their city provides an entry into thinking about how the patterns of elite transnational behavior are enacted through practices in Budapest.

Echoing Calhoun's focus on cosmopolitan practice, J.V. Beaverstock (2003) advocates focus on practices within the "space of flows," especially with regards to how the agency of transnational actors works on the city (often through the "cosmopolitan consumerism" of Calhoun) to reproduce these practices in space. One of the many messy aspects of homing, encounters with others provide important sites for exploring what happens when a cosmopolitan or global outlook is faced with the particular urban space of Budapest. Accordingly, my thesis considers how home-makers engage with spaces through discursive, cosmopolitan lenses promoted by organizations.

Beverley Skeggs (2004) furthers Calhoun's and Beaverstock's calls for cosmopolitanism as practice. In a similar vein as Bourdieu (1992), Skeggs theorizes that the fundamental practice upon which other cosmopolitan practices build is that of turning a gaze onto the other into desire for enhancing oneself. After orienting oneself toward seeing others as a resource for self gain, one can then enact cosmopolitanism as a way of "propertizing" the self (2004:158). Recalling Hannerz's cosmopolitan orientation (1996), after feeling the prerequisite "embodied, entitled subjectivity" articulated by Skeggs (2004:159), a cosmopolitan-in-the-making can move forward to creating common culture through shared practices (including consumption), appropriated within urban space. Skeggs' notion of cosmopolitanism as an aesthetic/prosthetic cycle attests to the willingness, framing, self-invention, and practices that expatriate women enact as part of how they do cosmopolitanism.

Tony Chapman similarly suggests that encounters with otherness can fundamentally change a self; in recognizing alternative options, we are reminded that we can prosethtize ourselves with particular aspects of otherness as we desire (Chapman 2001). It speaks to expatriate cosmopolitan subjectivity in action, using a stream of aesthetic judgments to add to one's self for personal gain. Additionally, the focus on the aesthetic relates back to Calhoun's call to recognize some cosmopolitan practices as a precise type of class consciousness among transnational elites (Calhoun 2001).

2.4 COSMOPOLITAN COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS

Among communities, an orientation to cosmopolitan practice is both promoted and framed by the institutional culture and social consciousness (or lack thereof) running throughout the group; it is a consciousness, an organically-produced orientation with a limited scope. The presence of a consciousness that both Craig Calhoun (2001) and Paul Rabinow (1986) illuminate is fundamental to

negotiating (expatriate) cosmopolitanisms. Rabinow's conception, "an acute consciousness of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates" (1986) suggests a careful, broad consciousness that recognizes subtle externalities and chance. Discourses of cosmopolitan expatriates shape how community members think about Budapest by translating local space for them, providing a model of how to manage themselves in local space. Rabinow's understanding of consciousness is related to Foucault's genealogical approach (1984), recognizing things as they are while still recognizing how they came to be translated, imperfectly, into their present condition, laden with value judgments.

It is vital to consider the role of consciousnesses at work in these cosmopolitan translation projects. Unlike Rabinow's conception, Calhoun's consciousness is informed by class consciousness. He suggests that while claiming a universal orientation, cosmopolitans often are primarily conscious of their own socioeconomic class, not the values and practices of others (2001:3). Taken in itself, this lack of interest in others is in itself a value-laden judgment that promotes a sense of entitlement, as articulated by Skeggs (2004), suggesting that others have little to offer cosmopolitan transnationals. Certain communities blend two forms of consciousness, with Rabinow's outward-focused sensitivity often overshadowed by the self-consciousness of one's class and the sense of entitlement that goes along with it. In accepting some or all of a set of cosmopolitan practices draped in class-consciousness, individuals accept a corresponding orientation.

Bruce Robbins (1998) comments on this practice of framing as prerequisite to cosmopolitan practice, noting that it is not merely an "optional extension" (247) of traditional thinking, but a large-scale revaluing and re-judging of social landscapes. Kwame Anthony Appiah stresses self-invention as the "fundamental thought of the cosmopolitanism [he] defends," calling it a "tool kit of self creation"

(1997:625). It is logical to situate expatriate women, individuals who have moved abroad by choice, as particularly apt to accept a renovation in how they frame their social landscapes. Yeoh and Khoo's research concerning expatriates in Singapore highlights the "opening of liminal space (albeit temporary)" in which people rethink who they are and how to be themselves (1998:167).

For Appiah, the agency involved in creating one's own self within this liminal space is informed by social institutions, which not only offers possible identities, but even endows us with the language of possible identities. Accordingly, social organizations take much of the negotiation out of this revaluing, instead offering a comprehensive set of cosmopolitan values and corresponding practices, creating a source of social solidarity through common practices and values that is overlooked in many contemporary conceptions of cosmopolitanism (Calhoun 2001). Furthermore, creating and maintaining a discrepant cosmopolitanism requires many aesthetic judgments, deciding what earns the groups' endorsement or promotion. This aspect of group reflexivity is, as Lash and Urry (1994:256) suggest, a cognitive and normative way of asserting aesthetic value judgments about other spaces and people. Lash and Urry (1994) further suggest that this reflexivity stems from increased mobility, influencing how the world is experienced and how subjectivity is formed.

Similar to Robbins (1998), who focuses on the interactions and attitudes that shape social landscapes with regard to cosmopolitan practices, Lash and Urry also advocate increasing reflexivity and attention to the shifts in how people conceive of the world serve to "authorize" cosmopolitanism (1994:256). Individuals that do not want to share common values or group reflexivity with organizations simply do not participate in their activities. In this way, cosmopolitan discourses and practices connect community members through normative practices; the act of returning and

endorsing the values of the organization means accepting (to some level) a particular brand of cosmopolitanism--in a sense, belonging--with this organization and its members.

Feeling one belongs in an expatriate cosmopolitan style, like all forms of cosmopolitanism, means successfully bridging global and local knowledge. Expatriate cosmopolitans, like other varieties of cosmopolitans, value feeling comfortable in a diverse range of settings, including unfamiliar ones (Sennett 1993: 17). However, in addition to more "exotic" settings, expatriate cosmopolitans must also be comfortable with their range of local knowledge. Acquiring and sharing such cosmopolitan local knowledge in itself creates belonging through successful "citations" of collective knowledge and values (Probyn 1996:3). By making explicit the discursively-shaped codes of belonging from time to time, members actively create the "we" of community.

Local knowledge is, according to Mike Featherstone, a relational concept (1993:176). By bounding their organization in space (through meetings, activities, parties, etc.) as a site of local knowledge for members, expatriate women's clubs place themselves in a position relative to the city of Budapest. Such self-situation is linked to symbolic identification as "we" and outsiders as "they" (Featherstone 1993:176). Importantly, this we/they distinction created by enacting cosmopolitanism within urban space fosters feelings of belonging among members. If *we* do expatriate cosmopolitanism *this* way, the specific class-informed consciousness that Calhoun explored can be used as a source of both belonging and exclusion. Adopting an identity as an expatriate woman at home in Budapest thus requires a significant amount of self-invention within a dialogic feedback loop from self to other and back again, mediated by established discourses of individualism, self, and other. One cannot simply orient oneself as a cosmopolitan and then project this identity onto a blank space of Budapest, as

ideas of this locality, the "others" within it, and what it means to be a cosmopolitan expatriate are necessarily translated, value-laden and continually reinvented.

3. METHODOLOGY

Where Thou art -- that -- is Home--
Emily Dickinson

To attempt to understand how individuals interact with women's expatriate organizations as they create homes in Budapest, I conducted participant observation with the North American Women's Association (NAWA) and the International Women's Club Association (IWCA). I attended monthly meetings and social events over a period of five months, where I was able to meet and informally interview many members of these organizations. These conversations were an intersubjective process of building trust and familiarity between community members and me. This was necessary, as I was not only a new face, but a young, single, student (though still an expatriate woman) which made me significantly different than the members of both organizations even though we shared many commonalities. Additionally, I read organizational newsletters and flyers closely to gain more of an understanding of the roles these clubs play in the lives of their members.

First, I contacted chairs of both IWCA and NAWA to ask permission to carry out participant observation. After being welcomed by them and invited to attend meetings, I was introduced to a few other board members and other key players within both organizations, in addition to the women I met more casually through meetings and events. After explaining my project, several women expressed an interest in arranging a time to meet, but I was not able to secure interviews with them as they were each "too busy." Ironically, the transnational, often hectic lifestyles I was attempting to explore presented an impasse to setting up interviews. After several failed attempts at arranging one-on-one semistructured interviews, I sought the chairs' permission and wrote a request for

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participation that was published in both organizations' newsletters. Frustrated by waiting for replies that never came, I contacted each board member of both organizations as well as all other members that I had met previously, sending personalized correspondence about myself and my project that included an ethnographic survey of open ended questions about one's background, being at home in general, and experiences with IWCA or NAWA in Budapest as well as another request to arrange an interview for anyone willing. Within a few hours, I had already received several replies with detailed answers to my questions, and one woman sent me a narrative account of homing in Budapest. As a direct result of this set of correspondence, I arranged several in- depth, semistructured interviews, lasting from one to three hours each. The interview guide was thematically similar to the ethnographic survey, but I encouraged informants to lead the direction of the interview, to interrupt with any questions, and to share narrative accounts of home-making at any time.

Issues of authority and privacy were constantly at the forefront of my fieldwork; for example, one board member repeatedly expressed deep concern that my research could be detrimental to participants if they expressed negativity either about Budapest or their or their husbands' employment with embassies and multinational corporations. Perhaps in part because of this reason, I found the communities both slightly difficult to infiltrate. As both organizations usually welcome new members in September and the membership year ends in May, beginning fieldwork in January proved to be a disadvantage for intra-community networking. However, the fact that my oddly timed entrée kept me out of established cliques within communities may have also benefited me by easily positioning me in a relatively neutral stance in members' eyes. Participating as a paying member, I was never under the impression that I had any special privileges or exceptional access as a researcher during my fieldwork, even though I found both communities accommodating. With members always coming and going, it can be difficult and, consequently, a low-priority to keep track of new

arrivals, focusing instead on maintaining established networks of acquaintances, socializing with an established group during organizational gatherings. Additionally, the notion of "studying up" suggests that informants have little to gain by involving themselves in my project, as they are, for the most part, already endowed with much social and cultural capital and established in powerful social networks. In this way, participation in my project offered little incentive; there was nothing I could offer these women except a listening ear, my own good will, and the open, genuine answers to any questions they had about me or this project. However, all the women that spoke with me seemed quite open and willing to reflect and discuss their experiences; I did not once feel like I was being told a version of the "right" answers. During one interview, an informant interrupted me, saying, "you ask the best questions! I've never thought of these things before!" Reflecting on this statement, I realized that responses were, perhaps, more candid because of the surprising subject matter: everyday experiences of home that are often taken for granted and rarely thought about.

4. EXPATRIATE HOMING IN BUDAPEST: MOVEMENT, MEMORY, ENCOUNTER, ASSOCIATION

There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.
--William Shakespeare.

4.1 NEGOTIATING BELONGING IN LOCAL SPACE

Everday engagements with the space of Budapest provide one terrain upon which expatriate women enact their identities as "being at home." As Tonkiss (2003) reminds us, according to Barthes, there is a language in one's movement through the city that provides a form of speech. Expatriates' movements through the city provide a researcher traceable ways to interpret and interact with urban space. One's identity is negotiated in relation to both a real and imagined Budapest, a space upon

which identity is constantly performed in both public and private space. Pre-existing ideas about the city and its inhabitants can be conceptualized as a discursive grammar upon which expatriate women speak the language of their identities. Mike Featherstone suggests that much of the interactions typically associated with expatriates attempts to create a "home plus," in which the positive aspects of the receiving culture combine with the comfortable familiarity of a previously home culture (1993:182). It is not easy (or desirable, in most cases) for expatriates to "go native," adopting identities that are in sync with the local socioscape of Budapest. Instead, established discourses about the place of expatriates in relation to the locality they now inhabit guide their engagements with space as they transform space into a lived place, a "context for human experience, constructed in movement, memory, encounter and association" (Tilley 1994:15).

Expatriates offered jobs abroad are most often offered packages including a significantly higher salary than they currently receive, a relocation allowance and moving services, educational stipends to fund children's international school fees[2], and assistance with housing. Some corporations offer preview trips for employees and spouses to expose the appeal of the typical expatriate lifestyle, accentuating the benefits of "foreign" living, and familiarizing potential expatriates with such specified, comfortable transnational spaces that validate their status as a group of cosmopolitan elites. Not to be vague about which side of this socio-economic divide they represent, one primary way that elites distinguish themselves from other classes is spatially.

Manuel Castells (2002) offers two distinctive characteristics of how elites produce specific urban culture within which they feel belonging. First, the self-segregation and retreat into privileged,

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[2] International school fees present a significant expense for many expatriate families. The annual fee for grades 11-12 in the American International School of Budapest is 13,459 Euro (http://www.aisb.hu/DOCS/2/admin_schoolfee.html). Fees at the British International School of Budapest ranges from 11,072 to 14,845 Euro (http://www.bisb.hu/index.php?page=60&l=1).

secluded space that produces spatial fragmentation; secondly, their creation and use of transnational spaces, which reminds them of their membership in a global, cosmopolitan lifestyle and at the same time as insulating them against the multifaceted reality of life in the city. I will show that for many expatriates in Budapest, practices carried out in such secluded environments, specifically sleek, urban, generic space (as seen in hotels, trendy fusion-cuisine restaurants, and airports) are engaged with the production of home. Such spaces serve as a background on which to enact belonging in expatriate communities as they take a relational stance, shaping individual identities through the collective "we."

Upon acceptance of a foreign transfer, managerial and other elite expatriate families in Budapest are further shuttled into both of Castells' criteria for elite urban life. Expatriate neighborhoods in Budapest are primarily in Buda, particularly the 2nd and 12th districts, providing access to international schools, parks, and a wide range of services. Of eleven international schools (not including international kindergartens), all of them are located in Buda, with 5 located in the 12th district, 2 located in the 2nd district, 2 in the 11th district, and one each in the 3rd and the 22nd (Palhegyi 2007). International schools are not the only place in Buda that expatriate women frequent; the North American Women's association meets in Buda once each month, and various social evenings, book clubs, and dinners are held there as well.

In one particular source for expatriates, the "Hungary Culture and Relocation Resources" website (Palyhegyi 2007), expatriates are explicitly steered away from "not so great" areas because they are "a bit seedier, more working class" (XIII); "crowded, dark, and polluted; some side streets can even be dangerous" (VII); and "those overweight women wearing spandex and thigh-high boots asking you if you'd like to have a good time" (VIII). Alternatively, popular expatriate districts are praised:

> Families love district 2, as many houses are private and even have yards and parks around.
> There is a definite minimum of riff-raff and low-life bard [sic] here. District 2 is home to

Rózsadomb (means Rose hill), with many gorgeous, high-rent places; not just trendy, but prestigious.
District 12 is, therefore, a pretty nice and expensive neighborhood. With one hill after another, you've got winding roads, large houses and beautiful hiking trails. Clean air, a couple of bus lines - what more could you ask for?
(Palyhegyi 2007).

The effusive, strongly worded discourse of binary distinctions (bright/dark, dirty/clean, nobody/somebody) present in this advice to those moving to Budapest begins shaping elite space long before one arrives at Ferihegy Airport. Invocation of the prestige one would gain by residing in one of these large houses propels the expatriate in the planning stages to want to "be somebody," a perk the website claims goes along with living in Obuda, in the 3rd district. Before one can even begin creating and maintaining an elite self within the urban space of Budapest, a desire for membership in this elite space is fostered. Thus, upon arrival, some expatriate women are eager to embrace the "enforced luxury" that is prescribed upon relocation. From her arrival in Budapest, to her first visit to a particular salon frequented by other expatriates, enrolling any children in an international school, joining an English-speaking yoga class, and learning where to purchase specific food items, expatriate women begin the work of carving out their sense of belonging in the particular variety of privileged, cosmopolitan space inhabited by other expatriate women. In these ways, discourses frame interaction with Budapest and serve to construct expatriate subjectivities that in turn shape feelings of being at home in the urban socioscape of Budapest.

Usually with exemplary access to all parts of the city (including financial resources, ownership of a car and possession of leisure time) such women's specific tastes influence urban economics, not to mention urban tastes, smells, and looks. When arranging interviews, one informant cheerfully invited me to her house in the 12th district, only to email me later saying that she realized I didn't have a car, so it would be easier to meet at either MOM Park or Budagyongye Shopping Center. Several women

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expressed surprise that I had never before been to MOM park, suggesting that they generalize their personalized "scapes" of Budapest to me, a female, twenty-two year old, single, student living in Budapest for ten months, with needs and wants that do not necessarily mirror with any of theirs (Appadurai 1996).

The shifting relevancies of the local space for elite group are reflected in the distribution of businesses and services within urban space of Buda and Pest. Services that cater to transnational elite cluster around the second district in a constant cycle of response and reinforcement that *here* is where you (as an expatriate) want to be (Hannerz 1996:131). This here/there discourse is yet another binary distinction that colors how and where expatriates enact belonging in Budapest. *Here*, the Mammut shopping center encompasses posh restaurants, bars, clothing shops, and a Gold's Gym that expatriate women are constantly encouraged to patronize. Various hair salons, massage therapists, the Dr. Rose Medical Center (which performs treatments such as plastic surgery and mesotherapy) and First Med health clinic are dotted around Mammut area and in the V district near Széchenyi lánchíd. This asymmetrical arrangement of global cities attests to elite power manifested in urban space (Castells 2002:347). However, the sociospheres of expatriate women do not develop in a vacuum; instead they are constantly informed by the dominant discourses about how to be an expatriate in Budapest. Micro-networks of communication among expatriates, both formalized through organizational discourse and informally on websites and word-of-mouth work to project discourses of consumption onto the urban landscape in precise ways.

One organization I conducted participant observation with utilizes a rule that if five members recommend a business or service, they will publish the recommendation in their publication for new arrivals. "We don't feel it's our job to filter out who you *should* support, just to disseminate

information…and maybe offer a recommendation," explains the chair of North American Women's Association, an expatriate women's organization with about 75 members mostly from the United States and Canada. Organizational suggestions like these, when adopted, take some of the personal negotiations out of relating to local space and promote a stylish brand of "good" expatriate cosmopolitanism—from relaxing during a Thai massage, arranging to rent a villa in Croatia, or gaining knowledge of regional wine from Eger and Tokaj during specially organized tastings for an expatriate audience.

By adopting certain local practices, they become a *somebody,* a self at home, within the binary distinction between somebody and nobody. Karin[3], a Swiss woman, shares her story as we sit over cappuccino in the lobby of the hotel her husband manages:

> I don't want to go where the expats go, not at all. I prefer a mix of locals, it's not a price issue, it's just like I like to figure things out for myself. I have my own dentist who is special for our family. I don't want to tell everyone about her; I try to keep it low profile. If I recommend her to you maybe she doesn't have space for you. Maybe she doesn't have space for us anymore, or she gets arrogant, etc. I don't want this to happen.

Interestingly, Karin is careful to assert both her supposed independence from a predefined expatriate spaces and discourses as well as that price is not an issue in how she chooses service providers. In her class-conscious assurance to me that she could afford Western-style health services, Karin asserts her elite cosmopolitan identity as a *somebody*, inherently distinguishing herself from *nobodies*—which would include both locals and an imagined, other expatriate, who would patronize 'local' services for financial reasons (Calhoun 2001). She clearly articulates that she has a choice of service providers and her feelings of independently choosing where her family goes are of highest importance. As Hannerz (1996:106) theorized, Karin can afford to experiment with her family's dental care, without standing to lose a vulnerable self-identity. She thus utilizes her own self-creation tools (such as her

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[3] All names of individuals have been changed.

connection to her husband's hotel that provides her with local information) to create a home within Budapest, careful to position herself in relation to imagined binary distinctions, prioritizing that mixes global and local to provide a comfortable, personal, cosmopolitanism within which she and her family feel at home.

During our conversation at a café at MOM park, Anna, originally from New York, explains "when we were driving around with the real estate agent looking at houses, we passed MOM park. 'You'll probably do your shopping here at the Match,' he said, but I don't. After we moved in, I found a Kaiser down the way which I like much better." The agent's attempts to acclimate Anna to her future neighborhood reveal one way in which expatriate spaces are imagined by those both within and outside the consumerist cosmopolitanism that characterizes expatriates. Like Karin, Anna's elite status allows her to patronize any shop she chooses, even if it is outside service providers traditionally marketed to expatriate women. Anna's cosmopolitan orientation provides a base upon which to build her relational identity as an expatriate woman at home in Budapest, but she does not allude to whether her orientation is built on a sense of entitlement, as Skeggs (2004) proposed.

Despite their distancing efforts, both Anna and Karin still associate themselves with discourses that assist them in addressing and managing local spaces in order to make homes. Instead of relating to the goods or services themselves, these active, distancing practices reflect their prioritization of individuality in home-making, even though many of their other practices (such as their residences in popular expatriate districts) are congruent with traditional models of expatriate life in Budapest. It is in this popular discourse of self-creation, of imagining oneself as a self lacking boundaries, that expatriate women practice a relational cosmopolitan that assists them in feeling like a somebody, specifically, a somebody-at-home (Pollock 2002:20).

On the other side of the dialectic from how they imagine themselves in relation to local space, businesses also imagine expatriate women in a very domestic and gendered way, offering small gifts like magnets and candles to promote their services. Three times during one month of attending expatriate women's events, I was approached by a man in his 40's, dressed in a gray suit with a recurring grin, saying each time "I don't think I've met you yet. Have you heard about the Dr. Rose Medical Center? We're right by Gresham palace, We offer all kind of services, including plastic surgery. If you'd like to speak with our plastic surgeon, he's right here!" His reference system assumes that I, as an expatriate woman attending this meeting can quickly locate Gresham Palace on my mental map of Budapest—a self-proclaimed ultra modern, luxury hotel, offering twice daily housekeeping, and room rates ranging from 320-4,800 euro per night[4]. Even though the clinic is located in Pest, across the Duna from most other expatriate-directed services, the clinic attempts to make itself spatially relevant to women by locating it next to another site that expatriate women *should* know, where they may go to enjoy an exotic lime and ginger salt glow body treatment or a six-course dinner with wine at the hotel's restaurant. Alternatively, the clinic could have chosen the Chain Bridge or Roosevelt Ter as a recognizable landmark, but these are not "we" places where women relate to local space in a given way, performing their elite identities. In the next section, I will discuss how members relate to community spaces and discourses that aim to help transnational women feel at home in Budapest.

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[4] Description taken from Gresham Palace website, accessible at http://www.fourseasons.com/budapest/

4.2 COMMUNITY AS HOME: INSIDE BELONGING IN WOMEN'S EXPATRIATE ORGANIZATIONS

I sit around a large round table with seven other women, conversing politely with Claire about the four years she and her family lived in Cameroon and the fear that paralyzed them as she caught malaria and had to be evacuated from the country. Sunlight streams in the large windows as servers whisk away my empty teacup onto a shiny silver tray, scarcely allowing it to touch my saucer after I swallow the last sip of milky black tea. At precisely 11 o'clock am, the chair of IWCA addresses the hotel meeting room full of expatriate women and vendors there to promote services such as plastic surgery, relocation services, to sell Italian ties and cufflinks, used books, and homemade bread loaves and portioned bags of cookies tied with ribbons. On the baked items table sits a small, undecorated box, covered in white paper with a slot in the top. It carries a handwritten sign denoting that it is Zoltan's box, along with a picture of a young boy smiling attached to the top.

"My mother never woke up with a bad hair day," the chair proclaims from a small runway set up in the front of the large room after welcoming everyone to the meeting, "then I realized she slept with curlers in. I don't have the dedication for that. I do wake up with bad hair days. You need to go speak with the people at this booth over here to get some tips for days like this." She then awards a special raffle prize for treatment at the salon that sponsors the booth to her right. "Please donate money to Zoltan's box, ladies. For those of you that don't know, Zoltan is an orphan. He is blind and deaf. Our organization supports eye treatment for him, it costs 37,000 HUF a month, much more than they can afford. Please be generous."

The Chair then reminds the members of next month's meeting, arranged as a special treat by the ladies of the Moroccan embassy. She then calls up one of the organizers, who is affiliated with the Moroccan embassy, and asks her to address the audience, sharing something about next month's

event. The organizer shyly takes the microphone she is offered and says, "we hope to see you next month!" The Chair quickly takes the microphone back, adding her own addendum "oh, I could have said that. I thought you would say it in Arabic or something!"

At this monthly meeting of the International Women's Club Association (IWCA), held in a posh five star hotel in central Pest, around 75 women ranging in age from twenties to eighties gather to socialize, watch a fashion show of spring fashions, enjoy a table of constantly replenished beverages and pastries, purchase products from vendors, find out about upcoming social and charity events, and purchase tickets for the charity ball that is planned for several days after the meeting,

In addition to IWCA, expatriate women in Budapest are also served by the North American Women's Association (NAWA). With about 80 members, this club is open to North American women as well as any woman married to a North American. Sharon, the chair of NAWA, describes a prototypical member as one who is "here with a partner. Doesn't need to work, supported by someone else. Able to meet during the day. We get women at the beginning of their career, the end, and everywhere in between." Often in contemporary research on skilled labor migration, expatriate women are conceptualized as "trailing spouses," with issues relating to nonworking women remaining unaddressed (Yeoh and Khoo 1998:159). For some women, after leaving an established community where one feels belonging, the reproductive/domestic sphere takes on highest priority for enacting adaptive strategies and negotiating identity. Other women become highly involved in what Yeoh and Khoo (1998) call the third sphere, or community involvement and charity work. Simultaneously involved in each of these spheres, NAWA and IWCA thrive in Budapest, providing guidance on where to go, what to do, buy, be interested in, and how to occupy one's time. Additionally, they provide social networks, validation of expatriate women's lifestyles as worthwhile,

and community service opportunities. Sharon describes the purpose of her organization in the community in the following way:

> Mostly we're there to support each other and do charity work. We don't pretend to be just a charity organization, because we have to make it attractive to join, too. Sometimes women have small kids, or no kids. This is the only way to make friends, to meet ladies, to share common interests. We're proud of our charity work, but we don't mind being a social club. We're not the cute sexy charity type thing.

There is a definite performative element hinted at in Sharon's description, both implying that other organizations parade their charity involvement as a "sexy" accoutrement to their purpose, when in reality perhaps trying to support too many charities and not having sufficient interest of members to actually contribute as much as they would like. These organizations' involvements with charities in Budapest attempt to localize members as well as provide them an arena to exercise leadership roles in creative ways. The social and charity facets of both NAWA and IWCA can be seen as pieces that are put together in various ways by different members in order to create the attachments that make up the "true fiction" of community (Tonkiss 2003), a story which is interpreted differently by different members as they relate both within and outside the community in order to make and feel home. Within these organizations, expatriate women can meet others and access specific resources designed to assist them in making and feeling home as they actively exert claims of belonging within a self-created community (Walsh 2006:134).

However, not everyone in expat clubs is there for the chance to meet with many familiar and new faces at once, the fashion shows, or the raffle prizes. Marla suggests that there are two main reasons why she believes women become involved with clubs that cater to their needs: firstly, in order to "get them started…give them some ideas of where to go, to get the tools to do things one way, to meet some interesting people" and secondly, "those go with time to fill up. They need routine; they want to try things out, like walking, stitching, and other things. They try to reach out to Hungarians

sometimes through charity work. It can be, and hopefully is, positive to the community." When asked why she is involved with NAWA, Marla, who works as a managing director at a Western-style health clinic in Budapest, immediately responds, "they're part of our target group. When I go, I thoroughly enjoy it. In a past life, it was different for me, now I don't have the ability to attend meetings during the day usually. I need to be a face in the community of NAWA." Similarly, Karin, whose husband is employed by a transnational hotel chain, took up a two year board position at IWCA. "I took it as a business opportunity," she remarks matter-of-factly, "to help promoting the hotel. We have small events here [in the hotel that employs her husband]. For me, it's business social. It's practical. Of course I gossip, I'm a woman!" `Calling more attention to the performativity present in negotiating community belonging, both Marla and Karin are open about their motives for community membership when speaking to me, but neither advertises the underlying reasons for participation to the community members themselves.

This multiplicity and dominance of common reference points (as opposed to encouraging multiple points of view) serves to remake what women have in common; thus narrowing the space between members and creating seemingly already "familiar terrain" in unexplored urban landscapes (Ahmed 1999:331). At one meeting, I overheard two members, both with young babies, introduce themselves to each other for the first time. After exchanging names and locations of past homes, one woman asked the other, "okay, I have to ask you. How on earth do you get formula here?" By sharing personal experience overcoming this unfamiliarity of Hungary, these two women have created actively shared concern in only a very brief and very gendered exchange. By actively 'doing' gender through advocacy of traditional gender roles, women "circulate, and embody, thresholds of belonging" in an intimately corporeal sense (Fortier 1999:42). It is through the action of bodies as they enact the ritual belonging—by arriving at the chosen meeting sites, patronizing shops that cater

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to expatriates, and conducting oneself as expected of a community member—that individuals become at home in a community.

In the above example, these women's identities as mothers quickly rose to prominence. Accordingly, one common thread in the many conceptualizations of cosmopolitanism is the ability and desire of the cosmopolitan to weave and interpret multiple systems of value and meaning as part of the creation of a flexible, urban identity (Pecoud 2004). The mental conception of intimate belonging relative to a certain space is only part of the processes through which expatriate women negotiate feelings of being at home throughout the world. Presenting oneself as independent from the need to cling to NAWA and IWCA, while at the same time voluntarily associating oneself with such organizations, can also be a mechanism for establishing a home in Budapest.

4.3 RE/MEMBERING HOME: THE CONTOURS OF BELONGING

"We were thinking, just the other day, about a place we'd like to stay in…but we couldn't think of anywhere," Sharon muses to me during our conversation at one of Buda's many cafés. After leaving the United States in 1994, Sharon moved to the Netherlands with her Dutch husband, later moving to Budapest, unexpectedly moving to London after dramatic events with her husband's finance job, and, in 2004, back to Hungary. She has just returned from a school scouting trip to the Netherlands to prepare for her family's June move. "We don't own property anywhere. We did," she remembers, "home could be where I live now, where I was born, where I've lived the longest…none of which are the same place." For Sharon, home is currently where she and her family enjoy dinner and conversation together every night, without the distraction of television. It's where her Dutch pastry table sits proudly in her kitchen, reminding her of her father, now deceased, who worked in

Indonesia many years ago. Following Ahmed's (1999:330) suggestion that spaces become comforting because they are a destination, a "somewhere of home," many other expatriate women I interviewed shared such sentiments that where they are currently is home. "It's wherever I happen to be," Anna, a 41 year old from New York, explained. Another woman, Karin, echoes this adaptable, family-centered home but adds more practical financial consideration: "we say in our family that where daddy works, where we get the money to make our life…that's our home." Relating to home in this highly mobile way fuels a dominant expatriate discourse, promoting the ideal of easily feeling at home anywhere in the world.

However, this ideal mobile conception of home is far from a reality for many expatriate women. Remembering a time when she lived in a rented apartment in the Netherlands, the first thing Sharon recalls is the cuckoo clock. "It's so different, living in a temporary home. You can feel it, sitting on a couch that isn't yours. We didn't even unpack everything. When we finally made it to London there were things we'd forgotten that we had. We always forgot, on purpose, to wind the cuckoo clock. The owner would come and it's the first thing he would notice, he made sure to wind it up again." Her family, their two cats, their "stuff," her books—relating to such familiar pieces of past homes within her domestic space fosters a sense of home that makes context, for a while, less relevant. Not everything they carry from home to home is practical or everyday; for instance, she has never unpacked her grandmother's china.

Similar to Sharon's focus on the domestic and family sphere, for Karin, a Swiss woman who left Switzerland at age 21 to begin an expatriate lifestyle, being at home is both material and emotional: "home is my things, my souvenirs, from all over the world, being with my family, being calm, peaceful…my home is my castle, whether it's big or small…we have moved so many times." For

her, feeling comfortable, feeling the strength of her family are most important for feeling home. "You can live anywhere in the world as long as you have that. Wherever my husband likes his job…we can make do. We adapt to the language, the place. I feel home in my home, not in Budapest." For Karin, feeling calm within the walls of her physical home informs a sense of being at home, regardless of her statement that she "really does not care for Budapest." Karin's reflection on where home is gives weight to Brah's (1996) conception of home: firstly, a simultaneously grounded place and floating symbol, secondly, a well mapped familiar space of interaction. In the next section, I turn to the notion of specific attachments in order to further explore the relational, created intimacies of home.

4.4 THE MOTIONS OF ATTACHMENT

The processes of making and feeling home are dynamic; it is through everyday interaction that a dwelling space becomes a place, rich with meaning, that lives through the practices and objects one enacts at home (Petridou 2001: 88). Kate, an Australian woman, clearly states that, for her, the context of the city she lives in is not as important in feeling home as the emotional and material ties she carries with her, or the floating symbolic space of home (Brah 1996:4). Kate, who has been living as an expatriate for 17 years, explains she felt at home in Budapest immediately:

> It is a mind frame and attitude we have in order to get on with our lives. Moving with all our household items and furniture obviously helps us to adjust very quickly. It's like moving house in your home country. The only thing that changes is the layout of the outdoors and the language spoken outside your house.

This articulation suggests an immense attachment to the "stuff" of home as a way to soften the sharp edges of disorientation in a new place, as something sticky which carries a part of one's identity. The inside of Kate's home is intimately familiar even though positions of items fluctuate between

dwellings, fulfilling Brah's call for home as intimate, familiar space (Brah 1996). By carrying many of her home possessions, or vehicular icons for identity, with her, Kate actively constructs a mobile "somewhere" of home that infuses her current home with meaning that transcends past lived localities (Ahmed 1999:330; Walsh 2006:134)

Interestingly, even though she notes her quick adjustment time to Budapest, Kate's narrative says nothing about relating to the city itself, cultural considerations, or local interactions. Later in the conversation, Kate mentioned that in addition to her post as the vice chair of IWCA, she is a substitute teacher at the British and American schools, and loves to work out—all practices promoted by expatriation discourses. Her association with the IWCA and international schools places her quickly into a community with dominant discourses about how and where she should spend her time; through these, Kate becomes an "I" through being part of a "we." At the same time she is working to create an individual identity of being at home, Kate is also managing her encounters with the local through dominant discourses through her involvement with these institutions. In this way, Budapest and its expatriate community intrudes into home-making, pushing its way into shaping a feeling of home that she attributes to her own "mind frame."

As in Kate's narrative, practices of being at home encompass many processes which are not physically bounded by the structure of a home, but this does not mean that they are detached from the material world or enacted in blank space (Petridou 2001:88). Marla, 37, has lived in Budapest for seven years, and is a minority among those involved in expatriate women's organizations because she is the only member of her household. We quickly found commonalities between us: single with no children, she too had attended a transnational graduate university. When I asked her what being at home means, she replied with a highly independent characterization: "knowing you're taking care of

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your own needs…mentally and physically. Relaxing and recharging. That's being at home." Marla

told me that she "feels more at home in her apartment here [in Budapest] than anywhere else. I have

my two pieces of furniture I own there. It's comfortable." Marla then quickly moves to the public

sphere when describing her feelings of being at home:

> I was riding a tram, on, like, my second day here. It sounds dramatic, but I just knew I was
> home. I don't understand what people are saying around me. I can't read anything. But I can
> find food…and transport…I will figure it out. In my heart I knew I was home.

Marla's ability to attend to self-professed "practical" everyday needs (without carrying the additional

responsibility for anyone else's adjustment) suggests a highly mobile "somewhere" of home, one of

memory and remembering in which meeting one's needs remains the constant susurrus of being at

home. By sharing with me her interactions with both public and private spheres of dwelling, from

relaxing at home (or during her lunch break at work during our interview) with her iPod, which is

one of her favorite possessions, to picnicking on the island on Sundays, I become witness to Marla's

active claims of belonging (Walsh 2006:134). She clearly recognizes the agency present in creating

and feeling home in the places she has lived:

> *Brigette*: What are the biggest challenges of being an expatriate?
> *Marla:* Making it your home. Definitely. I'm 37. Right now I'm looking for a new job, that's
> exciting, I like that. I like to move and not know anyone. You have to *make yourself* at home. I
> like to socialize, to network, so that's okay.

As Marla details to me how she created a home in Budapest, I notice that she moves through

"motions of attachment" that Walsh reminds us were suggested by Fortier (2003). The motions of

creating a social network from combining alumni networks from her international graduate school,

being introduced to friends of friends, attending social events sponsored by the Budapest Business

Journal and the Professional Women's Association, finding "a neighborhood place to go to" and

exploring the "thirty minute radius" around her apartment are distinctively non-linear patterns of

engagement. Instead, Marla's homing practices follow a circular model of homing that is,

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importantly, led by a desire to feel and see oneself as home in previously unmapped space, in line with Brah's homing desire (1996). Her positive descriptions of involvement with organizations that serve business women alludes to how Marla's identity as a working woman at home in Budapest has been necessarily shaped by these organizations' discourses about who their members are, where they like to meet, and what kinds of activities they enjoy.

Other than her iPod, the possession that leads to her feeling most home is her polish pottery dinnerware that she purchased during her three years living there before moving to Budapest. She assures me that uses it everyday, distinctly establishing it as a part of her cosmopolitan life in Budapest each time she invites friends over for dinner at her apartment, overlooking Liszt Ferenc Ter. Here, the lived locality of Budapest interacts with Marla's feelings of belonging; she has not carved out a home in empty space, but out of interactions with individuals in a place that she has actively made familiar. Marla's attachment to her pottery also reveals an emotional trajectory of home that is mediated in an object. Marla was only one of many informants that stressed an attachment to cooking, culinary objects and furniture, and the act of eating as integral for homing. Indeed, food and home can be seen as parallels, both becoming meaningful through the process of time and growth (Petridou 1999:89). Sharon's Indonesian Dutch pastry table, her family meals— these help solidify a sense of home that blends times past with the present. Even though activities of eating and drinking move outside the home, they are often still integral for transporting a feeling home, as perceiving and consuming foods connect one's body with material culture and a portable sensory landscape that informs one's sense of being in a familiar place (Law 2001:279). However, the relationships of expatriate women to food are also mediated by ideas of appropriate behavior. For example, one of the restaurants at the hotel where IWCA meets offers members a discount for post-meeting lunch; alternatively, American baking products are sold at NAWA meetings.

Participating in either of these culinary experiences helps an individual identify as one of "us" in a highly relational sense.

Just as food and the practice of eating can encompass previously lived geographies and help shape one's identity of being at home, domestic possessions can also travel along circular paths between past and future homes. "Recently, I've accumulated lots of things that I want in a future home of mine," Marla explains to me, suggesting that even though she feels totally at home in the present situation, home is not static and always lends itself to future renegotiation. Her milleux has extended, as Durrschmidt explored (2000), to encompass both past and present homes as well as readiness for the cosmopolitan homes she will infuse with meaning in the future. This imagining of future homes is unexpectedly central in the way many informants discuss some of their material attachments. The conception of home must include this imaginative dimension, readying itself for its incarnation in future spaces, which, for many women, can be enacted at any time.

Also addressing the imaginative dimension, Karin describes to me her most special possession: "We have a dining table that we bought at the occasion of the birth of our son. It's from the Middle East, from Bahrain. It's one of these big tables, where you imagine many people sitting, eating…." Her voice trailed off, likely imagining people gathered around this special table. Commemorating such a major event in her family life, "carried" with her from Bahrain to Athens to Vienna to Budapest, the emotive, imagined scenarios involving this table are fundamental to its importance. Although Karin emphasizes many times that her family would be able to feel at home anywhere, she professes very strong specific attachments to the contents of her home, the everyday engagements with these objects conjuring the stories the family has infused in them, and also recognizing how these objects,

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in turn, shape the many homes they inhabit, echoing Hedetoft's (2002) sentiment that although we can open our home to the world, the world cannot be our home.

Sometimes the attachments held closely by informants are not practical or even material at all. Sharon, after much deliberation shares with me the following

> I guess I'm most attached to my wedding ring. It's very important that I have it all the time. Mostly I just need my family. One constant is my email address. I guess that's one of my favorite possessions, if you can call it that. I don't do what many expats do, change to local service provider, .hu or whatever. I always have my hotmail and you can always contact me that way, even though my snail mail addresses change often.

Sharon's interesting choice of attachments to share with me is not the only interesting thing about her response; her choice of the word *constant* to describe something important to her supports the circular reformation of home, that constants travel with us, we hold these fragments of stability close as we actively carve out the spaces of our homes in the world, similar to how food and eating provide a mobile arena through which we can gain a sense of stability in spite of unfamiliar spaces (Petridou 2001:90). Like others, she also distinguishes her attachment from those of other expatriates, suggesting that in this expatriate lifestyle of limited choices and unknown futures, she values being unique—the feeling that she is in control of something, even if it is only an illusion of control within the transnational movement of a job that isn't hers to begin with.

When I ask Beth, from South Carolina, about her favorite possession, she quickly explains, "wooden men from Krakow. We call them 'Rabbi' because my husband is Jewish. We have them now displayed in our Myrtle Beach house." Interestingly, these favorite objects are not currently with Beth's family; rather they wait, in a sense, at one home that the family visits periodically. Marla's attachment to her iPod (symbolic of her music collection as a whole) furthers such symbolic attachments, that are fundamental for mobile homing, whether they are as small as a wedding wing

or as big as a dining room table. All these examples of specific attachments speak to home as a construction, built out of the dialectical relationship between change and continuity in which the past is part of the present and the future, the faraway is near, and the local is increasingly cosmopolitan. By relating their local, at-home identities to these possessions from around the globe, my informants actively produce creative cosmopolitan selves, as suggested by Calhoun (2003:542) and Hedetoft (2002:xix).

4.5 "I'M NOT LIKE THESE WOMEN"--ASSERTING A RELATIONAL SELF

Although members of IWCA and NAWA may seem to have much in common, there is a pervasive discourse of independent home-making strategies. Intertwined with discursive cycles of proper expatriate lifestyles, the choices of these women are sometimes limited, as they occupy an elite, yet marginal space. Usually not fluent in Hungarian and living in certain sections of the city, many women assert themselves as agentive subjects, capable and willing to shape their own homes. At the same time, they are still supported by a preexisting elite social network, relating to local space through the distinct lens of elite expatriate cosmopolitanism. Utilizing business connections to gain information, not hiring domestic laborers to care for children, choosing to live in an area outside traditional expatriate zones—many of my informants' choices signifies a move away from digesting the entire package of elite expatriate women's cosmopolitanism as a whole while still embracing many of the dominant discourses about who expatriate women are and what they do.

In fact, most women I spoke with expressed some variation of the theme that they conceive of themselves as rejecting, in part, an imagined archetypical expatriate woman. Much of the experimentation noted by Hannerz takes place in the constructed elite spaces that Castells (1994)

proposes (such as expatriate neighborhoods in the II and XII districts) acting as the base upon which cosmopolitan orientation and belonging are articulated. Furthermore, Hannerz proposes that the cosmopolitan's embracing of another culture is by all means conditional and inherently noncommittal (104). This trying-it-out aspect of creating a lived locality with global influences links up with Calhoun's conception of cosmopolitanism as a glorified class consciousness that looks inward to one own's status instead of to others as traditional cosmopolitanism (2001).

Trying out different aspects of life in Budapest, however, takes on many forms and is never free from the influence of discursive practices. When I asked Marla if she had any routines for adjusting to a new place after a move, she responded, "I'm not one of these who rides transport to the last stop, gets off, and looks around. My needs are met close by. I'm practical. I have a 30 minute radius, you know?" Her response hints at an imagined prototypical expatriate woman, curious about the entire city and what it has to offer her, in contrast with how Marla self-identifies herself as enacting an alternative, strategy. Similarly, Claire shares some of the choices she had made about motherhood and leisure, carefully distinguishing her choices from those of others, imagining herself an atypical expatriate woman:

> Many mothers go to work for a break and when they return home this is when the 'work' kicks in. My day and life really revolves around the children, but this is a personal choice. I do not have any help with the kids; I have a cleaner who comes for a few hours once a week to do the floors. I am telling you all this because it is very common for expat families to have a lot of help, much more than what they would have back home…probably because it is cheaper and also because in most cases the salaries increase as a perk for leaving your country.

As Claire and I looked over a list of the raffle prizes for the charity ball together, she muses quietly, "see this," as she gestures to the list, which includes such prizes such as a men's suit from Eurotaliors, A two night stay in Malta with roundtrip airfare for two to anywhere in Europe, a designer couture dress voucher, and a complete day spa package (haircut, color, massage, facial,

manicure, pedicure) "*this* is what most expat women do all day. Massage, manicure, shopping, lunches. I'm not one of them, I've got my kids."

Marla and Claire's strong claims to self-reliance speak to an imagined standard model for managing local space and the desire to construct highly individual liberal selves in contrast to this model. Interestingly, several women exaggerate their independence from the community values and practices. Claire's example that she does not subscribe to domestic help is severely weakened by her hiring of a floor cleaner once a week. Similarly, Karin proclaims:

> I don't need the club [IWCA] to get around. A lot of women are happy for that—they want to go where everyone goes, to this dentist to prove he's good or they're good or whatever. Our company, they push us in quickly. I'm not trying to be egoistic, but I like to figure out everything on my own, with a little help from the hotel.

During our conversation at her husband's hotel, Karin's mobile phone rang. After answering it and speaking for several minutes in an upbeat tone, the call ended and Karin relays the following abstract of her conversation:

> Apparently the traffic issue was some guy on the chain bridge trying to kill himself. I called our security guard at our hotel earlier when I saw the traffic on my way here. He knows everything. We call him all the time, like last Friday, I was trying to go to the cinema and couldn't get there, did you hear about the robbery at Moskva ter? Yeah, that's what was holding us up.

Even while distancing herself from IWCA, Karin casually reveals her close ties to the hotel, another source of relational discourses of how to *be* in Budapest, even though she clearly states that she doesn't want to go "where all the expats go, not at all. They [other expatriate women in organizations] are very concerned, oh, where do you go? And sometimes, my hairdresser wouldn't suit you. The Germans, the Americans especially, it's them playing a game."

In the same way playing the game is performing, Karin is also performing as a version of the "independent expat woman," one who convinces herself that she decides for herself where to go and how to live while seeking out and trusting multiple sources of information, including the Swiss

embassy. "I always call the embassy when I come somewhere, I get involved with the same age group, they're very social." It is clearly important to Karin to tell herself that she is wielding the tools of her own belonging, that she has something and somewhere to call her own, a map on which she can act out her homing desires (Brah 1996). Resistance to organizational values can take many other forms. My conversation with Anna illustrates two such forms of resistance that are simultaneously enacted.

> *Anna*: I just fit better at NAWA. I can go there wearing these jeans and sandals that I've got on now. IWCA meets at a hotel. They dress up there, you know?
> *Brigette:* Oh, I do know.
> *Anna:* If I were to dress up like that, I would have heels on. Then I couldn't get there because I couldn't walk down Gellert Hill in my shoes…because I don't have a car.

Through rejecting IWCA, Anna dismisses one organizational model as she embraces another, suggesting that her preference is actually not based on the unappealing posh character of IWCA as much as it stems from her desire to exert agency in a situation where she is elite, yet marginal. She also articulates a feeling that she is not able to cite the same "reference system" as other expatriate women (Probyn 1996). "I don't know all about Target. I've never seen 'Desperate Housewives.' I can't really relate to all that." Kate employs a similar distancing mechanism when she offers me this disclaimer: "other expatriate women that may not see things the same way as me. I would like to emphasize that we have expatriated for the last 17 years and may look at situations differently than the newly expatriated family." Perhaps Anna and Kate do not share the sense of entitlement suggested by Skeggs (2004) necessary to adopt a personalized set of cosmopolitan practices, or perhaps she does not have the desire or space to experiment with this class conscious, aesthetic/prosthetic cosmopolitanism that IWCA promotes (Skeggs 2004; Calhoun 2001).

As Featherstone (1993) suggests, all of these stances are relational, as they help construct a "we" that opposes a local "they," fostering a feeling of belonging that characterizes itself by what it is *not*.

Through perceived distance from the discursive norms of expatriate women's practices, women can focus on carving out a comfortable balance of belonging.

The interstitial spaces for resistance of the lifestyles that organizations such at IWCA and NAWA support are lined with the social and cultural capital that structures these expatriate women's lives. Importantly, these acts of resistance are chosen; even more importantly, they are *able to be chosen*, and do not result from lack of status, money, or desire to conform to established models for expatriate lifestyles. For example, Anna mentioned several times that she does not own a car. But when I inquired how her son got to the American school, she told me that there is a school bus-like pick up service that comes to get him each morning and brings him home each night. Such a service is made possible by the high fees at the American school, as well as necessarily in demand by families at the American school, revealing how the local space of Budapest sharply penetrates home-making.

The infiltration of local space in home making practices is often problematic; some informants apply the "it's not right for me" attitude to Budapest itself. Karin was quick to share her appreciation for "nice things, like beauty salons." When I inquire whether Budapest offers what she needs in this regard, she forcefully assures me "no. Budapest has nothing to offer. There's all this talk about Gellert, the mineral spas and so on….but I don't want to take my shoes off in there. I mean, if you go to hairdresser here, it's like a time warp, back fifty years. It's interesting, yeah, but…" Claire reveals that she finds the people "quite miserable," even though there is "so much to do here especially for the kids." Karin adds that Budapest is "missing quite a bit to be called Europe." This extremely powerful statement attests to the strength of one's imagination of a locality, shaped by interactions with various discursive practices; there is no blank space upon which one writes a narrative of home and belonging.

Both self- and outward- consciousnesses inform the brand of expatriate cosmopolitanism I observe in women's organizations, with Rabinow's outward-focused sensitivity (1986) often overshadowed by the self-consciousness of one's class and the sense of entitlement that goes along with it. Some, such as Marla and Karin, perform suitable levels of group membership while exerting independent decisions and preferences; others conform enough to be accepted while covering up agendas for their involvement. Resistance to discursive norms among expatriate women in Budapest is a creative force, shaping how women assert that they belong both in their own transnational self as well as among a community (Hedetoft 2002).

CONCLUSION

Expatriates' actively produced material attachments constitute an important site for locating and producing a sense of home, as do expatriate women's organizations, which provide selected kinds of social support. But taken together, these do not paint the complete picture of how one makes a home. Instead, the everyday practices of homing are those of relating to things, places, and attitudes. Expatriate women navigate the complex space of belonging in Budapest, using community as a place to refine their own identities in relation to Budapest as well as homes, both present, past, and imagined.

As suggested by the ways in which informants speak about their homes and attachments in Budapest, home is clearly neither static or a given. Instead, home can be seen as a symbolic, metaphoric space of practices and attachments that speak to journeys past and future as a result of their everyday qualities. By positioning themselves in relation to Budapest, dominant discourses of expatriation,

and an aesthetic cosmopolitanism that rely on an imagined affiliation with a global transnational culture, elite women who associate with expatriate women's organizations structure their everyday activities around a mélange of global and local in order to feel at home. On one side, the quick adoption of popular practices is one way expatriate women can exercise their agency to assert claims of belonging in the "right" side of the binary distinctions are discursively drawn onto geographies of Budapest. In this way, the choices made by my informants of where to go, what to buy, and where to live are strategies for performing relational identities of an expatriate women at home in Budapest, simultaneously navigating both the discourses of appropriate expatriate practices as well as those distancing discourses that prioritize an ideal of an independent self creating a home. Feeling one belongs in a city or a community requires active navigation of relational geographies of intimacy.

Further research into the practices of homing among voluntary, elite transnationals would benefit from extended, comparative ethnographic fieldwork that seeks out the complexities of these privileged, yet marginal, lifestyles. The processes through which people make themselves at home provide a site through which we can *think* of home not as a static state of being or a place that is taken for granted, rather, as a *somewhere*—carved out through negotiated belonging, shedding light onto the dialectics of mobility and stasis, past and present, intimacy and foreignness, and near and far.

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