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Tales of Ambivalence

Stories of Acceptance and Rejection among Swedish Expatriates in Poland

Tales of Ambivalence

David Wästerfors

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Abstract

Stories about another country and others often contain moral and ideological tensions and ambivalences. This report analyses and interprets work-related stories among Swedish expatriates in Poland in order to highlight that aspect. The stories are told in interviews. When telling stories of their arrival in Poland, the expatriates may be seen as reflecting the narrators' initial impressions of the Polish scenery and surroundings, various surprises or sudden changes in their impressions as well as others' opinions. By dialogising these points of view, a space for individuality and self-consturction seems to be created. Simultaneously, an ability to be on one's own is cultivated. The narrators draw on the narratives of other Swedes as well as Poles and Swedish expatriates in Poland in order to highlight the differences between Swedish experiences in Poland and those of other Swedish expatriates. The narratives and interviews reflect on the narrators' own construction of identity in a new cultural context. The paper is also available in PDF-format at CFE's web-site: www.cfe.lu.se.

David Wästerfors, Lund University, Sweden. His thesis will focus on interviews and stories among Swedish expatriates in Poland.
Throughout the history of economics, the stranger everywhere appears as the trader or merchant as stranger. As long as an economy is essentially self-sufficient, or products originate outside the group. Insofar as members do not leave the circle in order to buy these necessities – in which case they are the "strange" merchants in that outside territory – the trader must be a stranger, since nobody else has a chance to make a living.

(Georg Simmel 1950/1964, p. 403)

An additional variation of Georg Simmel's stranger seems to exist today's economic and working life: the company expat. To live and work abroad during a certain period of time is common, and highly praised, especially among privileged groups in Western societies. Working abroad is associated with learning, personal development and new insights. It is perhaps also associated with a particular lifestyle and a particular point of view. Expatriates are neither local inhabitants nor tourists, neither completely at home or away. They are to some extent supposed to make their new place familiar and recognisable, but nevertheless continue to underline their distinctive otherness. In that sense expatriates may very well acquire, or serve to accommodate a certain characte from an outsider and insider angle, a certain tolerance of distance, some of the features Simmel associates with a stranger's certain

Quelle: (Chase 1995, p. 31; Atika 1999, p. 193; Sacks 1992, vol. II, pp. 248; Dyer & Keller-Cohen 2001, p. 284; Migliore 1993, p. 354). In any case, to relate one's experience to someone is not just emptying out the content of one's experience to someone in that outside territory – the trader must be a stranger, since nobody else has a chance to make a living.
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head but organizing a tale that is told to a specific recipient by an authorized narrator. It is not only the entitlement of having experiences that contains an aspect of social order but also the specific packaging of these experiences. As Harvey Sakai carefully pointed out, experiences may be seen as "extraordinarily carefully regulated sorts of things" (Sacks, 1992, vol. II, p. 13).

The position of expatriates as strangers brings a certain quality to their stories and storytelling. These are not only formed in the context of social particularities of being an expatriate but also within the framework of transnational practices (Herzfeld, 1997). Experiences of others are shaped and influenced by these practices.

From some Swedish points of view, Poland is more or less regarded as having been rediscovered in the last ten years. Since the fall of communism, a wide range of political, economic and cultural connections have been established. One example is the project "Poland in Focus" that was arranged during 1999 by the Swedish government. A considerable part appears to be taking place in private arenas (e.g. in tourism and the labor market), trade and business fields.

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My focus is however not on business or economics as such but on wider sociological and social psychological problems. One background to these problems consists of the traffic of resources, people, and symbols that is taking place between Western and Eastern Europe (Sampson, 1999, p. 154, 159). Capital and experts are being transferred from West to East, bringing more and more industries being set up or restructured in Poland. The position of Westerners appears to be a significant example.

The empirical source of this report is the Swedes working and living in Poland. From some Swedish points of view, Poland is more or less regarded as having been rediscovered in the last ten years. Since the fall of communism, a wide range of political, economic and cultural connections have been established. One example is the project "Poland in Focus" that was arranged during 1999 by the Swedish government. A considerable part appears to be taking place in private arenas (e.g. in tourism and the labor market), trade and business fields.

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The empirical source of this report is the Swedes working and living in Poland.
In this report I try to view stories and storytelling among Swedish expatriates in Poland as such sites for social tensions and ambivalences. My purpose is to describe and interpret some narrative patterns and episodes among these expatriates and to explore the relation of objects and events (cf. Katz 1990, p. 76-77). Since these expatriates are from a qualitative perspective (cf. Katz 1990, p. 76-77) it may be possible to identify interests in narrative individuality. How individual narratives relate themselves to the expatriates' experiences in Poland will be described as an effort in terms of James A. Hassen and Janet F. Guba 1994, p. 147: a way to be seen as regenerating. Especially when the expatriates are talking about problematic experiences in Poland they use narratives to describe the others' actions and their interpretation and position themselves in relation to them.

Secondly, I analyse arrival stories, that is, stories about how the expatriates arrived in Poland in the first place and the circumstances surrounding this arrival. These stories are described in terms of meaning in general (cf. Holstein & Gubrium 1994, p. 5). Narrators do not just tell stories in straightforward ways. They speed them up or slow them down, they fill them with comments and corrections, they use other voices, they point at connections, and so on. Each story presents several connections in its context, many events and stories themselves indicate points of departure and importance in their respective contexts, and the same events and stories are significant in themselves. In addition, my analysis is characterized by a way of viewing stories and storytelling as depictions of a social world and its narrative characteristics and not as isolated and subjective phenomena. The analyses are guided by symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology and narrative analysis. At some interpretive level, Michael Balfour's ideas on narrative analysis and language and narrative discourse are functioning as organizing frameworks. The interviews and stories are viewed within a frame of collaboration between these actors (Hassen & Guba 1997, p. 153; Guba & Lincoln 1994, p. 118; Zimmerman & Pollner 1974, p. 82; 102). To understand this, the expatriates' stories need to be seen as describing their actions and experiences as presented by the expatriates themselves. Each story presents several connections in its context, many events and stories themselves indicate points of departure and importance in their respective contexts, and the same events and stories are significant in themselves. In addition, my analysis is characterized by a way of viewing stories and storytelling as depictions of a social world and its narrative characteristics and not as isolated and subjective phenomena.
Methodological Remarks

Since some reflections on the concrete interview situations are incorporated in the analysis I do not include a separate section on methodology in this report. Some overall remarks may be found below. The interviews took place in Poland (Warsaw and Gdansk) and in Sweden (southern part). Some of the interviewees were contacted through a club for Swedish expatriates in Poland, others were recommended by the Centre for European Studies at Lund University. Besides

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Methodological Remarks

On the other hand, this perspective also has advantages. It may make some interactional basis of the production of opinions more subtle phenomena and paradoxes, among them my influence as interviewer, that otherwise might be overlooked.

At a more general level, additional methodological circumstances ought to be mentioned. My perspective (as all perspectives) illuminates some aspects but ignores others. There is, of course, no choice to point out these other perspectives. There is, of course, no choice to point out these other perspectives. However, one cannot avoid the fact that the importance of such aspects is not understood as a neglect of the importance of such aspects.

The interview evolved in two major stages, and two professionals from the research team were involved in the analysis. The first stage involved coding and categorizing the interviews, which were then further analyzed

In conclusion, the interviews were carried out with two main interviewers who are

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Arrival stories: regenerating an expatriate self

In the latter study, David M. Engel labels these stories "origin stories," stories that transcend time and reorganise the earliest and most basic set of oppositions in an event. Retelling such stories may not only clarify the fundamental meanings of crucial events but also give rise to narratives that provide a self-diagnosis and that the parents' insights have ultimately triumphed over medical professionals (Engel 1993, p. 821). In this chapter, I try to analyse and interpret various arrival stories among Swedish expatriates in Poland, focusing on the narrative compositions and their linkages to the narrator's self.

The expatriates' arrivals may be seen as beginnings in several senses: a new job or a new assignment may have been accepted, a new company might be started, a new lifestyle adopted, or new perceptions and aspirations develop. Questions or visions about one's future may be put forward, as well as doubts or expectations.

Where the heck have we ended up?

My first example is an extensive one and may to some degree be seen as a complex model for arrival stories, filled with suspense. Speaking to a Swedish small entrepreneur, here called Jonathan, I ask if he remembers the first time he came to Poland:

Yes, I remember that. And we were there. We were there. We drove down to Térd, yes, that’s where we were. Yes, we drove down to Térd, yes. And there, there, there, there, there, there, there. And then we came down from Stockholm, then we drove.

The expatriates' origin stories: a statement of a rather exact time of arrival, a number of regional and cultural differences, a number of regional and cultural characteristics, a number of regional and cultural differences, a number of regional and cultural differences.
Jonathan explains his own conclusions at the time of his first arrival:

"Then coming down, meeting this terrible road and this boring landscape, the first you do, so you get yourself a little ..., I thought that 'if it's looking like this, if they cannot build roads, if they cannot build houses, can they really supply these things on time?'.

"These things" refers to the products that Jonathan and his colleagues were planning to buy in Poland. Jonathan is thus not only presenting a way to construct knowledge about people's abilities out of his impressions of roads and houses, he is also presenting an excuse for doing this. This excuse is achieved partly by a comment on the difficulty of avoiding jumping to conclusions, partly by a quotation. Jonathan is doing this to avoid reading his prejudice into the report – the former Jonathan – whose prejudices are fit for use in the perspective of the present Jonathan – that is the narrator.

In another part of our conversation Jonathan reconnects to this feature of his origin story and illuminates his changed attitude:

"But then you're coming down, meeting the people and then you notice that, well, they're not different from us. They've got ..., ((in Sweden)), it's looks almost as rotten there ((in Poland)) there are a few more ((such holes)).

Jonathan tries to moderate the significance of his initial impressions and even out the absolute differences between his stereotypes, and introduces a distinction between other Swedes. Jonathan says:

"And also here in Sweden, I've got the impression that people consider Poles and Poland, it's like, well 'they're gathering strawberries'.

And they're people that are coming here in the summer, trying to get money for themselves and stealing and messing around, so that is, so to speak, the image that I had of Poland before…"
Gdynia, you’re driving through an industrial area and it simply looks damn boring, you know, there—there you got this image ‘oh, what kind of country is this?’. And I remember we arrived at this... and I had, and Simon, had—had been offered. And it was completely unbelievable, how it looked, I thought that this won’t ever be fixed. And when we had, when we were going to inaugurate the office one month later, I think it was six or eight weeks or something, I thought... transform this into something we’re interested in’. But it did work and eh eh we’re still there in these premises.

By mentioning other Swedes’ “image” of Poland and suggesting a distance from this image as a point of departure (lines 17-18), Paul retells his hesitation and pessimistic conviction (lines 19-20). The fact that everything did work out is Paul’s point so far (line 19). He is not only puncturing his own historical conclusions, he is also implying another recurrent feature of the expatriates’ origin stories: the struggle to carry out your work and business ideas despite all obstacles.

Many elements in Paul’s depiction are similar to Jonathan’s story above. Paul’s question, “oh, what kind of country is this?” (lines 11-12) has for instance quite the same rhetorical function as Jonathan’s. Still, the two stories are made into an object for the present narrator, an object to wonder at, perhaps regret and mock or merely investigate.

Furthermore, the expatriates’ origin stories tend to organize certain biographical and societal developments into a coherent entity, emphasizing that the most important things in Poland actually happened in the 1990s. Further on in my interview with Paul, when he returns to his origin story, this tendency becomes evident:

...during these years that I’ve been involved since—, the first time I went down there was in the beginning of 1994, a... eh the quality of food was like, when you were going out to eat, it was always, all the menus in Polish, it was like— and now it’s like any tourist country at all. I would say that supplies in the shops in Poland are better than in Sweden. There... you may enter shops where they cannot speak anything but Polish and really don’t welcome you but—but there has been an enormous change. People are realising ‘if I don’t do a good job towards a customer who walks right in then I probably cannot keep my job’, you know. That, that has, the mentality, the treatment of people when you’re entering as—as a Swede has changed very much, I think.

Enthusiastic over the recent changes in Poland, Paul here reconnects to his origin story (line 5) and uses it like a storyteller’s spring-board: it takes him down to lift him up even higher. The contrast between his first impressions (lines 5-8) and the contemporary situation is then underlined: “and now it’s like any tourist country you want” (lines 8-9). According to Paul, the treatment of customers is getting better (lines 14-16) and the choice of goods in Polish shops is better than in Sweden.

Contrary to the perspectives of the conventional, simplified versions of the conventional Swedish images of Poland (I am not prejudiced), to some extent there really is a reality behind them (I am a realist), and I am not the one who are going to pretend the opposite (I am not a hypocrite). A safe way to ventilate this is to quote yourself as you were. But not a single story, not a single line, not a single paragraph can be made into an object for the present narrator, an object to wonder at, perhaps regret or mock or merely investigate.
The co-existence of a perception change and a change in what is being perceived in the expatriates’ origin stories has been a consequence of a selective attitude and a consequence of objective facts. Below I ask Frank, a leader of a project in a big Swedish company in Poland, if he remembers his first visit in Poland:

Frank: Yes, I remember that and at that time I had, I hadn’t signed the contract or anything, then I went down and met some people and formed an opinion before I signed the contract. Then I went there in the winter. There are a lot of parks, but during the winter they aren’t particularly beautiful... That was winter. It was very cold and it was raining before then and it was foggy. It meant no one could see anything. I thought it was terrible. It was awful.

David: Yes, you know... I thought it was terrible. It was awful...

Frank: Yes, I remember that and at that time I had a positive working spirit. The co-existence of a perception change and a change in what is being perceived in the expatriates’ origin stories is often a consequence of a selective attitude and a consequence of objective facts. The co-existence of a perception change and a change in what is being perceived in the expatriates’ origin stories has been a consequence of a selective attitude and a consequence of objective facts. Below I ask Frank, a leader of a project in a big Swedish company in Poland, if he remembers his first visit in Poland:

Frank: Yes, I remember that and at that time I had, I hadn’t signed the contract or anything, then I went down and met some people and formed an opinion before I signed the contract. Then I went...
In this arrival story, Frank is highlighting the effects of climate and weather—the fog, the temperature, the grey daylight, the leafless trees—in his effort to make his initially bad impressions of Poland understandable and accountable. These seemingly unquestionable facts are used together with an aesthetic statement—"it isn't a beautiful city, Warsaw" (lines 9-10)—to make a sort of caricature of the conventional Swedish or Western image of Poland. His evaluation is laconic: "I thought it was..." he may consider the story too good to be true. Poland was, so to speak, scrutinized during the worst possible conditions.

Despite the detailed and evocative descriptions, Frank's explanations make it clear that he is telling his story entirely from his present position. When he says "I mean, no place looks nice..." he adds that his story is based on direct, authentic information. This is also made obvious when Frank later reassures me that his image of Poland has "completely" changed (line 16), a change that is symbolized by colours versus greyness. The reported social climate is the story's major counterbalance: "a very good atmosphere down there, a very positive working spirit, working climate" (lines 12-13). This is said to have affected Frank in a rational reason for accepting the job and signing the contract, in spite of his terrible view on arrival in Warsaw.

As a whole, Frank's arrival story may illustrate the significance of nuances and self-corrections in the narrator's performance (laughs and reflexive comments) as well as the significance of context. A condensed or concentrated version, even "Frank (altered version):"...I went down, it was a dark, grey day in January. It—it was terrible. It was awful. It was terribly cold and it was ten degrees below zero and it was foggy. It was very grey. It isn't a beautiful city, Warsaw, it's terrible...

Alone with your brief-case

Tommy occurs a few years ago. He started a fresh place to live in, which is slightly different than his working place in the United States, in the middle of the desert. He does not say much about his experience. "I wasn't ready, I wasn't equipped. It was different. I can't adapt in a desert climate." He prefers to live where there are more possibilities to change and grow. Tommy's version of his arrival in Poland has some dark strains (a description of strange, vast buildings). However, he also mentions a relief-effect, making his biographical accomplishment seem more achievable.

Although Frank's version of his arrival in Poland is sometimes humorous, Tommy's version is more serious. Frank's narrative is more focused on the physical environment, while Tommy's is more about the social and cultural context. This contrast illustrates the importance of context in understanding different perspectives on the same event.
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Even more astonishing and at the same time embedding it into a societal development: the increase in cars with catalytic converters. The dark strains are thus integrated into his positive feelings, co-producing the exciting sense of taking a certain risk or confronting a danger.

Coming to Poland “alone with your brief-case and trying to do something and run a business” (lines 2-3) seems to be Tommy’s primary rhetorical picture of his excitement, as if he wanted to … self, symbolized by a description of perhaps the most basic initial position for people in his line of business.

Using the origin story: Turning Poland up to date

Arrival stories may also be included in other pictures that the expatriates present. Sometimes they are just briefly included as personal anecdotes in a story. The expatriate describes how things have changed since the arrival of the expatriate.

…my mother has been here on a visit for a couple of days now and yesterday…”

Talking about spectacular changes in Poland, Maria so to speak relies on her mother to achieve a trustworthy description. The mother seems to be regarded as a cultural witness, presumably “God I hated it” is recalled, widely divergent if compared to her present judgement “they are more modern here”.

The arrival story is thus helpful in making a sharp change in Maria’s storytelling distinguishable and comprehensible. In this context, it seems to be functioning as a narrative pillar or a reference point that enables the speaker to show the changes that have taken place since the arrival of the expatriate.

Speeding up the story: A reluctant way of telling

Not all interviewees are telling their origin stories freely and without hesitation. Some episodes in my material even seem to have been abbreviated or shortened. In such cases, the interviewee may not be able to tell the whole story, or may not want to tell the whole story at once.

David: Do you remember that, how it was?

Chris: In ’95 I came to Poland for the first time in January, you know.

David: …when you came to Poland for the first time, was it that time, was it that time?

David: …even more astonishing and at the same time embedding it into a societal development: the increase in cars with catalytic converters. The dark strains are thus integrated into his positive feelings, co-producing the exciting sense of taking a certain risk or confronting a danger.

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Chris: Yes, terrible.

David: Could you tell [short laugh].

Chris: No, it was like grey and dark and snowy and cold and there weren't any shops and ( ) and so on, everything has happened since then you know. And then you may say, but we decided to do it anyway, we went there together, and we decided in the car that we will go in for it. Then we got abroad and then we decided to do it. We decided to go to Poland. We decided to go to Poland.

David: That was the starting-shot, that you wanted to get abroad? Where?

Chris: You know, that was the starting-shot, that you wanted to get abroad? Where?

Looking at the content of the origins stories, Chris' characterization of the expatriates' origin stories is characterized by the historical confirmation of the conventional image. Chris' response to the question of whether he remembers his arrival is immediate and concise, with a hint of a laugh. Chris' hesitation and brevity display what Rogers et al. (1999) call the language of smokescreens and evasions. Chris' expression "and so on" seems to be held up like a sign saying: the rest of the story is in here but I do not bother to expand it. There may of course be a broad range of motives for Chris to act like this, most of them beyond my knowledge. His arrival may for instance be associated with a shock or a trauma that he does not want to touch upon in the interview. He may also be ashamed of his initial impressions regarding Poland and the possibility to relate them directly to the conventional image of Poland is avoided. A complete arrival story is avoided, and another subject elicited. Chris' hesitance and brevity display what Rogers et al. (1999) call the language of smokescreens and evasions.

Engel even suggests that stories of this kind constitute a form of myth making in everyday life. As myths, they reflect dominant ideologies and influence human experiences. According to David M. Engel, an origin story deals with how something was produced or began to be. It transcends historical time and connects the past with the present. An origin story reflects our understanding of the world and illuminates our identity. It is a story that is central to our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. An origin story can be used to reflect on the past and to shape our understanding of the present. Engel's suggestion is that stories of this kind constitute a form of myth making in everyday life. As myths, they reflect dominant ideologies and influence human experiences. According to Engel, an origin story deals with how something was produced or began to be. It transcends historical time and connects the past with the present. An origin story reflects our understanding of the world and illuminates our identity. It is a story that is central to our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. An origin story can be used to reflect on the past and to shape our understanding of the present.
As has already been indicated, parts of Engel’s conceptual framework may be useful when the expatriates’ arrival stories are to be interpreted. Yet details in such an interpretation remain unclear. If the expatriates’ selves are regenerated in and through the stories, then how is this regeneration accomplished? What, more specifically, do the interviewees do when they tell arrival stories? In order to discuss these questions I review some passages in the above excerpts, using some of Mikhail Bakhtin’s key concepts. Certain aspects in the above analyses are addressed once again. This interpretation is therefore not a restatement but a re-reading, in the spirit of Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia. The language of a novel is the system of its “languages”; the narrator’s, the characters’, the persons’ those characters refer to, and so on. Therefore, a novel permits a multiplicity of voices and a wide variety of characters’ perspectives, with their links and interrelationships (Ibid., p. 267). This is, in essence, the basis for what Bakhtin means by his term “heteroglossia.” It is therefore not merely a literary phenomenon but a social and extra-literary phenomenon. The basic heteroglossia is in fact social and extra-literary, and works as a prerequisite for a novel’s specificity. Bakhtin emphasizes that the basic heteroglossia is a prerequisite for the novel’s specificity. This particular artistic reworking is undoubtedly a key element here too (Ibid., p. 334). Yet some kind of creative reworking is undoubtedly taking place here too (Ibid., p. 335).

If Bakhtin’s perspective is taken into consideration, a certain collection of “dialogues” may be identified in the expatriates’ arrival stories. The most fundamental one is obvious: the dialogue between intertext and intertextual, between the actual story and the narration. The second and third dialogues are more subtle. They involve different types of utterances or “languages” that are verbally interconnected. In additional, a third dialogue may be identified: the dialogue between intertextual and intertextual, between the actual story and the narrative. The fourth dialogue involves the interviewee himself, his own voice and his own thoughts. The fifth dialogue involves the reader, his own voice and his own thoughts. The sixth dialogue involves the reader and the interviewee, their own voices and their own thoughts.

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It isn’t a beautiful city, Warsaw. There are parts that are beautiful but as a whole it’s terrible… (Frank).

…it felt strange with these vast buildings and things like that…(Tommy). …God I hated it. I thought that it was terrible. It was so grey and appalling and people looked sad and depressed and terrible clothes… (Maria).

…it was like grey and dark and snowy and cold and there weren’t any shops… (Chris).

Taken out of their conversational contexts, these utterances all seem to convey feelings of something strange or odd, as if the interviewees wanted to say: I was not used to Poland and did not like it. …in themselves seem to be critical toward the perceived Poland. The scenery and the surroundings are somehow dismissed.

Further, the arrival stories seem to contain utterances that verify some kind of positive surprise or sudden change. Some of these utterances appear to reconnect to the utterances above in a polemic or reversed way:

I thought ‘this will never work, you cannot transform this into something we’re interested in’. But it did work and eh eh we’re still there in these premises. (Paul).

But then, when I met some colleagues, future colleagues, then you got a completely different image (…) it has completely changed, you know, it has become much less grey [laugh] and more colourful, definitely. (Frank).

…and then I thought, uh, I guess it’s possible, you know, they did something… (Jonathan).

…we said that ‘this is unbelievable’, if you look at- at how people are dressed in restaurants, you know, good lord, they are more modern here…(Maria).

Utterances such as these may be looked upon as involved in a dialogue with the former utterances. They relativise and relativise impressions that were not completely wrong, they at least were not equal to the whole truth, now listen to what happened…

Some of the impressions that people consider important and that we might consider important:

Here in Sweden, I’ve got the impression that people consider Poles and Poland, it’s like, well ‘they’re gathering strawberries’. And they’re people that are coming here in the summer, trying to get money for themselves and stealing and messing around… (Jonathan).

As a Swede today (…) that certainly it’s a big country and the economy’s growing well but just this thing that it’s grey and boring and dirty and- and not many goods in the shops… (Paul).

I had the same image of Poland as everybody else, you know. (Chris).

Such utterances, once again taken out of their conversational contexts, dismiss other Swedes’ utterances that at least somehow evaluate (or indicate an evaluation of) Poland, Poles or “the Swedes themselves.” Further, the interviewees seem to convey a distinction, as if they wanted to say: I am not like other Swedes in relation to Poland.

This, however, does not mean that they want to present themselves as opposite in relation to “other Swedes”. In that case, the interviewees would have been unequivocally celebrating Poland from the very beginning. The very combination with the first type of utterances allows for a more nuanced and differentiated presentation of Poland.

Other Swedes’ utterances on Poland, which are considered inferior, appalling or indifferent, are used to relativise these impressions, to relativise the impression of Poland, both in the sense of relativising the interviewees own impressions. The impression of Poland that the interviewees bring to the conversation is only a fraction of the impression that other Swedes bring to the conversation, and these other impressions are used to relativise the impression of Poland that the interviewees bring to the conversation. This relativisation is done not only to relativise the impression of Poland itself, but also to relativise the impression of other Swedes, the impression they bring to the conversation, and their attitude toward Poland.
3 Wrestling with others' voices: Resisting the "mentality"

References and quotations of others are common devices in storytelling, not only when intercultural topics are brought into play but in a wide range of speaking activities in general. To invite others' voices and explicitly link one's speech to others' appears to be fundamental components in human narrating. Regardless of the particularities of such invitations and links – irony, mockery and polemic are just as dependent on others' words as agreement, embracing and praise – they seem to be intrinsic parts of verbalizing and acting out social relations.
Presumably this is reflecting the social character of man's becoming. According to George Herbert Mead (1934/1967), taking into one's conduct the attitudes of others, especially in and through language, is prerequisite for the appearance of a self. It is by employing others' attitudes to oneself, by using one's speech as a form of 'role-taking' (p. 337). Another word is the subject of conversation and interpretation, discussion, evaluation, referral, further developments and so on (Ibid.; cf. Billig 1987/1996, p. 270-276).

We can go so far as to say that in real life people talk most of all about what others talk about – they transmit, recall, weigh and pass judgment on other people's words, opinions, actions, attitudes and judgments, and use other people's words, opinions, actions, attitudes and judgments as a reference. At every step one meets a 'quotation' or a 'reference'... (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 338). By "quotation" and "reference", Bakhtin is however not talking about literal quotations or authentic references but quotations and references that first and foremost are presented or understood as such, as the speech of another, no matter how accurately transmitted (Ibid., p. 339).

Further, even if a speaker were actually to present a correct quotation, the act of quoting in itself transforms what is being said. Transmitted words are always subject to changes. Even the most serious utterance may for instance, if subjects and contexts change, turn into a different form. The significance of reciting in everyday speech may be intensified as social life differentiates. The importance of attaching one's own words to another's increases as the importance of the very words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that are being quoted. This is one of Mikhail Bakhtin's central points. He argues that the transmission and interpretation of human communication (Bakhtin 1981/2000) and the very act of quoting in itself transforms what is being said. Transmitted words are always subject to changes. Even the most serious utterance may for instance, if subjects and contexts change, turn into a different form.

The latter aspect is one of my themes in this chapter. When Swedish expatriates in Poland tell stories about their work and everyday life, they do so in a way that is full of other people's words. Citations of other people's words are presented as separate voices (Ibid., p. 105). The very act of appropriating another's word may thus loosen its control. In this manner the narrator is animating and emphasizing significant parts of his or her narrative. Still these inserted words do not always fit into the accounts in a completely smooth way. Inserted rejoinders may not always fall into the accounts in the same way as cited quotations. They may also contain such a positioning as the other is taken into account in and through citations. To listen carefully to citations may therefore make audible the narrator's struggle, no matter how accurately or proficently such a positioning as the other is taken into account in and through citations. To listen carefully to citations may therefore make audible the narrator's struggle, no matter how accurately or proficently. Mimicry is sometimes identified as a vital way in which people relate to so-called 'late modern discourses', a way that may end up throwing the discourse mimicked into question (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999, p. 129). The very act of appropriating another's word may thus loosen its control. In this manner the narrator is animating and emphasizing significant parts of his or her narrative. Still these inserted words do not always fall into the accounts in a completely smooth way. Inserted rejoinders may not always fit into the accounts in the same way as cited quotations. They may also contain such a positioning as the other is taken into account in and through citations. To listen carefully to citations may therefore make audible the narrator's struggle, no matter how accurately or proficently. Mimicry is sometimes identified as a vital way in which people relate to so-called 'late modern discourses', a way that may end up throwing the discourse mimicked into question (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999, p. 129).
We're not sufficiently clear

As mentioned above, the expatriates' storytelling include a number of citations and voices that display a range of nuances and implications that are not always being explicitly stated. Citations ... each other well) to tell me about their specific work. After a while, they started to talk about their jobs in general.

John: …I think one of the biggest problems is that we’re a bit soft. So that, a classical example is that if you’re in a meeting, some Swedes and some Poles, so, yeah, one finishes the meeting saying ... (NO VOICE CHANGE) ‘one could do like that’ and then we’ll do so, you know. So that they are used to a completely different—

Larry: —We’re not sufficiently clear.

John: No.

Larry: We don’t have that authoritative, dictatorial way of giving instructions, you know. Like (VOICE 4) ‘you’ll do that, you’ll do that, that must be ready tomorrow, that must be ready this … is not like they’re taking care of it, (NO VOICE CHANGE) ‘we’ll do it as fast as possible’ and then they come back with it< they don’t do that. If you ask them after two days (VOICE 5) ‘eh what happened to that?’. (VOICE 6) ‘Well, you didn’t say it should be finished today’.

John: No, it’s an endless (process).

Larry: [laugh]

John: J

Larry: —We’re not sufficiently clear.

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When Larry is putting forward the next citation, he is not trying to illustrate how Swedes behave but how they do not behave. His speech becomes louder, making a caricature of a person giving orders (VOICE 4):

Larry: —We’re not sufficiently clear.

They started to talk about their jobs in General...
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John's and Larry's discussion about working together, without John's and Larry's usual interruptions and competitions, can be seen as a way to portray their special wisdom (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 403-404). Seen in this light, also the initial recitation of the Swedes ('one could do like that or what do you think?') acquire a shade of foolishness. It portrays the Swedes' lack of awareness of the different social patterns, which makes it difficult for them to understand how differently we function, especially when they come here and have no experience. This is also seen in their behavior towards the Swedes, who are often considered too effective and too serious. This interaction allows the narrators to teach a narrative's special wisdom.

Larry's recited question 'eh what happened to that?' is put in a slightly critical way (VOICE 5), while the Poles' answer has the tone of somebody being baffled, somebody who is too surprised: 'Well, you didn't say it should be finished today' (VOICE 6). This animation could be seen as a way to portray stupidity. In this context, a person who says 'well, you didn't say it should be finished today' discloses the fact that he or she has not understood that the Swedes actually wanted it to be finished today (or earlier), even if they did not say so explicitly. And why did the Swedes not say so explicitly? Larry's suggestion is clear. They do not want to become living caricatures of persons who give orders.

Although this avoidance could be seen as quite the same argument as John's statement "we're a bit soft" and Larry's "we're not sufficiently clear", it implies a different evaluation. Whereas it suggests a lack of intelligence, Larry's statement implies a different attitude. This interaction shows how the narrators are able to portray their special wisdom.

And there we go with the backpack again.

Larry: And there we go with the backpack again.

John: Yeah.

David: Yeah.

Larry: But so, in that case—

David: —[Laughter] —But what do you do then, do you just go on your way?

Larry: —Yes.

John: —That is really I think the big difference between Poles—

Larry: —Yeah, that is perhaps the most difficult thing too, when you're coming here and you're totally new and you don't have any experience, that is to understand how differently we function, you know, to be able to function together. They also think that, you know, the Poles, they often think that we Swedes are very dry and kind of, entirely too effective, we, if you go, come to the work in the morning, you know, or if you meet somebody then you say, you know, we just say hello actually and how are you.

John: Yeah, at best—

Larry: —At best, you know.

David: Aha, yeah, yeah.

Larry: The Poles, they—They can start talking for fifteen, twenty minutes, you know about [laugh] what they did yesterday, I mean they've got a different social pattern.

John: And when people on vacation for a week, then they expect you to tell about that. We don't do that, you know. Larry has ( ).

Larry: But so, in that case—

David: —[Laughter] —But what do you do then, like, do you adjust yourself so that you become a bit, or you ( ) on your side?—

Larry: —A bit, a bit.

John: Yeah, we're trying to adjust ourselves eh at our best, they get used to us being that way, it's not like we're being stuck-up or something like that, but C. ((John's and Larry's company)) is a bit boring.

Larry: Yes.

John: We don't talk so much with each other and so on.
If you’re here, there is a difference.

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pret the quotations in the first excerpt and their implications. Now, the Poles are not portrayed as stupid, just different. Utterances such as “to understand how differently we function” (Larry), “we do things differently” (Kate), “and we never say” (Kate) indicate that they view themselves as understanding actors; perceptive, sensitive, and able to discuss the topic in an elaborate way. The speakers’ mutual role taking probably belongs to this portrayal. The conversation between John and Larry is a sample of consensus.

Consequently, the quotations and the following discussion could be interpreted as the speakers’ collaborative striving towards understanding others as well as each other. Quotations such as “you say, they say, we say, they think, we think, we never say, they never say.” From their perspective, John and Larry take several relevant roles, not only the role of the others and the roles of themselves, but also roles that others do not play as well as roles that they themselves do not play. These latter, so to speak, virtual roles, help the speakers to define the roles they find real.

Kate’s recited instructions (VOICE 7 and VOICE 8) are related in a calmly explanatory manner, just slightly more distinctly articulated than the surrounding speech. Despite their substantial role in a (presumably non-existent) order-giving Swede above, these citations seem to be shaped in a way that underlines how normal and sensible such instructions are to be seen. The last citation is particularly clear in this sense. Although it could have been uttered quite rudely – ‘do that, call that person and say this’ – it is not accompanied by any voice change, just signalled with the words “you say”. In this manner, Kate’s citations do not illustrate her statement that Poles are “damaged by communism”. Instead they do this indirectly, by illustrating instructions plausibly given to and correctly understood by a Swede. Kate’s recited instructions (VOICE 7 and VOICE 8) are cited a child.

Speaking to a child

To depict relations between oneself and others using citations may not only be integrated in a collaborative project to comprehend these relations, citations may also be used when a more...
and that's not because they're stupid, it's just because they've got a completely different background you know. // Or perhaps not as, or, one has to be extremely over-explicit, I think, tell them that (NO VOICE CHANGE) 'well, if you don't get hold of them you'll have to do this instead'. They're simply used to be controlled, I think.

David: Mm, mm, yeah. And eh, is there any, if one could get any example (…) first time you came to think about this or when you, when it's clear in some way?

Kate: Yeah, it's like, one never thinks in alternatives. It is, if I say that I want to get something delivered at some point in time >then they may just call and say (VOICE 9) 'it won't work!'. (VOICE 10) 'No, no, but everything is possible' you'll have to say then, you know. (VOICE 11) 'But our truck doesn't go that day'. (VOICE 12) 'But you could rent another truck instead, you know'. (VOICE 13) 'Well, well, okay, yeah but in that case we'll do it then, then it'll work'. (…) You can't presume that things just happen, you have to check it and check it, sometimes it felt like you didn't do anything else, like you were running around checking (VOICE 14)'now have you done that, have you done that?'.

Kate's direction is met by a quoted protest ('it won't work!', VOICE 9), uttered in a firmly and slightly hysterical way. This is contrasted with Kate's citation of herself ('no, no, but everything is possible', VOICE 10) in a calm and more slow voice, also provided with a taste of repetition or phrasing (it is followed by "…you'll have to say then"). The continuation of the Polish protest – 'but our truck doesn't go that day' (VOICE 11) – has a tone that is similar to 'it won't work!' whereas Kate's staged answer is again calm and explanatory. This answer ('but you could rent another truck instead, you know', VOICE 12) actually seems to be uttered as a basic reminder, as a fundamental and self-evident truth that nonetheless has to be made explicit. ...

Being tough, teaching responsibility, reminding oneself...

The last quotation is the most interesting in this excerpt, especially if it is compared to the first one. Both are linked to Kate's depiction of herself, but whereas the first one is uttered in a normalizing and conventional manner, the latter is said in a light and somewhat overly worried way (VOICE 14). To run around checking other people all the time – 'now have you done that, have you done that?' – is...

This element was not present when Kate began to discuss the differences she detects between Swedes and Poles. It came in conjunction with and throughout her citations. These citations in other words seem to enable Kate to reflect on as well as evaluate others’ and her own behaviour, not only in favour of herself but also in implicit polemics with herself.

Kate’s self-criticism is however sealed in her complaining depiction as a whole. It is not shaped as an explicit criticism, raised in a straightforward way. Instead it has attained a somewhat tragic...

Besides assessing responsibility, responsibility and defense, a constructed association between Poles and childishness may...

A constructed association between Poles and childishness may...

Being tough, teaching responsibility, reminding oneself...
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Kate: … here (in Sweden) you can be rather relaxed but there (in Poland) you’ve got to be rather tough. They take every chance they get to run away but it’s—

David: —How, I mean, like how? I mean, could they for instance—

Kate: —Well, they can, they can, the first day they can ask (NO VOICE CHANGE) ‘I have, I need to get something done, I need to go an hour earlier’. (VOICE 15) ‘Sure, of course you can do that’ … I have to do my job, while it is happening that, well, now I speak about those people I’ve seen and worked with, you know. They don’t have the same feeling here, instead they can come (VOICE 16) ‘well, okay, it worked this day, then I’ll ask tomorrow too’. So you’re—

David: —Whereas here in Sweden it would be like, how?

Kate: Well, then I know, if somebody came asking me here (NO VOICE CHANGE) ‘can I go?’ (NO VOICE CHANGE) ‘yes, of course you can’ because I know that they’re doing their job anyway, or … on, and there, I don’t think that the Swede is asking three days in a row. But they do, which is, well …

David: Mm, what do you mean, what do you mean, what do you mean, as a manager?

Kate: —No, that you never have to do, never.

When Kate is staging her answer to the correspondingly staged Polish question her voice is high and light (VOICE 15), conveying a nice attitude. This answer contains two instances of something self-evident and natural. Sure, of course you can ask on the first day, they have to do their work, while, still, the Poles are in other words not only depicted as abusing trust, they are also portrayed as having fun while doing it. Their manner of playing a double game is pointed out as a consciously irresponsible lack of understanding whereas Kate is portrayed as serious and honest. Her laugh may be looked upon as expressing an awareness of the coexistence of these contradictory frames (cf. Katz 1999, p. 92).

If we turn to the last phase of our conversation, when Kate is citing the Poles’ reaction to her nice attitude her voice is slightly laughing. This citation does not illustrate what the Poles say but what they think: ‘well, it worked this day, then I’ll ask tomorrow too’ (VOICE 16). The Poles are thus portrayed as sharing in and through their Polish colleagues’ strategy in which the situation is portrayed as a routinized and shared reminder. Subsequently, when Kate is citing the Poles’ reaction to her nice attitude her voice is high and light (VOICE 15), conveying a nice attitude. This answer contains two instances of something self-evident and natural. Sure, of course you can ask on the first day, they have to do their work, while, still, the Poles are in other words not only depicted as abusing trust, they are also portrayed as having fun while doing it. Their manner of playing a double game is pointed out as a consciously irresponsible lack of understanding whereas Kate is portrayed as serious and honest. Her laugh may be looked upon as expressing an awareness of the coexistence of these contradictory frames (cf. Katz 1999, p. 92).

Kate: —Well, it was to become over-explicit. We saw a rather amusing scene. The portraits, the naïveté and thoughtlessness. This portrayed is incorporated into the animated drama, the Poles are cheating. Kate is being cheated, Kate’s colleague Frank, who is working as a leader of a project, says much the same as her remarks above. The excerpt below is from a passage in which Frank is talking about how he has to change his conduct when working in Poland:

Frank is using a quotation but does not alter his voice. Although his citation is treated as merely a detail, the explicit moral of Frank’s story is not about a quotation and its message seems rather commonplace; despite its content, it is not an animated voice. Or, rather, it is just reporting, thereby imitating himself as an ordinary person. Such a frame makes the details mean to speak, that is, in the meaning of the word, it becomes more specific, it could be made — or not — in any different ways, actually …

Revealing the “mentality”: An ambiguous need

As I have tried to show above, the efforts by the expatriates to comprehend others’ and their own acting and thinking may be shaped in and through citations, as well as the expatriates’ efforts to comprehend have they themselves, and others, think about others. Besides this, citations may also be used when speakers strive to comprehend how others think about what knowledge

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one should have about others' thinking. In this particular context, the latter is sometimes explicitly talked about as knowledge about people's "mentality" (cf. Herzfeld 1997, p. 78-79). In my … for many years and who speaks both Swedish and Polish. In the excerpt below I ask him what kind of help she offers:

Yeah, translation and telling me how their mentality actually works for me who doesn't understand certain things (NO VOICE CHANGE) 'how the hell could one do it this way?'. (VOICE 17) 'Well, it's because one thinks so and so'. The answer from the source is therefore 'the mentality is so and so'. Peter is describing the woman's help with a cited question and a cited answer. The fact that the question is uttered … local authorities have been accusing him of tax evasion (a false accusation, according to him). The question 'how the hell could one do it this way?' may therefore be seen as thoroughly integrated in Peter's narrative. For him, this question needs no animation that distinguishes it from the rest of his speech, it is perfectly regular and motivated within this speech. Such an interpretation may even make it hard to see this question as a citation. The only thing that distinguishes it from the rest seems to be … – a Pole, a Swede, anyone. In this way, it is a rhetorical question, or maybe a rhetorical complaint.

The related answer, on the contrary, is not presented as Peter's answer but the Swedish-Polish woman's. Now Peter is changing tone, shaping his speech in a stuck-up, … of this answer (it does not end with anything particular but with the exchangeable unit "so and so") implies that there are several answers within this form, there is perhaps one answer for each of Peter's business troubles that he is bringing to the Swedish-Polish woman. Peter seems to suppose, end up with the woman's knowledge he still in this quotation displays an ambivalent attitude to this need. When Peter is asking 'how the hell could one do it this way?', the answer that he designates to the woman is for instance not something like 'well, that's a good question, I don't know' or 'you're right, I don't know, etc.', it describes the woman's help with a cited question and a cited answer. Such an interpretation seems to contribute to the unrefined and coarse manner of Peter's speech. One may wonder why this help is presented in the way it is, why Peter is asking and why the woman is giving help in this way.

Comprehending and controlling: Ideological encounters

...
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does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture; and it forgets nothing" (Bakhtin 1984/1995, P. 342). It is important to note that in the context interleaved system in a very concrete way. The expatriates are taking the words of another (as they conserve these words), uttering them "again", and arranging them at their pleasure. By using quotations the expatriates are assimilating others' words as if they were their own words and also their own words as if they were others'. As Bakhtin mentions in his work on the expatriates' use of quotations, assimilating others' words as if they were their own words creates a kinship with the expatriates' use of quotations in the expatriates' messages, displaying them in understandable ways and infusing them with fresh life. This is clear from the narrator's particular point of view. Poles are not understood in an abstract or isolated way, but in relation and opposition to Sweden. Working life in Poland is not understood as working life in general, but in relation to the expatriates' messages, assimilating others' words as if they were their own words creates a kinship with the expatriates' use of quotations in the expatriates' messages, displaying them in understandable ways and infusing them with fresh life. This is clear from the narrator's particular point of view. Poles are not understood in an abstract or isolated way, but in relation and opposition to Sweden. Working life in Poland is not understood as working life in general, but in relation to Sweden, and so forth. The expatriates' use of quotations in their messages creates a kinship with the expatriates' use of quotations in their messages, displaying them in understandable ways and infusing them with fresh life. This is clear from the narrator's particular point of view. Poles are not understood in an abstract or isolated way, but in relation and opposition to Sweden. Working life in Poland is not understood as working life in general, but...
4 Concluding remarks

To conclude this report, I would like to acknowledge two additional and possibly more focused interpretations of the above presented illustrations of narratives. The voices and their particularities, the counterpoints and twists, the voices do not simply, the point of view is not simply made clear, the narratives are not simply resolved. The expatriates are depicted in this respect as interior and exterior, frequent or infrequent, different and the same, their voices are not just displayed, they are also understood, interpreted, evaluated, and their narratives are not only presented but also discussed, commented on, and elaborated. The voices are not just heard, they are also seen, their presence is acknowledged, their stories are not just told, they are also analyzed, their situations are not just described, they are also evaluated.

Furthermore, the expatriates are depicted as multiple and diverse, their voices are not just heard, they are also understood, interpreted, evaluated, and their narratives are not only presented but also discussed, commented on, and elaborated. The voices are not just heard, they are also seen, their presence is acknowledged, their stories are not just told, they are also analyzed, their situations are not just described, they are also evaluated.

Concluding remarks

In this report, I have called attention to the role that people play in the narratives. The voices are not just heard, they are also understood, interpreted, evaluated, and their narratives are not only presented but also discussed, commented on, and elaborated. The voices are not just heard, they are also seen, their presence is acknowledged, their stories are not just told, they are also analyzed, their situations are not just described, they are also evaluated.

This story ends on a cautionary note and ties up loose ends (pp. 14–15).

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This story ends on a cautionary note and ties up loose ends (pp. 14–15).
In this paper, I try to indicate some further themes in my material that I have not explicitly touched upon yet. At the same time, some overall themes in the report are revisited.

The first point reconnects to my introductory comments on expatriates as strangers. Focusing on their storytelling, what kind of strangers could the expatriates be said to resemble?

The second point reconnects to several of my remarks on the links between the expatriates’ selves and the narrative components they use to depict experiences from Poland. This time, my point is: "... the colour grey. What does it mean when the expatriates repeatedly use this narrative ingredient when describing Poland?"

Expatriates as self-styled anthropologists

One aspect in Jonathan Friedman’s perspective on globalization concerns a supranational identification process. According to Friedman (1989), this process is driven by a desire to participate in the global economy and to be part of a modern (Ibid.). They are “participating in many worlds without becoming part of them” (Ibid.; cf. Beck 1998, p. 100).

In comparison with this aspect, there seem to be traces of the gaze of a “self-styled global ethnographer of culture” in the Swedish expatriates’ storytelling. As if playing ethnographers (or anthropologists), the expatriates are striving to survey and comprehend the other country and its inhabitants. They are narratively negotiating with what is familiar. A certain distance is clearly articulated: places and impressions are lumped together in broad themes; judgments on whole populations are embedded in stories that are constructed upon a local incident or episode, and so forth (cf. Zerubavel 1996a). As a superior to the local, they are presenting a global perspective on the local experience, a perspective that is often constructed upon the local incident or episode, and so forth (cf. Zerubavel 1996a). They are superior to the local, they are presenting a global perspective on the local experience, a perspective that is constructed upon the local incident or episode, and so forth (cf. Zerubavel 1996a).

On the other hand, there are also traces of the opposite. Some stories are quite local and consequently articulate nearness, detailed practices, and contextualized working experiences. Additionally, the expatriates are turning into a narrative element. Jonathan appears to strive to prove his knowledge about the distant and supranational position he is attributing to himself, he strives to prove globalization reflexivity. Thus, the expatriates’ manifestations as self-styled anthropologists are more complex than they initially might appear.
Elements like these belong to those narrative patterns among the expatriates that are oriented toward regenerating the narrators' selves. Tommy's account seems like a globalist's reply to his own experience in Poland. His moves are actually presented in terms of an ambition to create a modern world. To Tommy, the country that he is in is not as it was. He is creating something new. Tommy explains that he would like to stay in Poland for a long time to see the country develop. Tommy says that the fact that all want to stay is not that his wife does not want to stay as long as the money lasts. Tommy says that he is just as living in Poland that is different from Sweden. Tommy says that he and his wife have to go to Sweden if they want to make a career in Sweden. Chris is, so to speak, a quite reluctant anthropologist.

One rhetorical force within the construction of a nation-state could according to the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld be called iconicity. The notion is derived from "icon", that is an image or symbol that signifies something derived from "icon", that is an image or symbol that signifies something. Iconicity is a matter of creating self-evidence (Herzfeld 1997, p. 27, 64). The point about an icon is that it is a symbol that signifies something. Iconicity is a matter of creating self-evidence (Ibid., p. 65).

One of the expatriates' storytelling some instances of iconicity seem to be present. One of these involves colours, or more specifically one particular colour (or absence of colour): grey. In the expatriates' stories, grey is used to describe the country and people's behaviour. When Paul is characterizing other Swedes' opinions, he says that it's grey and boring and dirty...". Frank says, "That's the way it is. Grey and dirty. Grey and cold...". When Chris is describing other Swedes' opinions, he says that it's grey and cold...". Frank says, "That's the way it is. Grey and dirty...". When Chris is describing other Swedes' opinions, he says that it's grey and cold...". Frank says, "That's the way it is. Grey and dirty...".
in relation to analysed quotations these signs are used:

[laughter]

excluded passage

interrupted or overlapping speech in dialogue

recontextualisation

researcher's comment

speaker's emphasis

Appendix: Transcription Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Italic</strong></td>
<td>speaker's emphasis</td>
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<tr>
<td>( )</td>
<td>uncertain transcription-self-interruption</td>
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<td>——</td>
<td>interrupted or overlapping speech in dialogue</td>
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<td>(…)</td>
<td>excluded passage/one second of silence</td>
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<td>uncertain transcription</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; then it's not like... &lt;</td>
<td>words said with increased speed</td>
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It is also contextualised by an effort to transcend this very contextualisation, an effort to recontextualise. The term "contextualised" should be understood in a concrete sense. The word grey is uttered close to and together with words that signify these things.

In these cases there seems to be an instance of iconicity. As a word, "grey" is after all just referring to a visual impression, a colour. To resist "grey" in a very concrete sense – that is as a colour or visual impression and not as a symbol – might in this context be the same as being captured by its iconicity. The expatriates may treat "grey" as a sign that is not seen as a sign at all.

Following this line of interpretation, some questions may be relevant. Why do the expatriates bother to highlight the greyness in one's own and others' eyes? Why do they bother to reflect on, ... observed, the underlying meanings of boredom may often be a sense of understimulation or disconnection. Situations (or objects, environments, people) that are interpreted as boring are in other words described as empty, monotonous and uneventful. They may also be described as impossible to get involved in, or to connect to, or to escape from, or to be detached from.

In this context, moreover, the connotations of grey take the form of a narrative task for Swedish expatriates. When reflecting on and opposing these clichés the expatriates are also reflecting on and opposing the idea that they themselves could be associated with these clichés. Since they have ended up or chosen to work in Poland they are probably eager to avoid being portrayed as having ended up or chosen something that is considered to be the opposite end of the spectrum.

In more general terms these remarks may highlight expatriates' ambiguous embracing of another country and others, perhaps especially relevant in the case of Western visitors in a Central European country. The idea of a voluntary embrace of a country and others presupposes a simultaneous and corresponding transformation of another country and others.

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Endnotes

1 This rhetoric is not only frequently used in media but also within organizations. For instance, when a Swedish association for economists are providing advice for potential expatriates among its members a notice appears on its website, saying: "Are you tired of your job? Are you bored of your country? Are you tired of your world?" (quoted from the website www.civilekonomerna.se/nyttigheter/utlandet/tips.html, my translation).


3 This figure does not include Swedish entrepreneurs working in close cooperation with Polish companies or other semi-structured collaborations.

4 Cf. Wästerfors 2000a.

5 An instance of the way Swedes and Poles often are said to view each other is found in the Swedish magazine Affärsvärlden ("Business World") No. 5, 2000. The article begins by stating that Swedes and Swedish companies are becoming more and more common in the world and that Polish companies are becoming more and more common in Sweden. For instance, a Swedish company is said to have started a new operation in Poland, and a Swedish manager is quoted as saying: "We have been able to succeed in Poland because we have been able to understand the Polish way of doing things." (Wästerfors 2000a, p. 36).

6 Some of these themes are given a preliminary description and analysis in Wästerfors 2000b, 2000c, and 2001.

7 In some respects, however, one particular structural factor is taken into consideration, the societal position of the expatriates. It is their social position that determines whether or not they are included in the local community, and whether or not they are accepted by the host society. For instance, when a Swedish company is setting up a new operation in Poland, the company managers are more likely to accept the Polish workers if they are given a prominent role in the company's operations, and if they are given a leadership position.

8 As will be clear further on, some of these themes are responses to my question on the interviewees' remembrance of their first visit to Poland, but not all. A formal variation is prevalent. Whereas some are long and detailed accounts or arguments, others are short and more concise. Some of these themes are given a preliminary description and analysis in Wästerfors 2000b, 2000c, and 2001.

9 Jonathan here refers to a slightly derogatory category that identifies Poles with seasonal workers in agriculture in some parts of Sweden.

10 To be engaged in creating distinctions between a tolerant self and an intolerant other — although both in other respects are belonging to the same group, defined in relation to "the other" toward which the very tolerance is directed — has been described and analyzed by Andersson (1994, p. 28-31, 95, 139). It is also touched upon by Heruzfeld (1997, p. 158), who comments on the way in which "who take studious care not to seem to be avoiding physical contact with black (or poor, or disabled) people".

11 This possibility would certainly depend on contexts — the social context of the narrator as well as the immediate situation in which the story is told and its context within the speech. The visualized option is to be seen simply as my way to highlight the significance of subtle ingredients in Frank's actual story.
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and authority. A speech may also be delivered with a historical person's voice; then it is called **ethopoeia** (Greek). If the speaker lets a country, a virtue, an idea or inanimate things speak it is called **prosopopeia**. These rhetorical figures are not to be seen as merely artificial tricks but as latent possibilities in language in general (Johannesson 1991, p. 151-154).

Whereas the focus of this chapter is restricted to quotations and their contexts, such a struggle could of course also be found in a wide range of other utterances. Bakhtin underlines that “within the arena of ... word is being waged, a process in which they oppose or dialogically interanimate each other” (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 354).

Prosodic phenomena include accent, intonation, length and rhythm (Sigurd 1991, p. 41).

A quick, summarizing look at the citations in John's and Larry's conversation seems to indicate this. Their speech contains an examination of several different speaking positions:

- **One (we) say**: 'one could do like that or what do you think?';
- **they say**: 'yes, that would perhaps work';
- **they think**: 'damn we've not taken any decision, what shall we do';
- **we think that we said**: 'one could do like that';
- **we never say**: 'you'll do that, you'll do that, that must be ready tomorrow…';
- **they never say**: 'we'll do it as fast as possible';
- **we say**: 'eh what happened to that?';
- **they say**: 'well, you didn't say it should be finished today'.

Bakhtin describes this phenomenon as common, general and concrete: “Were we to eavesdrop on snatches of raw dialogue in the street, in a crowd, in lines, in a foyer and so forth, we would hear how ... of people in a crowd, everything often fuses into one big 'he says…you say…I say…'”. (Bakhtin 1981/2000 p. 338).

This is not to say that John and Larry are succeeding in their effort to understand, or that they act in a reasonable or good way. My point is not to evaluate their conversation. Rather, my point is to highlight the significance of bringing in others' voices.

In rhetoric such exclamations and questions are regarded as a way to expand the dialogue, a way to invite other voices. The speaker may mediate between the processes of meaning and transformed to mean something else

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