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The Global Imaginary of International School Communities:

A Case Study from Germany

by

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ABSTRACT

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THE GLOBAL IMAGINARY OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL COMMUNITIES:

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This thesis explores the 'global imaginary' of an international school community located in Germany. It examines how globally-oriented social imaginaries are constructed, negotiated and contested within such gated communities comprised of both expatriates and host country nationals. It highlights the role of the international school market and the role of the 'local' in the production of these 'global' imaginaries that not only impact community membership, but also its members' residential life in Germany.

  International schools have developed into a thriving, lucrative educational network –offering an English-medium, 'international' education to facilitate internationally-mobile families as they move from country to country. Not only are international schools educational facilities, they are also strong 'international' *communities* comprised of both expats and host country nationals. Where international school literature is typically focused on the educational experience of expats (or 'Third Culture Kids') attending international schools, little has been written on the extent to which membership impacts residential life, not only for expats, but also for host country nationals. Moreover, the role of the 'local' in the construction of 'global' imaginaries and international school community membership has not been thoroughly investigated. It is argued in this thesis that while international schools place a particular emphasis on the *distant* local to uphold institutional globally-oriented principles and branding, the immediate local is not only eclipsed, but this overshadowing plays a role in the construction of the 'global' orientation.

  There is also a gap in literature concerning large-scale ethnographic projects looking into international schools located in Europe – a gap which this thesis aims to fill through the use of participant observations, semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions that took place in Germany between 2012 and 2015.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, **Heather Anne Meyer** declare that the thesis entitled, **'The Global Imaginary of International School Communities: A Case Study from Germany'** and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- Where I have quoted the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- Parts of this work have been published in:

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Signed: _____

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGIS	Association of German International Schools
ASA	After School Activities
ATCK	Adult Third Culture Kid
CAS	Community, Action, Service
CIS	Council of International Schools
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBDP	International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
IBO	International Baccalaureate Office
ISS	International Schools Services
ISSG	International School of Southern Germany
ISST	International Schools Sports Tournament
MYP	Middle Years Programme
PYP	Primary Years Programme
PTO	Parent Teacher Organization
TCK	Third Culture Kid

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Shortly after beginning my fieldwork in an international school, one of my participants described to me how her son had recently applied for admission onto an MBA program at a university in the U.S. by submitting, along with his application, a personal statement answering the question, 'to what extent do you consider yourself to be 'global'? Around that same time, her son also applied for an internship with a multinational company, where he was once again asked to submit a statement about his 'intercultural' experiences. In his responses, he reflected on his international upbringing as an expat, his international education and his journey in developing intercultural competencies as a 'global citizen' – answers which granted him two successful applications.

The statement questions asked by two decisively different parties, not only illustrate the popularity, versatility and interpretability of the terms, but also highlight them as significant qualities worth writing (and reading) about. The cultural currency attributed to one's level of 'globality', 'internationality' and /or 'intercultural competence' has become starkly valued and demanded in higher education, and ultimately in the global marketplace. The value placed on these attributes makes them desirable across the globe - in fact, a recent study conducted by BBC World Service and Globe Scan[1] indicated that one in two individuals consider themselves to be a 'global citizen' in one way or another.

But what exactly does it mean to be 'global' or 'international'? There are so many different definitions across an array of sectors that it is difficult to define what these terms actually mean – let alone exhibit or perform them as personal qualities. Indeed, recent scholarship has observed that while educational sectors may use rhetoric affiliated with 'globality' and 'internationality' for market-driven purposes, there still remains a large 'disconnect' between the discourse and the actual practice[2]. Yet, this may actually be the point: Nowadays a*nyone* can be 'global' or 'international' – they are terms to which people can relate, and with which they can connect in one way or another. As will be shown in this thesis, it is

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[1] BBC World Service, 2016.
[2] See for example: Lilley, Barker, & Harris (2015); Lilley, Barker, & Harris (2014); Streitwieser & Light (2016); Lilley (2013).

precisely how these terms are interpreted, aspired to, and practiced within certain social groups that give them specific meaning and ultimately, shape boundaries.

One particular sector which regularly uses terms such as 'global' and 'international' to define itself and its community is the international school system – an ever increasing body of private schools seen across the world. International schools are known to attract elite migrants and host country nationals of the 'transnational capitalist class' (Sklair, 2001) seeking to provide their children with an English-medium, 'international' education and learning environment. As the sociological literature generally suggests, such communities are "positioned as [social manifestations] of the globalisation process" (Rofe, 2003) and receive an education that is widely deemed necessary to participate in the global economy (Selmer and Lam, 2007). An emphasis on the 'global' therefore becomes a key marker of international school education, and also community life.

Thus it is significant to note that international schools operate not only as educational institutions, but also exist as social *communities*. They offer socialization opportunities for expatriate children and their families who may be adjusting to their new country of residence, and who can access English-medium social interaction, extracurricular activities, and cultural norms shaped by Anglo culture. This communal aspect entails that internationally-mobile families can experience smooth transitions from one international school to the next in any national context, and partake in comparable cultural rhetoric across international school settings.

However, even though repeated references to the 'global', 'intercultural' and 'international' conjure notions of inclusivity, mobility, openness, and universality, international school environments are also known for generating a certain degree of isolationism within the respective host nation (Allan, 2002; Bunnell, 2005; Poore, 2005; Jackson, 2005). The relationship between an institutional self-definition as 'globally-oriented', and the actual remoteness and detached nature from 'localities' bring into question what 'globality' and 'internationality' actually *mean* within international school communities, *why* members invest in them and *how* they are actually practiced.

While research on international schools is relatively narrow to begin with, there is a large gap in scholarship in relation to the international school market and significantly, the impact 'global' and 'international' orientations have on their communities. The international school system is rarely described or illustrated in literature as a strong, lucrative 'business' which carries a strong *brand* of 'inter-nationality'. I argue with this thesis that the *inclusive*, 'global'

orientation works not only to frame the community, but also to mask the market incentives and *exclusivity* that represent a strong undercurrent in community discourse and practice.

Additionally, there have been no long term studies which focus on the role of 'locality' in the construction of 'global' orientations of international school communities and their brand of 'inter-nationality'. Current research rarely considers residential life, the host nation, society, language and culture as relevant factors in the production of such 'global' frameworks in international school communities. The reason for this oversight is that most literature produced in this field has focused exclusively on what occurs *within* the international school system, and thus, ironically, contributes to its often-cited isolation and exceptionalism. However it is important to also examine what occurs *outside* the school, where expatriates also lead lives as local migrants[3] residing in a host nation. The extent to which the global orientation of community membership transcends the school's boundaries is a significant arena that has not yet been thoroughly investigated – particularly in Europe.

Moreover, research to date has not addressed the *process* of community construction through such educational orientations. International schools have attracted an array of scholarly attention for their communities of 'Third Culture Kids' who are expected to experience identity challenges due to their (often assumed) 'internationally-mobile' or 'nomadic' upbringing. While such research has used certain assumptions about the Third Culture Kid identity (see Chapter 3), it has left out *how* the actual international school system's ideological orientation and brand culture may have aided in the production of such identities.

Therefore, I was keen to investigate international school communities as spaces of socialization and identity *production*. International school students (current and former) are regularly described institutionally, in scholarship and amongst themselves as 'globe-trotting' 'global citizens', while they simultaneously report leading entirely detached 'local' lives. Based on a particular case study in Germany, this thesis explores these tensions and how they are reproduced within the international school system.

I will draw on the notion of social imaginaries[4] to explore this particular international school community. Social imaginaries are how members perceive their social lives, position themselves amongst others, and anticipate, aspire to, observe and practice their community membership (Taylor, 2002). The 'global' symbolic orientation of community is what I call the international school's 'global imaginary'. It is what defines, unites, inspires and maintains

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[3] See section 1.3 for discussion of labels.
[4] See discussion on Taylor (2002) in Chapter 3.

community. Using this concept as a starting point, this thesis explores how the 'global' becomes a community symbol (Cohen, 1985) and aspiration (Baumann, 1992) through specific discourse and community practices, and the extent to which boundaries are drawn as this orientation becomes institutionally and socially defined.

In order to understand the globally-oriented social imaginaries of international school communities, I have taken an ethnographic methodological approach. There is currently very little ethnographic work conducted on international schools[5], and in particular, on international schools located in Europe. An international school in Germany was selected to contribute to a growing debate[6] on the increasing demand of private schools in Germany, and for reasons related to my own personal familiarity with the region and language. For purposes of anonymity and confidentiality, I shall refer to my fieldwork site as 'International School of Southern Germany' (ISSG) from this point forward. The ethnographic data I collected at ISSG over the course of three years included participant-observations, ethnographic interviews and focus groups with ISSG community members.

There are three major original contributions this thesis makes to existing scholarship, which act as over-arching themes discussed throughout my entire thesis. My research questions were developed to highlight these major themes and help structure the thesis. These questions will be discussed in more detail below.

The first contribution is the exploration of an international school community through the notion of a 'global imaginary', as a means to address the process of identity reproduction in this particular sector. Where much of the current literature examines identities related to international school attendees, such as 'cultural chameleons', 'global nomads', and 'Third Culture Kids', as an already-attained product of the migration experience itself, the 'global imaginary' allows for an examination of the extent to which international schools, as *organizations*, reproduce identities, boundaries and residential experiences in the host nation. By looking at international school communities as reconstructing and practicing a 'global imaginary' both in and outside of the school, the study can include a larger insight into members' mobility within, and significantly, across community borders.

The second contribution is the role of the 'local' in the construction of the 'global imaginary' of international schools. This thesis highlights the significant role of locality as an antithetical referent on which globally-oriented social imaginaries are built. As will be shown

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[5] Tanu (2010; 2014) has produced one the largest ethnographic research projects to date, in Jakarta.
[6] See, for example, Kraul, (2015); Koinzer & Leschinsky (2009); Cortina, Koinzer & Leschinsky (2009).

throughout the thesis, the regulation of the 'local' exhibited by the international school and its community members contributes to the strength of the community boundaries and the production of 'global' identities. Where some scholars (e.g. Tanu, 2013; 2015) have found similar regulatory measures within such communities, these have been largely attributed to racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic discrepancies between expat communities and their host societies in postcolonial contexts. This study demonstrates that such exhibitions also exist beyond such contexts, where the expatriate communities are less demographically distinct to their hosts. The management of the 'local' within international schools not only impacts the construction of a global imaginary, but also contributes to the production of the school brand and maintenance of the international school market.

Thus the third major contribution and theme of this project is the role of the market in the production of the global imaginary of international school communities. As argued above, the international school system's branding objectives are not often a major discussion point within existing scholarship[7]. However, this thesis shows the extent to which the international school brand plays a role not only in the production of the global imaginary, but also has an impact on the isolationism the school and its community members experience in the host nation. As will be seen, the extent to which the community remains isolated impacts the extent to which the members become dependent on the international school system for schooling and socialization. This also raises the point that these three major contributions to existing scholarship are also significantly interrelated: The global imaginary is maintained through its relation to 'locality', and this interplay creates and maintains the international school's market niche as a school system for expatriates unable or unwilling to attend local schools. This dynamic will be examined in depth across the entire thesis.

As a means to discuss in detail these three inter-related contributions to scholarly literature, I have devised the following research questions below which shape the structure of the thesis.

1) How is the community's global imaginary discursively constructed at ISSG?

2) How do members socially position themselves at ISSG and to what extent do these practices play a role in the global imaginary of the community?

3) To what extent is community practiced and institutionally regulated in other spaces?

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[7] See discussion on this in Chapter 3.

Research question 1 was posed to enable a discussion on how the global imaginary was regularly discursively articulated at ISSG. This exploration is significant in conceptualizing how globally-oriented social imaginaries take shape, are reconstructed, and perpetuated throughout community life. It also allows for an investigation on the extent to which global imaginaries are produced via the school system's marketing agendas and how international schools represent themselves institutionally in the host nation.

Research question 2 was developed to highlight the tensions between discourse and practice within the school and its community. This question is answered largely through an analysis of the data I collected while conducting participant-observations. Members articulated their global imaginaries through practice in often contradictory ways to the discourses presented through research question 1. The significance of such tensions between discourse and practice is that it highlights the presence of an *imaginary*, where self-perception often differed from what was occurring in practice at the school.

Finally, research question 3 was constructed to allow for a discussion on what occurs outside of the school's physical boundaries – when members traversed into other spaces. Here, I discuss the transposition of 'local' loyalties as community members were mobile across these spaces. It questions the strength of the global imaginary not only when ISSG members travelled abroad on school-sponsored excursions, sports trips, and other community events, but also, significantly, when members were removed from the international school and led residential lives in this region of Germany.

1.2 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This thesis is divided into 7 chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the rationale for this study and sets the general framework through which the research was conducted. It explains the research questions to be answered in the subsequent chapters, and provides an explanation for particular terms that will be seen repeatedly throughout the thesis. It ends with a brief note on confidentiality and anonymity.

Chapter 2 provides a contextual overview for this thesis. I discuss the development of the international school system – providing a historical analysis towards the development and definition of contemporary international schools like ISSG. I examine 'international education' as a vital component of international schools, and significantly, the role of the growing global

market and demand for this form of education. Following this, I further discuss the relevance of this study by exploring the development of international school education in the German context, and situate ISSG within it. Following this section, my methodological approaches are discussed – providing a brief outline of how I collected my data through participant-observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups with high school students. Finally, I discuss my methodological considerations and the ethical issues I faced while conducting my fieldwork and analysis, including my insider-outsider position as a researcher.

The literature review and theoretical orientation of this thesis are examined in Chapter 3. This chapter situates my research through an examination of scholarship on international schools with a special emphasis on the international school market and "knowledge economy" (Coulby & Zambeta, 2005:1). This discussion is followed by an analysis of the epistemological positioning of contemporary research in this field. As this thesis assumes an interdisciplinary approach, combining the fields of education and sociology, I also provide an overview of the ethnographic and sociological literature on elite migration and 'privileged migrants'. Following this, significant gaps in research are identified as a means to situate my study and identify its contribution to knowledge. I examine the main theoretical concepts used to discuss and analyse the data I collected during my fieldwork, and to outline the steps I took to answer my research questions. This will include looking at existing notions of 'global imaginaries', and explain how I apply them to the ISSG community. Subsequently, I explain how concepts of discourse (Chapter 4), habitus, field and capitals (Chapter 5), boundaries and spatial mobility (Chapter 6) underpin my investigation of the 'global imaginary' of the school community.

The objective of Chapter 4 is to answer my first research question, 'How is the community's global imaginary discursively constructed at ISSG?'. This chapter examines the relevance of the notions 'global-mindedness' and 'internationality' in the production of community. I look at how 'global-mindedness' is discursively constructed as a community aspiration related to universality, inclusivity and boundlessness, and the extent to which members engage with this notion. I argue that school members identify and construct social positions based on levels of perceived 'internationality', as opposed to 'global-mindedness', for the reason that is more tangible, quantifiable, and thus 'performable' or 'practiced'.

Chapter 5 therefore builds on the discourses identified in Chapter 4 to answer the second research question: 'How do members socially position themselves at ISSG and to what extent do these practices play a role in the global imaginary of the community?' I examine how the school's brand of 'inter-nationality' guides community practices and shapes the global imaginary. I argue that strategies of marginalizing what is perceived to be 'local' aid in the

construction and legitimation of a 'global' community. I focus primarily on two school events in which community members practice or perform 'inter-nationality'. Significantly, the role of the nation-state becomes an important marker of cultural currency and status within the community – drawing tensions with the inclusive, 'global' orientations of the institution and the development of social hierarchies based on very specific forms of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986a).

Chapter 6 builds on the practices identified in the previous chapter, by examining the role of boundaries in the construction of the global imaginary at ISSG. It is in this chapter that I aim to answer my third research question, 'To what extent is community practiced and institutionally regulated in other spaces?' I begin the chapter examining the concept of physical, social and mental boundaries (Hernes, 2004a, 2004b) and spatial mobilities. I argue that while the 'global imaginary' is often dependent on the extent to which the community is internationally-mobile, tensions emerge through the relative isolation and restricted mobility within the host society. I examine elements of the international school curriculum and extra-curricular programs in which opportunities for 'local' engagement are offered, and the extent to which the school regulates these opportunities through its 'global' ideology and market-driven incentives. Significantly, I discuss the impact this regulation has on expatriate and host national mothers of the community.

Finally, Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by summarizing the primary arguments in reference to the research questions outlined above. I reflect on the significance of my findings, discuss the limitations of this research, and suggest ideas for future research in this area.

1.3 SELECTION OF TERMS

This section defines particular terms I will use often in this thesis, and provides the rationale for their selection and use.

I begin with the term, 'expatriate' – a label that I have repeatedly found controversial and thus academically challenging during the writing of this thesis. The term conjures a wide range of assumptions related to the respective individual's socio-economic status, class, nationality, ethnicity or race, and 'type' of mobility he or she is considered to be undergoing. I say 'assumptions' for the reason that often these terms are used without further consideration of their connotations – particularly within expat communities (Gatti, 2009). Scholars, for these reasons, have turned to other terms in the attempt to avoid the use of the over-laden

'expatriate' label, including 'skilled migrant' (e.g. Gatti, 2009), 'privileged migrant', or 'mobile professional' (e.g. Fechter & Walsh, 2012).

Conversely, the term 'migrant' is equally socially and politically charged. It is often used in reference to individuals seeking permanent residency within the host nation through the primary objective of attaining employment due to economic hardship[8]. Comparatively, the perception of the 'expatriate' as a highly paid, temporary resident, employed by a company of the sending country, carries often more positive connotations than the former (Gatti, 2009).

Significantly however, Leinonen observes that such terms are "contextual" and not "stable" (2012a:214). Klekowski von Koppenfels (2014) also argues that the terms are used varyingly based on authorship and the objectives of the literature – providing the example of governmental bodies generally using the terms according to visa status, where scholars may define them differently to analyse migration and integration processes. Much like any categorization practice, labelling is a practice which reifies boundaries and produces social and political hierarchies. As will be seen in Chapters 4 and 5, labelling in the ISSG community is a fundamental social practice which reinforces community borders. Conscious of these issues, I have nonetheless maintained the label, 'expatriate' in this study, thus following how my participants described themselves and others in the ISSG community.

Secondly, I have opted to use the term 'private school' to describe a fee-paying school, as it corresponds with the definition ISSG ascribes itself. Moreover, 'private' institutions in Germany are also seen to be schools which call for tuition payments. I have chosen to maintain a consistent approach towards labels and terms throughout this thesis, and use the terms according to how they are defined by my research subjects and the contexts in which they find themselves.

Finally, it is important to note that I do not aim to create a dichotomy between concretized notions of the 'local' and the 'global' as static forms of situational and spatial realities in this thesis. However, as will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, I found the terms often treated as oppositional or polarized conceptions by ISSG and its community. Gupta and Ferguson (1997) for example, find this common treatment of the terms equally problematic:

"the extent to which ideas of "the local" and "the global" in practice tend to replicate existing dualisms opposing tradition to modernity, cold societies to hot ones, or *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft.* In this way, "the local" can take the place of the traditional, "globalization" can take the place of modernization, and a new

[8] See for example, Hayden and Thompson's (2008) 'economic migrant'.

"transnational anthropology" can wind up bearing a disturbing resemblance to a sort of recycled modernization theory".

I observed this framing repeatedly at ISSG: the perception of 'locality' as representative of the past and 'tradition', and conversely, 'globality' as a symbol for the future, and modernization[9]. Holtzman poignantly argues that this categorization is a product of globalization and "that dichotomous notions of global-local, town-country, etc., are themselves an important export in the spread of world capitalism" (2004:63). This is significant in this thesis, as I argue that this antithetical treatment of the terms plays an important role in the construction of the global imaginary within the community. For this purpose, the terms must be maintained here, as a means to analyse how my participants, the school, and the wider ISSG community use them. 'Locality' or 'the local' is therefore used here as a metaphorical space that is regionally-bounded to the location of the school. 'Globality' or 'the global' is, conversely, used here to refer to an abstract, unbounded space that is detached from 'locality'. It is important to note that these terms were defined by community members according to personal circumstances, as will be seen in Chapter 4. This, I argue, was a strategy of place-making and social positioning within the ISSG community, and will be discussed further in the subsequent chapters.

1.4 A NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

In order to fully protect my participants' and the school's confidentiality, I have anonymized some of the source material from the school website, school magazines and school handbooks. When referencing these sources, I have used the pseudonym, 'ISSG', along with the appropriate publication date of the source. For example: "(ISSG website, 2013)". Moreover, I have maintained the anonymity of these sources in the thesis bibliography.

During my fieldwork, I was given an array of paper-based sources from community members, which I have also cited in this thesis, if the source was used. I have also used some images and extracts from the publically accessible parts of the school website – all of which I have cited under the pseudonym, 'ISSG website' in the text and in the bibliography.

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[9] See also Smith, 2005.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the context in which ISSG was positioned and an overview of the methodologies I have selected to investigate the school community. I provide an overview of the history and development of international schools as a means to situate ISSG as a research site within them. I then discuss the educational context of Germany to explore the attraction of international schools for German nationals. After positioning the school within this landscape, I discuss the profile of ISSG as a contextual backdrop for the subsequent section. Here, I explore my methodological approaches and consider the ethics of my own positioning as a former pupil and researcher at ISSG.

2.2 DEFINING INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

The origin of the first international school is a debated issue amongst scholars, and varies according to definition used. The European School of Maseru (renamed later to its current name, Maseru English Medium Preparatory School (MEMPS)) was founded in 1890 in the British Colony of the Basutoland where it was established to provide an English-medium education for children of missionaries, traders and officials of the British administration based in the region (Maseru Prep, 2014). The International College at Spring Grove in London (1866-1889) may have been the first international school, and was founded under the premise that a network of such schools located throughout Europe could benefit particularly nomadic students (Sylvester, 2002). The foundation of the school attracted the interest of a select group of individuals, including Charles Dickens, who claimed that "the pupils, in passing from one language and nation to another, would find no notable change in the course of study to retard the progress of their education" (Sylvester, 2002). Hayden and Thompson (2008) point out however, that prior to the opening of this school, there had been a series of additional calls in Europe for the internationalization of schools for such students. Prior to the 1920's, the term, 'international school' had not yet existed, and therefore many would consider the first establishment of an 'international school' carrying the title itself as a 'draw' between the International School of Geneva and the Yokohama International School, which were both founded in 1924.

The development of English-medium international schools prior to 1960 across the globe was due to the relatively high number of expatriates from North America and Great Britain (Ronsheim, 1967). Such nationally-oriented schools originated due to parents seeking an education which would smooth the repatriation experience for their children upon inevitable relocation (Fox, 1985). While English was the primary language at these schools, German *Gymnasien* and French *lycées* also can be seen as 'international' schools which were staffed, supplied and financially backed by the respective education ministries. While the term, 'international school' can be used for a range of forms of schooling, the original development of the sector was largely conducted in English.

Thus traditionally, 'international schools' have been considered to be educational establishments which cater to expatriate children, who accompany their parents on temporary professional sponsorships abroad. Particular expatriate clientele of international schools include children of missionaries, military personnel, business professionals and aid workers. Such is the demographic of current international schools, with the inclusion (in most cases) of (wealthy) host country nationals seeking an English-medium education for their children. However, with the presence of host country nationals, international schools still demonstrate the tendency to take on more traditional approaches, as defined by Hayden and Thompson:

> "These schools...catering largely, if not exclusively, for the children of expatriate, globally-mobile professional parents, might be described as the 'traditional' type of international school: providing a service to a community for whom appropriate education would not otherwise be available, and catering for an essentially transient group of students whose length of stay at the school is determined by the duration of their parent's contract locally" (2008:21).

Currently, according to these traditional definitions, there are approximately 7,000 international schools located across the globe (Bunnell, 2015) and are increasing in number each year due to the rising demand for international education. It is estimated, that by 2020, this number will reach 10,000 (Bunnell, 2015). Such figures however, are also debatable, as the definition of 'international school', much like its origin, currently varies between scholars and institutional bodies. Hayden and Thompson (2008) have identified eight additional 'types' of international school presently represented across the globe: United World Colleges, European schools, Shell schools, Dutch International Schools, Yew Chung International Schools, national groupings of schools, commercial groupings of schools, and franchises[10]. However, for purposes

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[10] See Hayden & Thompson, 2008:24-26.

of this study, I shall refer to international schools using Hayden and Thompson's (2008) definition (above) based on traditional characteristics and catchment areas, as this matches the profile of my research site.

2.3 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The International Baccalaureate[11] (IB) diploma program, and its sister programs, the Middle Years Program[12] (MYP) and Primary Years Program[13] (PYP) are unanimously the most popular educational models used in international schools today. The IB was developed in the 1960s by UNESCO as a means to provide a de-localized educational model – seen as unaffiliated with any nation – so as to target internationally-mobile families from varying national backgrounds and circumstances (IBO, 2014).[14] However, with the trend of national systems of education seeking more globally-oriented curricula, the IB program has evolved into a diploma program offered currently at more public institutions than international schools worldwide (IBO, 2014). It operates under the following mission:

> "The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring
> young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural
> understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools,
> governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of
> international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage
> students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who
> understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right" (IBO[15], 2014).

The ideological orientation of the IB is marketed, and often perceived as 'global', or 'international', and has been linked, particularly within national systems of education, as an alternative approach to guide students towards thinking beyond national contexts and borders. However, the IB has received criticism for providing a Western, Eurocentric educational approach cloaked under the pretence of it being 'international', as it provides an English-medium education, and oftentimes the teaching backgrounds of primarily English-speaking staff

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[11] Established in the 1960s, this program was developed as a pre-university curriculum for students ranging from ages 16-18 (IBO, 2014).
[12] Established in 1992, this program caters to students ranging from ages 11-16 (IBO, 2014).
[13] Established in 1997, this program caters to students ranging from ages 3-12 (IBO, 2014).
[14] For more on the development of the sector, see Chapter 3.
[15] International Baccalaureate Office. The IB Foundation Office (Headquarters) is located in Geneva, Switzerland. The IB organization has several other 'Global Centers' including in Bethesda, The Hague, Singapore, and Buenos Aires.

at international schools affect the 'international' learning outcomes. However, as Hayden and Thompson (2008) argue, while the intention and objectives are to provide an orientation that is international, it is difficult to pragmatically address these concerns. Questions such as, 'whose language?', 'whose history?', and 'what skills?' (2008:40) arise when critically assessing such international curricula.

Another component relevant to the transmission of such programs is the cultural composition of international school students, teachers and administrators. International education programs at international schools are advertised to be particularly beneficial due to the cultural diversity of the student body – seen to establish an intercultural learning environment. However, on a global scale, teaching staff still have been found to be predominantly from Anglophone countries[16]. These are some tensions that will be discussed in Chapter 5. Due to the increasing numbers of host country nationals seeking an English-medium education from such schools, the demand for 'native' English-speaking teachers is a factor in recruitment. Moreover, there is a common perception amongst internationally-mobile parents that the teaching standards and credentials of educators and administrators from North America, Australia, New Zealand and the UK are higher than those offered by educators of the host nations (Garton, 2000; Canterford, 2003). Therefore, international schools demonstrate a tendency to recruit educators from English-speaking countries due to the demands exhibited from their clientele. International school recruitment fairs are offered primarily in English-speaking countries – particularly the U.S. and the UK[17]. The initial screening requirements for recruitment are also largely influenced by the educational standards from North America and the UK (ISS, 2014) and therefore ultimately influence the pedagogical styles expressed within international schools. The education offered at international schools therefore takes on teaching approaches stemming from a relatively limited cultural sphere.

2.4 INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS AND THE MARKET

As indicated through the example of recruitment, international schools operate with both market and ideology-driven objectives (Matthews, 1989). They are uniquely positioned to facilitate a demographic of internationally-mobile expatriate families in need of a standardized system of education. The international system therefore can prevent an inhibition to learning

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[16] See Canterford (2003).
[17] In 2014, recruitment fairs were held by in the UK, the US, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and South Africa (GEL, 2014), and by International School Services (ISS) in several locations in the US, and one in Bangkok (ISS, 2014).

due to multiple international transitions throughout the child's formative years. While international schools generally provide an education model based on liberal humanist ideals, they also are responding simultaneously to a market in need of a globally-recognized brand that is "distributed by a network of franchises" (Cambridge, 2002:4). The IB diploma, in particular, is widely considered as the 'Golden Ticket' (Bunnell, 2010) leading to higher education admission, and future employment opportunities. The international school 'franchise' to which Cambridge (2002) alludes can be recognized through three primary pathways: accreditation, international audit and authorization. These establish a level of 'quality assurance' amongst the network of international schools across the globe.

Accreditation plays a vital role in the marketing campaigns of international schools, in that it can act as an assurance to families in transition seeking a school in their new hosting nation. Accreditation agencies had existed prior to the 1970s primarily through agencies based in the U.S., such as the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (Murphy, 1998). After the 1970s, a transition began to develop from the American agencies to European agencies in light of providing these services for more international contexts. The Council of International Schools (CIS) currently stands as the leading service, and brands international schools across the globe through its accreditation procedure, which is carried out to ensure that the institution meets its own mission, philosophy and objectives. Those carrying out the accreditation process are teachers and administrators selected as CIS representatives from other accredited international schools across the globe (Hayden and Thompson, 2008). In this way, a family in transition can be assured that the international school of interest is internationally recognized as providing the same educational quality and environment as the institution prior to relocation.

International audit operates as a scheme which seeks to ensure that the agendas of the school are met according to the international school's *own* standards (e.g. investigates the extent to which the school uphold its mission and vision statements). International audits are voluntary and involve individuals or small groups who can provide the necessary insight the international school seeks through an institutional inspection, as explained to me by the ISSG Head of School (June, 2013). Some international schools may seek auditors from other international schools, while others may invite an auditor from the national system of education of the host nation (Hayden and Thompson, 2008). The aim is to provide policy-makers and/or members of the school board with information which can be used to improve the overall quality of the school.

Authorization is the third quality control measure taking place within international schools across the globe. It involves authorizing the implementation of an internationally-recognized curricular program. The International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma program, and its sister programs (the Middle Years Program and the Primary Years Program) are the most commonly implemented programs seen at international schools. Therefore, if an international school wants to offer the IB curriculum, it must be authorized by the International Baccalaureate Office (IBO). In this case, the institution in question must pass the authorization process before offering the program.

Accreditation, international audits, and authorization are typically advertised within promotional literature produced by international schools, and ultimately act as agents which legitimize the institution within the network of international schools. It is significant to note that despite the three processes which are currently available for international schools to validate educational and institutional quality, international schools still operate largely independently from the host nation's educational system. In fact, international schools have also gained a reputation for working independently of host government regulations[18]. Moreover, international quality assurance measures have been criticized for following American and British-centred educational and pedagogical approaches, and identified as an area in need of improvement and tighter control (Hayden and Thompson, 2008; Pearce, 2013:68).

Such processes mark the inter-institutional dynamic that is unique to the international school sector. The network of international schools operates on a similar academic calendar, educational model (such as the IB) and extracurricular program and schedule. The interconnectivity between institutions allows for efficient conversions for expatriate families. However, those investing in the system also simultaneously subject themselves to a degree of isolationism and dependency on the institution. As researchers have shown, this occurs due to a variety of reasons including language barriers (Bunnell, 2005), disinterest in establishing close attachments due to continuous relocations (Hayden and Thompson, 2008), lack of resources or knowledge on how to engage with the local community (Allen, 2002), negative conceptions of the host culture (Ezra, 2007), frustration due to culture shock (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001), high involvement within the school community with little time to explore the local community (Hayden, 2006) and fear of the unknown and unfamiliar (Smiley, 2010). This thesis also draws on these findings to analyse how the privileged migration experience affects, and is affected by the

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[18] There have been some incidents which have gained public attention involving the relaxation of criminal background and/or teacher certification checks at international schools. See, for example, Caffyn (2010); Garton (2002).

international school market. The regulation of mobilities and isolation will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

2.5 INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN GERMANY

Germany presently hosts approximately 25 international schools[19], which are recognized by the Association of German International Schools (AGIS) (AGIS, 2014). AGIS is an accreditation agency designed for international schools located in Germany, and membership is considered a symbol of authenticity, recognition and status. Membership is based on the following criteria:

- "be recognised as a private and not-for profit (gemeinnützige) Ersatz- or Ergänzungsschule

- have been founded to serve the needs of an internationally mobile population

- provide an international education in the English language

- be members of ECIS[20], CIS or similar international organizations

- be committed to continuous improvement through evaluation, accreditation and professional development

- be committed to ethical practice and cultural inclusiveness to foster internationalism and international-mindedness

- participate in a free and open sharing of ideas, curriculum and benchmark data between member schools

- attend at least one Head's meeting a year as well as the AGM"[21] (AGIS, 2014)

The criteria mirrors the international-orientation expressed in the IB objectives – placing a strong emphasis on 'internationality'. However interestingly, while the organization is based on a centralized national context, the membership criteria do not actually include any references to the role of the host nation in an AGIS membership. Therefore, as an accreditation criterion, schools are not obligated to demonstrate curricular, co-curricular, social or service-related initiatives which are aimed to engage their communities with German society, language or culture. While these schools are interconnected through the AGIS, they rarely maintain links for

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[19] This number varies within scholarship, particularly within German literature. According to Klein (2007) and Ullrich and Strunck (2009), there are over 50 international schools currently located in Germany. However as we have seen, definitions vary, and for purposes of this study I shall revert to the AGIS defining factors listed above.

[20] European Council of International Schools.

[21] Bulleted format is consistent with this direct citation from AGIS.

educational or community purposes. Rather, they appear to be conjoined for promotional purposes, as all member schools advertise association membership on their respective webpages.

International schools in Germany operate as *Ergänzungsschulen* (supplementary schools) and/or *Ersatzschulen* (alternative schools). *Ersatzschulstatus* acknowledges the institution's role as a 'substitute' for national schools up until grade 10, and is therefore only equated with a *Hauptschulabschluss* (certification of basic education) (Schwindt, 2003). German nationals, under this approval, can therefore transfer from a national school into the *Ersatzschule* without going through bureaucratic exemption procedures from the state (Schwindt, 2003). Moreover, the international school itself must operate under the supervision of German authorities – offering a curriculum that meets the standard of national schools. One example of this control is that international schools operating under the *Ersatzschulstatus* must provide (and require) German lessons for all students (Schwindt, 2003). However, *Ersatzschulstatus* is fiercely sought after, as subsidiaries are provided by the state for transportation, and the majority of building costs (ISSG, 2014). International schools, which typically offer K-12 education[22], are otherwise granted *Ergänzungsschulstatus* for the remaining two years (11-12th grade). Under this category, the institution operates as a supplement to national forms of education, and therefore is less regulated by the state. For example, international school students after grade 10 are no longer required to take German lessons (ISSG, 2014). Institutions running under this category do not receive subsidiaries from the state, and up until 2000, the IB was not accepted at German universities as a valid form of education to meet entry requirements (Schwindt, 2003).

Schwindt (2003) identifies three primary reasons which may contribute to an escalated interest in international school education from German nationals. First, if a private education is sought, transferring into an international school with *Ersatzschulstatus* is a relatively easy procedure, for the reasons mentioned above. However, over time (particularly over the past ten years since Schwindt's study published in 2003), the admissions process has become increasingly more difficult for German nationals[23], as priority admission is often granted to students who indicate that national school education is inaccessible due to language barriers and other issues regarding the translation of marks received in other countries. The popularity of international school education over the past decade has increased admissions competition. Therefore German students are offered admission based on merit, and the extent to which they can demonstrate

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[22] Kindergarten through 12th grade. This includes both primary and secondary education.
[23] This was explained to me by a member of ISSG's Board of Directors.

qualities which are seen as 'international'[24]. Some international schools also 'cap' their admission of host country nationals at a particular percentage per year- including ISSG, which caps its 'German' student intake at 30%. The general increase in popularity and demand of international school education has also developed a stronger interest in attendance over the past decade.

Secondly, due to the recognition of the IB diploma at German universities in 2000, international school education has become increasingly popular for German nationals (Schwindt, 2003)- particularly for the final two years of secondary education (grades 11-12). Given that prior to grade 10, the education from an international school is recognized by the German authorities as meeting the standards of a *Hauptschule*, many German nationals will transfer to an international school after grade 10 only. The fact that many German nationals begin attending ISSG in grade 10 was brought up in interviews by my participants often.

Finally, German nationals began seeking privatized education in response to the relatively poor ratings of the German school system in the Programme for International Student Assessment comparative study in 2000 (PISA) (Schwindt, 2003; Cortina, Koinzer, Leschinsky, 2009). While Germany has since undergone reforms to their national educational system, inequalities linking socio-economic status and achievement levels are still viewed to persist, despite acknowledged improvements (Gürlevik, Palentien, & Heyer, 2013). Moreover, the attractiveness of privatized education within Germany has risen by 9% between 1992 and 2010, and now, one in eleven students attends a private institution (Gürlevik, Palentien & Heyer, 2013:8). International schools in Germany have been increasingly acknowledged as a worthwhile financial investment among a certain sector of the population.

Previously, transfers from the German national system into a private institution were generally perceived as being due either to a child's poor academic performance and social difficulties within the public classroom, or issues pertaining to conflicts arising between parents and the school (Schwindt, 2003). They were also often available for the rich sector of society, seeking an elite education at prestigious boarding schools or *Internate*. Private schools have also been perceived as alternative routes to break through notoriously rigid borders constructed within German public education. Thus opulent sectors among marginalized migrant groups (e.g. students of Turkish origin) have been shown to break through the notoriously rigid borders constructed within German public education by opting for private education (Söhn & Özcan, 2007; Koinzer & Leschinsky, 2009).

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[24] See Chapter 4.

Over the past 10-20 years, a significant shift in the perception of privatized education (including international school education) has emerged with the ease of transfer processes into *Ersatzschulen*, acceptance of the IB at German universities, and the repercussions stemming from the limitations of the public school system within Germany. The growing popularity and attraction of an English-medium education, coupled with the 'global' flair of the international school system and the prestigious nature oftentimes affiliated with international schools, has attracted host country nationals to the network of international schools across the globe.

Within German scholarship, there seems to be a degree of concern related to the growth of the private sector, and the fear of increased social stratification as a result of this trend (Koinzer and Leschinsky, 2009). Through an ethnographic documentation of the interplay between the international school and its host society, I aim to make a contribution to this debate. In the subsequent chapters I will discuss how social status, wealth, and perceptions of 'internationality' contribute to the exclusivity of the school community, and ultimately its role in the host nation.

2.6 INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF SOUTHERN GERMANY (ISSG)

ISSG was founded in 1966, after an American teacher from New York decided to collaborate with the American Consul and wealthy American investors to establish an English-speaking school in the southern region of Germany. Its founders aimed to provide an education 'to meet the needs of a rapidly growing international community" (ISSG website, 2014) of children seeking eventually to continue their education either in the United States or the UK. It therefore mirrors the traditional trajectories (Hayden and Thompson, 2008) exhibited amongst international schools established before the 1980s.

The school originally was located in a space that was leased from the U.S. military. It contained a cafeteria which served hamburgers, fries and ice-cream. However two years later, German authorities forbade the U.S. from leasing buildings to private companies, and therefore the school was relocated to its present location with approximately 220 students and 25 teachers (ISSG website, 2014).

The new property was comprised of three buildings originally: 'the Schloss[25]', or manor building; and two horse 'barns'. The 'Schloss' was built in 1875, and passed through multiple ownerships- particularly during the period of 1923-1939. During the outbreak of the war, the

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[25] Community members still use the word, 'Schloss' when referring to this building.

Nazis took over the manor, where the region's 'Gauleiter' took ownership of the building, and constructed the two "stables for riding and racing horses" (ISSG website, 2014). After the war, the Schloss was taken over by the U.S. Navy, who converted the building into an orphanage for boys. Given the building's historical connection with Germany's Nazi past, ISSG constructed a more positive approach by highlighting the Schloss' later purpose in the wake of WWII's end on its webpage, stating: "The fact that self-governmental structures were established to teach these boys democracy after the breakdown of the Nazi-regime made it a very special institution" (ISSG website, 2014). Thus ISSG was, in the beginning, closely connected with the self-emplacement strategies and democratic missions of the U.S. military.

By 1971 the school had expanded and was operating as a K-11th grade *Ergänzungsschule*, and by 1977 it achieved *Ersatzschulstatus.* Under this classification, the school was able to undertake the necessary expansion measures in light of its growing community, as the state government would now cover 80% of all building costs (ISSG website, 2014). ISSG saw the introduction of the IB diploma program in 1979. Four years later, ISSG established its own *Sportverein*[26], "as an attempt to integrate [ISSG] teams with local teams" (ISSG website, 2014). The founding of a Sportverein also meant additional governmental subsidies which helped fund the extra-curricular programming. I will return to this in Chapter 6. In 1984, ISSG became a fully accredited international school through the ECIS and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, which significantly increased clientele in subsequent years (ISSG website, 2014). By 1991, the student body had reached 800, and 8 years later, the school introduced the IB's Primary Years Programme (PYP), followed by the implementation of the Middle Years Programme (MYP) one year later.

At the time of this study, approximately 1600 students were in attendance across three schools: Elementary School (Kindergarten -4th grade), Middle School (5th – 8th grade) and the High School (9th – 12th grade). Each school had its own building on campus, and offered its own curriculum based on the IB model. Additional facilities included a gym complex with three in-door halls and workout area, four football fields, three outdoor tennis courts and all-play sports tarmac, multiple playgrounds for Junior School students, two arts auditoriums, a performing arts centre, a new teaching and learning building, and a newly built 8-lane track which was promoted to be the "third largest" in southern Germany at its opening ceremony in June 2014. The elaborate sports and arts facilities offered by ISSG were utilized to host tournaments, festivals,

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[26] Sports club. According to the German Olympic Sports Confederation (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund), over 27.8 million members across 91,000 sports clubs within Germany participate in the league (DOSB, 2013).

concerts and exhibitions across the league of international schools throughout Europe. At the time of this study, they were not contracted out for local hire.

ISSG was connected to a number of international schools throughout Europe through active participation in the following associations: ISST[27], SCIS[28], ISTA[29], and Model United Nations, to name a few. Through such connections, it maintained strong international ties which were promoted in literature produced for marketing and community-building purposes. As I will show later, these connections allowed for ISSG to validate the international nature of the school.

Finally, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at ISSG allowed community members (particularly expatriates) to utilize the school for socialization purposes. Membership in the organization was a requirement of the school, whereby a small annual fee was charged to each family at the beginning of each academic year. While every family was technically a member of the PTO, active participation was entirely optional. I discovered that the PTO was particularly popular among expatriates who also represented the majority of its active members. The PTO hosted a number of events, groups, charities, and fund-raising opportunities for the school, and its official purpose was to "[link] parents, staff and students of [ISSG] in a community friendly, mutually beneficial, fair and sustainable way" (ISSG website, 2014). Socialization opportunities for adult members of the community were particularly used by expatriate mothers who also largely ran the ISSG PTO. This organization proved very helpful for me to find participants, and to gain insight into the lives of adult community members.

2.7 METHODOLOGY

I chose an ethnographic approach to research the ISSG community, combining participant observation with conversations and semi-structured interviews. Data was collected over the course of three years (2012-2015), periodically throughout the academic school year. From the beginning of my PhD, I held a teaching assistantship which included teaching commitments during the academic year. Therefore, living and teaching in Southampton while conducting fieldwork in Germany involved substantial planning. The ISSG school calendar ran from mid-August through the end of June. The academic year in Southampton ran from late September / early October to mid-May. Therefore, I could afford two larger fieldwork trips both at the beginning and end of each ISSG school year (August-September and again May-June). We also had an annual large, month-long Easter break in March and April in Southampton - allowing

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[27] International Schools Sports Tournament
[28] Sports Council of International Schools
[29] International Schools Theatre Association

me another 2-3 weeks at ISSG, which only gave its students 1-2 weeks holiday for Easter. Throughout the years, my breaks would run often during times when school was in session at ISSG – including parts of the winter break and other term-time breaks including bank holidays. I also tried to have my teaching schedule arranged each semester so that I could take long weekend trips where I could throughout the year.

Each trip was carefully organized to ensure I gained a new insight into school and community life. An example is when I travelled to ISSG for a long weekend in order to observe the sports tournament at an international school in Vienna (see Chapter 6). Having access to a detailed school calendar which was available to me online, I was able to organize my fieldwork trips to ensure I was there for special school and community events such as the large Frühlingsfeste and Winterfeste (see Chapter 5). Each trip would last between 4 days and 6 weeks, and I would go to the school every day during my visit – even if I had nothing in particular planned for the day. It allowed me to take my time, be sporadic with my observations which enabled me to follow inconsistencies in daily routines (e.g. attend assemblies), and to gain an in-depth insight into daily occurrences across the school while it was in session. My transportation was sometimes the same as the students – I often rode the bus with them to the nearest train station. It was on these occasions that I could also speak with members of faculty and staff who would also take the same line. Across the three years, I had visited the school during each month of the year the school was in session (August – June). Due to the nature of some of my shorter trips, I also spent weekends at the school – where sports tournaments and additional extracurricular activities regularly took place across all seasons.

The scheduling of my fieldwork trips across the three years permitted me to see how the community developed over time: how social networks were formed, grew, and dissipated as members moved in and out of Germany; how policies changed over the years with new board, faculty and administration members; and significantly, how children at the school were growing up.

To enhance my understanding of the school, I attempted to explore all facets of ISSG life during these trips. I looked at the curricula and attended classroom activities during regular school hours (9am-4pm). I made classroom observations, met with coordinators, attended staff meetings, conversed with teachers (in some cases, following up with an interview), and informally spoke with students of all ages. I was often encouraged to 'wander around' the classroom, meeting students, and participating (minimally) in classroom discussions. I also invested a significant amount of time in exploring the IB's Creativity, Action and Service program (see Chapter 5). To investigate social activities during day time hours, I spent a significant

amount of time in areas designated for social activities for students, teachers and parents, including the cafeteria, the 'Imbiss[30]' (a separate room with tables which was used by high school students), and a lounge with beanbag chairs. All of these areas were frequented during lunch hours, breaks, and before and after school hours. To investigate the after school activities, I attended a number of practices of various sports teams, where the coaches sometimes asked me to help transport equipment or organize the students together. I was able to interact with coaches, students and parents watching their children practice. I also attended several competitions, and went on an over-night sports trip to an international school in Vienna with three high school teams. I observed concerts and other productions, engaged with the participants, and attended two art exhibitions put on by students. To explore the role of the adult community member at the school, I attended PTO meetings, PTO-sponsored events, and was invited to attend social functions off campus with mothers, including a ski trip to Kitzbühel. I explored adult recreational activities sponsored by the Sportverein and the PTO through observations, interviews and conversations with participants and leaders. All of my participants have been given pseudonyms in consideration of their privacy and confidentiality.

2.7.1 Interviews

I began searching for participants through contacting 'key' individuals at the school. These included the Head of School, the PTO presidents, and the individual school principals. These individuals held a certain degree of power within the institution, and after establishing a working-relationship with them, I was able to easily gain the trust of others to whom they directed me.

From the beginning, I tried to reach out to individuals across a broad range of fields, as a means to understand all facets of community life– from those who were in charge of after school activities, transportation, and curricular development, to nationality representatives and members of the Board of Directors. Additional participants were found through a 'snowball' approach. The more I interviewed, the more I gained access to other members of the community.

I contacted those employed by the school via email, and oftentimes these employees would refer me to other colleagues – providing me with additional email addresses or telephone numbers. Additional participants were found at community events and functions. I interviewed 19 individuals – 14 women and 5 men. All of them held an active position within the community.

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[30] Snack bar.

Men are under-represented in this group because they generally played less of an active role in the community. While the highest ranked individuals holding a position at ISSG were men (all principals of the three schools and the Head of School), the ISSG staff and PTO members were predominantly women. All participants were selected based on the position they held within the school, and not on gender-based criteria.

All interviews were conducted in English, and mostly on the school campus. They were largely conducted in the school cafeteria where parents tended to congregate for socialization purposes throughout the day, or in offices or classrooms.

2.7.2 Focus Group Interviews

In June 2014 I attempted to hold focus group interviews with high school students over the age of 16. Given that the school year was coming to an end, many students at this time were going through an examination period. Therefore, while the school made students available to me, I found it difficult to find volunteers. To organize the focus groups, I had contacted the high school principal and vice principal, with the intent to find participants during their lunch hour. However, the principals argued that students needed a break between classes, and preferred to organize the focus groups during another time period. I learned that students at ISSG were grouped according to the subjects they selected for their IB examinations. For example, those who were interested in science, operated on a different schedule from those who were interested in humanities. Schedules were also based on marks – those who were considered to be academically gifted were grouped together, over those who were not. Therefore, approaching students during their regular hours proved to be problematic, as I wanted to select a random group of students, that may not have been acquainted with one another (i.e. on the same academic track, and therefore continuously in the same classes). The principals told me that the only time when students were grouped together 'completely randomly' was during their 'homeroom period' – which was a 45 minute time slot in the week - dedicated to free study, school assemblies or other announcements. Students met in a classroom for the duration of this period with an allocated 'homeroom' teacher. The school principals argued that only one homeroom teacher of three would be available to offer their homeroom for purposes of this study (the two others were on leave and/or on a school-related trip abroad). Therefore, I was referred to a homeroom teacher who, very willingly, allowed me to address his students to find volunteers. During this time, I realized that students were under exam pressure and wanted to use the homeroom period to study – therefore, finding volunteers proved to be difficult.

The principals allocated a classroom to me to hold my focus group interviews for 45 minutes each. I was given two sessions over the course of 2 weeks. The first week, five male students volunteered to form the first focus group. In the interview, they told me they did not normally 'hang out' together, which confirmed the random selection of students in this homeroom – each of these students were studying different fields, and came from different national backgrounds. The second focus group, which took place the following week, was comprised of only 2 female students, for the reason that no one else volunteered due to the pressures of a mathematics examination in the following class period. Similarly to the first focus group, these students expressed that they did not normally socialize within the same social circles. Therefore, volunteers for focus groups were based on a number of logistical issues outside of my control.

Aside from the focus groups, I engaged in an array of casual conversations with students of all ages during my observations across campus. Oftentimes students would approach me, particularly when spending time in the school cafeteria, to ask who I was. Sometimes students would ask to have lunch with me, or, after becoming more acquainted with individuals across campus, I would be asked to work a position which required a degree of interaction with students. Examples of this included serving food at the Imbiss and helping the athletic department during tournaments. Casual conversations also took place across campus with adult members of the community.

2.7.3 Positioning within my Research and Ethical Considerations

My family moved from Seattle, in the U.S., to this region of Germany in 1995 when my father took on a new career. My siblings, my mother and I did not speak German and did not know much about Germany when we moved. My father was a German national, who later took on a U.S. citizenship in his teens when his family immigrated to the USA in the 1970s. When we moved to Germany, he was adamant that we 'integrate' into German society. We moved to a very small village with approximately 2000 people. My siblings and I attended German public school, and became quickly active in our village within the first year. We participated in local festivals, attended church on holidays, and we all played football and tennis on the local Sportverein teams. In the first few years, we went on the annual village ski trip to Saalbach-Hinterglemm and participated in the town's downhill ski race. My siblings and I regularly played outside and got to know all the kids in town.

For the first few months, I was unaware of the international school located nearby, and it was not until our family met a British family living around the corner from us, that we learned of ISSG. After being exposed to this knowledge of an English-speaking school, my parents tried to get my father's company to pay for the tuition fees. It took nearly 4 years. During these years I transferred to a secondary school (Gymnasium) nearby, where I remember things got very difficult for me. Where I felt a sense of belonging to the village, at the high school, I felt less of that. The language barrier and my subsequent 'foreignness' also impacted my confidence, leading to poor grades.

The transfer to the international school was an eye-opening experience for me. My impression of it was very positive – I remember coming home and gleefully dancing around our kitchen reiterating to my mother how wonderful it was to be in a classroom where I could speak English, and to meet others who were considered to be 'foreign' too.

My siblings and I began school at ISSG in 1999 and over the course of our time there until 2002, we gradually began to lose touch with the people in our village. We stopped going to local events, and eventually left the football and tennis teams. Our schedules from the ISSG community events always seemed to clash with village life. By the time we moved back to the U.S. in 2002, I had lost touch with nearly all of my local friends. Of course, I had also gained new friendships at the international school, and was a part of a new community that was exciting to me.

After moving back to the U.S. with my family, I finished high school and university, and after graduating, took on a teaching assistantship with the Fulbright organization in Linz, Austria. There, I worked in a range of schools including one in which the vast majority of the student body comprised of first and second generation 'migrant' children. At this school, students were regularly encouraged to 'integrate': the emphasis was placed on getting the students to learn German as quickly as possible, and introducing them (and their parents) to local culture, traditions and society. It was during this time that I began noticing substantial differences between how 'migrant' children of public schools were generally perceived in comparison to what the 'TCK' commercial literature generally described. I began to think about how certain migrant groups are framed through different educational institutions and sectors, and also reflected on how (and why) certain groups might be considered to be a 'burden' to their host societies, while others are not.

These experiences left an impression on me, and therefore have motivated and also impacted this research project. On one hand, they allowed me to approach ISSG with a slightly

'unconventional' background and relationship to the international school system prior to conducting the research. The experiences produced questions that have not yet been posed, and highlighted certain themes that have not yet been discussed in current scholarship. On the other hand, as a researcher, I had to continuously consider how my experiences impacted my analyses. I discuss below how I managed and reflected on my positionality throughout my research.

In 2011, when I first reconnected with ISSG after so many years, I recognized that I was considered by most ISSG community members to be a 'former' member of the school community. Even though I did not graduate from ISSG and was only a student there for 2.5 years, I was invited to a small number of 'alumni' events for those who graduated from the school in 2004[31]. Given the transient nature of the international school community, those who attended ISSG in a particular year group (regardless of whether they graduated from the actual school or not), were included in the mailing lists. However, I am also not active within the school's alumni organization, and have not lived in the region since I was seventeen years old. For this reason, I did not have a connection with the ISSG community or the school until I began this project. Given that I am also not currently active (i.e. a teacher or paying member) within the community makes me an outsider. However, I learned over my experience as a researcher at ISSG, that the lines between insider and outsider positioning are complex and fluid. My experience resonates with Dwyer and Buckle (2009)'s observation:

> "The notion of the space between challenges the dichotomy of insider versus outsider status. To present these concepts in a dualistic manner is overly simplistic. It is restrictive to lock into a notion that emphasizes either/or, or one or the other, you are in or you are out. Rather, a dialectical approach allows the preservation of the complexity of similarities and differences" (2009:60).

To view my positioning as situated in 'the space between' allows for a dynamic understanding of my role as both an insider and outsider at the same time. This notion was particularly useful in understanding my last research trip in June 2014, where my familiarity with the community and its members had reached the point where I was beginning to be asked to perform community roles. Thus, I was asked, for example, to handle money and work a concessions stand at a track and field meet ISSG was hosting in June 2014. During this time, I felt as though community members had accepted me as an alumna of the school, as a 'fellow expat', or as a newly acquainted member because of my prolonged research activities on campus. I noticed that the boundaries became increasingly blurred, as I became more familiar with the school and its

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[31] Including the more recent '10 year reunion' which took place in May 2014.

members. Nonetheless, during my final trip in 2014, I still received comments such as, 'Be kind!' (in a joking way), or 'Are you going to write that down?' which created an instantaneous barrier and, for that particular moment, confirmed my role to me, and to those around me, as an outsider. Sometimes these comments would be in a joking manner, or could be described as 'banter', however at other times the tone was very serious.

Since I attended ISSG in the late 1990s, the school had grown tremendously. The school community had nearly doubled in number and most facilities on campus had either been renovated or added since that time. Moreover, only a select few individuals had remained in employment since my time – most of whom, I had never engaged with as a student. For this reason, the feeling of historical change was strong for me personally. This allowed me to critically assess the data I collected, and remain relatively emotionally detached from the institution and its members.

Since the beginning of my fieldwork, I tried to document my feelings as an insider. I found this to be a useful tool to distance myself from feelings that were evoked through interviews, conversations, events, or observations that may have triggered an emotional response worth investigating. One particular phenomenon with which I actively struggled was loyalty. Over time, I had gained the trust of many individuals of the ISSG community who had shared their thoughts and feelings with me, which I, in turn, analysed and documented. To treat these thoughts and ideas as 'data' was something with which I, admittedly, struggled. This sentiment concerns undoubtedly every ethnographer – coming to terms with notions of 'portrayal and betrayal', as Back (2009) calls it. Moreover, the dual role of insider and researcher occasionally caused reflexive doubts (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). I noticed, for example, that my engagement with the student focus groups was 'easy'. I had been their age as a student at ISSG and felt that I could easily relate to them, and this ultimately affected the interviews. The responses I received from students were often candid and unfiltered (see Chapters 5 and 6), which on one hand produced very honest responses, but on the other hand called into question whether they would have responded differently had they seen me as an unaffiliated researcher, rather than an alumna of the school. Prior to the interviews, the homeroom teacher introduced me as a former student of the school, and even pulled out some of my own school work from the school files, to show the class. Therefore, I was presented from the beginning first as a former student, then as a researcher. It is therefore unsurprising that students approached the interviews in this manner.

To understand my own positioning as a researcher at my former school, I created a reflexive field diary to write reflections regarding these issues after these interviews were

conducted. I found this a useful way to consider these consequences, and ultimately referred back to this documentation during analysis.

I am confident that my role as an alumna of ISSG significantly facilitated my access to the school. International schools are notorious for being difficult to access as research sites – particularly for ethnographic work (Risch, 2008). My status as a former pupil did not only afford me privileged access to the school as a research site, but also indicated that it was seen as a life-long membership ticket in a community of insiders.

Finally, my U.S. nationality and linguistic variety also played a role in accessing particular groups at the school. I was able to easily connect with, and build trust with the group of American mothers who were actively involved in school life. However I also acknowledge that my drifting towards this particular group was largely based on my own language skills, gender, and experience as a former American expat child in Germany.

2.8 CONCLUSION

ISSG as an institution was both situated within a 'global' network of cohort international schools which espoused similar ideologies and branding to draw in clientele, and also within a national, regional and otherwise 'local' context. There are currently strong debates on the rapid growth of private schooling in Germany, the development of IB World Schools, and the concern over educationally-produced social stratification in the country. The positioning of this research aims to provide insight into the social ramifications of international school community life for expats and host nationals in Germany. The subsequent chapter discusses these gaps along with the theoretical framework surrounding the theme of 'global imaginary', which entails boundary-drawing strategies and institutionally-regulated cultural isolationism.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The international school education market has been growing exponentially since the 1950s[32]. This chapter argues that literature on international schools plays a significant, and in fact, vital role in the development and sustainability of this market. A close examination of the educational scholarship on international schools indicates a tightly-woven relationship between research and market interests. Researchers have been actively involved in the documentation, validation and accreditation of international schools, the International Baccalaureate, and other external governing bodies, thus actively investing in the maintenance and growth of the international school sector.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first explores the international school market and how literature produced over the past 65 years has reflected, and contributed to it. This illustrates a unique characteristic of international school scholarship: it is typically supported, funded, or encouraged through an international school, or an external organization that benefits from and/or contributes to this system. Moreover, I will show how the educational market and the documentation of this market (i.e. scholarship) have jointly created and accredited a 'global imaginary' over time.

The second part of this chapter outlines the larger concepts which will help guide my analyses in the subsequent chapters. These concepts have helped me understand my ethnographic data, and theoretically position this thesis. I begin this section with an exploration and definition of the notion, 'global imaginary' – a concept that founds the basis for this thesis. This 'global imaginary' is a community construct, which is firstly expressed within discourse[33]. I then turn to Bourdieu's 'habitus', 'capital' and 'field' to understand how the 'global imaginary' is experienced and articulated in community practices[34]. Finally, I explore 'boundaries' as a means to conceptualize the extent of the international school 'field' which is defined by physical, social and mental borders (Hernes, 2004a;2004b)[35].

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[32] See Brummit & Keeling, 2013.
[33] This theoretically positions the focus of Chapter 4.
[34] This theoretically positions the focus of Chapter 5.
[35] This theoretically positions the focus of Chapter 6.

3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOLARLY INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS & CONNECTIVITY TO THE MARKET

During the 1950s and 60s, the international school market was centred on largely American and British expatriate students living outside of their passport countries (Ronsheim, 1967). As limited as the literature on this sector was, it nonetheless was largely focused on education for the expatriate 'returnee'. Thus a very high emphasis was placed on research on the cultivation of nationally-oriented systems of education for expats living abroad, and in particular, the theme and prevention of 'strangeness' upon 'return' to the home country after living abroad (Ronsheim, 1967; 1970; Werkman, 1980). Moreover, most studies during this time also focused on the American expatriate scene, and the dilemma of the 'returnee' to the U.S. These themes mirror the political climate of the post-WWII world and onset of the Cold War (Jonietz, 2012) – the interest in loyalty to the nation-state, and the ensuing fear of 'alienation' or lack of belonging within one's passport country. Such traditions of carrying nationhood as a marker of identity within the international school system still remain strongly embedded within institutional and community discourse, and are discussed further in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Moreover, this traditional perception of the role of international schools as designed for a particular demographic of students is, I argue, still entrenched in international school community life. It is also exhibited in the scholarly literature. This demographic is often described as 'Third Culture Kids' – a term that American social-anthropologist, Ruth Hill Useem, coined and used during the 1950s and 60s as a means to classify a group of American international school students in India. The 'first' culture was defined as the passport culture, the 'second' as the host culture, and the 'third' as a "bridging culture which reflects the [individual's] cultures (first and second)" (Cottrell, 2011:61).

The term is still regularly used by international schools around the world (including ISSG) to describe their student bodies. Due to the original use of the term, 'TCK' holds a specific connotation to white U.S. nationals – a convention that has been criticised by contemporary scholars (e.g. Hylmö, 2002). Moreover, Bell-Villada and Sichel (2011) point to the origin of the term as constructing a foundation on which modern perceptions of the label still exist : "Colonialism, in a sense, created Third Culture Kids, along with the conditions and settings for a TCK literature that chooses to take on such themes" (2011:5). The label has been used in international school scholarship since the 1960s in reference specifically to individuals who have backgrounds in *both* international mobility and international school education. Scholars habitually exclude host nationals attending international schools from this category. A large

degree of cultural, social and economic currency is affiliated with the label, and I argue, this is left largely unconsidered within international school literature. I address this gap in Chapter 4.

In the 1960s, a standardized curriculum for TCKs was proposed by UNESCO as a means to further ease transitions for families experiencing several international relocations. International schools and their internationally-mobile families thus played a pivotal role in the origination of 'international education' programs, including the making of "grassroots contributions" (Fox, 1985) to the International Baccalaureate (IB) shortly after the establishment of the International Schools Association (ISA) in the 1960s. International schools were therefore documented as the only direct facilitators of the IB at the time – creating an even wider market for future growth of the international school sector.

In the 1980s, an additional rationale for the development of a standardized international curriculum was introduced to assist internationally-mobile students' transition into universities in Europe and North America (Jonietz, 2012). At the time, only a select few universities admitted IB graduates, including Harvard, Oxford and the Sorbonne (Hill, 2007). The prestigious reputation of these universities aided in the IB's development as a particularly exclusive form of education designed primarily for internationally-mobile students of international schools. This further increased the profile of the sector as exclusive and prestigious, and reinforced a "knowledge economy" of the globalizing world – a reputation that still stands today (Coulby and Zambeta: 2005:1). Present trends also show a demand for 'international universities' as a continuant form of education for international school students (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

Some of the initial primary concerns with the International Baccalaureate program have continued up until today, including (despite the IBO's best intentions) signs of Eurocentrism (Bruce, 1987; Blackburn, 1983; English Today, 1988; Blackmore, 2010), cultural imperialism (Fox, 1985; Hayden, 2011; Simandiraki, 2006), and the production of cultural elitism (Yip, 2000; Van Oord, 2007). Significantly, Van Oord (2007) argues the tensions between the IB as a provider of 'international education', and its intentions towards establishing links with higher education institutions in Europe and in North America support the program's critics who have proclaimed the IB as a form of 'cultural imperialism'.

While the IB was originally largely researched within the international school context, it attracted a wave of scholarly interest once again in the 1990s and early 2000s after its implementation into state-funded schools in the United States – inciting what Bunnell (2009) calls a "cultural war" after a conservative American public declared the program as cultivating an 'anti-Western bias' (Archibald, 2004), 'un-American' (Quist, 2008), and 'undermining U.S.

founding principles' (McGroarty, 2011). Such sentiments stem from American conservatism whereby nationally-oriented values take on a higher priority than 'universal' ones (Bunnell, 2009). However, despite the controversy in the U.S., this opened an entirely new field for research. With the increase in transnational mobility and opportunities for employment abroad, international education was becoming an increasingly popular form of mainstream education – and by 2008, the IB was offered in more national schools than international schools worldwide (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). With the growing popularity of 'IB World Schools[36]', the international school sector no longer led the market. This shift in demand expanded the international education sector – showing a surge in academic research and return to scholarly examinations of the IB and how it fit into national systems of education, including higher education[37]. Hill (2006) argues that this increase in accessibility to this form of education allowed for other sectors to deliver curricula which encompassed the following components: "understanding cultural identities across national frontiers, knowledge about global issues and interdependence of nations, critical thinking skills applied to transnational issues and world cultures and an appreciation of the human condition around the world" (2006:99). The fact that students around the world (particularly in the U.S.) were being granted access to the IB within the public school sector established a strong competition for international schools. When examining the literature in the 1990's, as scholarship on international education expanded into larger educational sectors (private and public), research on international schools shifted to place an emphasis on their new market: the diverse cultural *composition* of their students and community. While IB World Schools could offer an international education, international schools could offer an 'intercultural' learning environment uniquely comprised of expatriate 'TCKs' from around the world.

As Desmond Cole-Baker, co-founder of the IB diploma and once Head of Geneva International School stated in 1989: "in a true international school [of diverse cultures] international education is a question of environment; in a national school, it is a frame of mind" (in Hill[38], 2007: 26). This statement underscores the perceived difference between international schools and national schools offering the IB, and is presented as a way to defend the international school market as particularly exclusive. Thus international schools were (and still are) perceived by individuals invested in them as providing unique learning *environments* which

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[36] IB World Schools are schools which have been officially authorized by the IBO to provide the IB curriculum.
[37] See, for example, Halicioğlu, 2008; Tarc, 2009; Bunnell, 2010; and Parker, 2011.
[38] Ian Hill was Regional Director (Africa, Europe and Middle East) from 1993-2000, and then Deputy Director General for the IBO from 2000-2012.

are seen to supplement the ideological orientation of the IB program (Renaud, 1991). This perspective not only serves to differentiate the international school system from other IB World Schools seen in national systems of education, but also establishes a unique market based on the cultural composition of the international school network.

Research on the cultural composition of international schools thus became popular in the late 1990s and into the 2000s – focusing on the 'Third Culture Kid'[39].The publishing of the commercial book, *Third Culture Kids: Growing up among worlds* by David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken in 1999 popularized the term. With the resurfacing of the label, and 'TCK' as a concept to describe the unique composition of international school children, other terms began to become popularized within international school literature including, 'Global Nomad' (McCaig, 1992; Fail, 1996), 'Cultural Chameleon' (McCaig, 1996; Smith, 1996), and 'Internationally-mobile' (IM) (Gerner & Perry et al, 1992; Hayden & Thompson, 1995).

The growing popularity of the term, 'TCK' began to pose problems for scholars, including the fact that it is terminal – one is not a 'Kid' forever, and the affiliations with the term may not end after one reaches adulthood. For this reason, other terms emerged to describe privileged migrants regardless of age, including 'Third Culture Individual' (TCI) (Lyttle, Barker & Cornwell, 2011) and 'Adult Third Culture Kid' (ATCK) (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009).

Also, due to criticism of the exclusivity of the original term, TCK, other labels began to become increasingly popular including 'Fourth Culture Kid[40]' (Ezra, 2007), 'Missionary Kid' (MK)[41], and Adult Missionary Kid (AMK)[42], and Embassy Kid (EK)[43]. To curb criticism on the exclusivity of the term, TCK, Pollock and Van Reken coined the label, 'Cross-Cultural Kid' (CCK) in a subsequent edition (2001) to their original book[44]. This umbrella term, Cross-Cultural Kid (CCK) included the following categories: 'traditional third culture kid[45]', 'children of bi/multinational parents[46]', 'children of immigrants[47]', 'children of refugees[48]', 'children of minorities[49]', 'international

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[39] See for example, Gillies, 1998; Langford, 1999; McKillop-Ostrom, 2000; and Straffon,2003
[40] "These children grow up in their countries of citizenship but attend international schools espousing foreign, usually Western, cultural values. The result is an alienation that arises among children of the 'fourth constituency' towards their home cultures" (Ezra, 2007:281).
[41] See for example, Bikos & Kocheleva et al, 2009.
[42] See for example, Priest, 2003.
[43] See for example, Lising Antonio, 2004.
[44] *Third culture kids: growing up among worlds* (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999).
[45] "Children who move into another culture with their parents due to a parent's career choice" (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005:3).
[46] "Children born to parents from at least two cultures or races" (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005:3).
[47] "Children whose parents have made a permanent move to a new country where they were not originally citizens" (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005:3).

adoptees[50]', and 'domestic TCKs[51]'. While 'CCK' is not widely used within popular culture, a minority of scholars work to develop and promote the term, 'CCK' to include a much larger demographic (e.g. Cottrell, 2011). The aforementioned categories, however, indicate the original and growing exclusivity of the TCK label. The fact that additional categories included individuals who are likely to have experienced social and economic hardship supports the notion that the TCK label has been used within both academic and commercial literature as a means to describe a very particular elite group of 'expatriates'. This is an issue that Benjamin and Dervin (2015) also call for scholarly reassessment:

> "The ideal image of TCKs as "identity-less" individuals who can "surf" through different territories, cultures and languages needs to be revised…(can they really adapt everywhere?)" (2015:4).

The calls for reassessment and claims of exclusivity make it clear that some scholars have found these terms analytically challenging. I have chosen to avoid the terms as descriptive and analytical categories but treat them as labels which are routinely used by my participants and within literature produced by ISSG. For example, I do not use the term, 'TCK' to describe ISSG members, but will discuss in Chapter 4 how the term is used by the school and members to classify themselves and others. These labels play a role in how the field is constructed. Labels are therefore crucial categories of practice whose meanings and everyday use I seek to explore.

3.3 EPISTOMOLOGICAL POSITION OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

As indicated above, the course of development of international school literature is notably a reflection of the international school market.

Dolby and Rahmen (2008) draw attention to the fact that the most prominent scholars in the field are Mary Hayden, Jeff Thompson, George Walker and James Cambridge. All four are involved with most of the larger bodies of work produced within international school research, and all of them are, or have been professionally active or educated at the University of Bath. Moreover, *The International Schools Journal (ISJ)* and the *Journal of Research in International*

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[48] "Children whose parents are living outside their original country or place not by personal choice but due to circumstances such as war, violence, famine and other natural disasters" (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005:3)

[49] "Children whose parents are from a racial or ethnic group which is not part of the majority race or ethnicity of the country in which they live" (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005:3).

[50] "Children adopted by parents from another country other than the one of that child's birth" (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005:3).

[51] "Children whose parents have moved in or among various subcultures within that child's home country" (Van Reken & Bethel, 2005:3).

Education (JRIE) have always been, and still are the two leading publications in the area. The *ISJ* consulting editors are George Walker and James Cambridge, and the *JRIE* founding editor is Jeff Thompson, its editor is Mary Hayden and its chair of the editorial advisory board is George Walker. It is thus unsurprising to see the same network of international school scholars cyclically publish their work within these two journals. Moreover, the *ISJ* was, up until 2016, published by the European Council of International Schools (ECIS), whereby subscription was included in the respective school's ECIS membership. Journal contributors to *ISJ* or *JIE* are, and consistently have been international school practitioners or administrators – particularly those who have undergone a professional development program or postgraduate degree through the University of Bath's Centre for Education in an International Context (CEIC), which is notably the leading institution for international school research (Dolby and Rahmen, 2008).

The small network of scholars is further involved in a limited circle of organizations, certifying bodies and academic institutions which dominate the field. The International Baccalaureate Research Unit (IBRU), funded by the IBO, operates in conjunction with the CEIC. Significantly, Jeff Thompson's involvement with the IB as its Chairman of the Board of Examiners in the 1980s demonstrates the lengthy foothold the University of Bath has on the IB, its connection to the international school system, and the program's orientation as being influenced by research conducted through the CEIC. The CEIC is currently headed by Mary Hayden, Jeff Thompson and James Cambridge. Moreover these scholars have been affiliated with UNESCO, the International Baccalaureate, and have acted as consultants to international schools across the globe – including ISSG. When beginning my field work at ISSG, many of the teachers were involved in furthering their education, or participating in professional development programs through the University of Bath's CEIC – including the Head of School. Thus, the education of professionals in the international school system is often credentialed (at some point) through the same institution. Education and credentials received from the CEIC at the University of Bath is thus endorsed and acknowledged as a form of high professional capital within the international school system.

Finally, while the IB has expanded well beyond the context of international schools, it remains nonetheless closely connected with the Council of International Schools (CIS) – which is closely linked to the CEIC. For example, in order to become professionally involved at an IB World School, one must apply through the CIS – not the IBO (IBO, 2016). And, in order to apply through CIS, it is strongly advised to have some degree of professional development on international education, where the University of Bath's CEIC is listed as number one on a limited

list of providers (CIS, 2016). The field is therefore highly regulated, interconnected and, thus, has significantly impacted academic research on international schools.

As seen, one of the most striking characteristics of international school literature in general is that it tends to be authored by current (or former) practitioners or administrators at international schools. It is significant to note that my position as a former international school student also places this thesis, to a small degree, in this category[52]. However, my experience as a kid living in the area while attending national schools before transferring to ISSG, gave me a unique perspective on the international school system as an 'outsider'[53]. Given that the existing body of work typically involves empirical studies conducted through the institution in which the author is typically an expat active employee, the stance and perspectives on international school education take on similar approaches and overall tone. This would also explain why the vast majority of research conducted through international schools is aimed to highlight the rationale for pedagogical or curricular improvement and orientation, including the development of 'global' or 'international-mindedness'[54] and 'global citizenship'[55]. Moreover, provided that many of these scholars have been professionally active with the IB, CIS, ISS and/or the University of Bath's CEIC, the scholarly stance on international education conducted through international schools has stayed relatively narrow.

Within the field of international education, international schools are addressed according to their 'unique', de-localized nature. Because they do not constitute subjects of any national system, and are very particular within the scope of privatized education within the national context, the field of international school research is severely restricted and limited. They are often even deemed by academics as elite, "pampered minorit[ies]" which are 'undeserving' of scholarly attention (de Mejia, 2002: 298). Moreover, Knowles and Harper (2010) point out that privileged migrants are generally perceived as an "uncontroversial segment of migration". This would also explain how international school scholarship has resulted in using differentialist and exceptionalist rhetoric to define international schools and their communities. Terms such as 'international' or 'global' are routinely applied to both the schools and their clientele – highlighting a contrast to other forms of education and 'migrant' school children attending school in the host nation. A strong lexical transition is visible in literature pertaining to national systems of education. In these cases, internationalization reforms and efforts are

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[52] This is discussed in the methodology section (2.7) of this thesis.
[53] I discovered from an ISSG counsellor that it is rare for expat students to transfer into the international school system after attending local schools, for the reason that they are typically not reliant on the English speaking community or 'expat' social networks.
[54] See for example, Taylor, 2013; Cambridge & Thompson, 2004.
[55] See for example, Goren & Yemini, 2015.

labelled as 'multicultural education' for children of 'first-generation immigrants', 'migrants' or 'unskilled workers'. The approach is different:

> "Multicultural education is an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school" (Banks and McGee Banks, 2010:1).

While international school children meet the diversity criteria of this statement, the term, 'multicultural education' is rarely used to describe education offered at these elite schools. In fact, 'multicultural education' when applied to scholarship predominantly links this form of education to social problems (Coffey, 2013; Huss, 2001) such as crime (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Harber, 2001), social justice (e.g. Kumagai & Lypson, 2009; Stone Hanley, 2010), language problems (Hernandez, 2005; Osler & Starkey, 2000), and tensions emerging through racial and ethnic discrimination (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Ramsey, 2004; Theodorou, 2011) in immigrant societies. The influence and impact of labels is thus present in scholarship – shaping each field into concise approaches whereby participants are neatly categorized – largely according to the 'type' of migratory background or 'intercultural' experience they document.

Such rhetoric and discursive approaches differentiate the international school system and their communities as particularly exclusive, in comparison to 'the rest' – cultivating what are claimed as unique qualities specific to international school education. The quote below is typical for its generally endorsing rhetoric and is from an edited book by Hayden, Thompson and Walker:

> "[International schools] will continue to serve the global nomads, but by connecting with the 'holes' in the globalization net, they can make a real difference. In helping local schools to become more 'internationally-minded' they can further their mission of internationalism…" (Allen, 2002: 141).

Using the 'global' to legitimize the positioning of the international school and community as responsible for the well-being of the 'local', Allen (2002) perceives international schools as placed in a position of power within their host nations. Such statements can also indicate a belief in a superior cultural mission. Here we see evidence of a very common assumption found within international school communities: that the local populations desire the expertise and direction from this more privileged sector of society. The approach towards viewing the 'local' as 'in need of aid' is present not only within scholarship, but also within community discourse I observed at ISSG (see Chapter 6).

International school educators and administrators often claim a heightened sense of moral responsibility to humanity – reflecting the IBO's call for 'global citizenship' education in the 1980s.

> "Professor Walker's reflections provide provocative yet poignant advice for educators seeking ways and means of educating successive generations to be just, humane and responsible citizens, well equipped *To Educate the Nations*" (Taylor[56], 2003, emphasis included).

The italicized reference Taylor uses is taken from the constitution of UNESCO, which is used by George Walker in an article entitled, *To Educate the Nations: Reflections on an international education* (2002). Much like Allen's (2002) statement (above), the phrase used by the two scholars demonstrates an elitist and idealistic undertone. Bunnell (2005) argues that some international school educators and administrators (like Taylor, above) demonstrate sentiments which suggest that international schools should stand as exemplary symbols for freedom and democracy. References to the United Nations are frequent within international school missions, communities, literature, and activities, including the often-practiced annual ritual of 'UN Day' parades[57]. In my interview with the ISSG Head of School in 2013, he defined his role as "…like being the Head of the UN". Notably, this stance follows the primary ideological principles expressed in the IB Learner Profile[58]. Provided that the relevant literature is frequently produced by IB educators, it is unsurprising that it contains the same perspectives. The following statement, for example was made in an article in the newspaper, *The International Educator*[59] about American-oriented international schools:

> "Our overseas schools are light-house beacons in often hostile environments to call others to the benefits of democratic thought, theory and reality" (Brown, 2002: 9).

The notion that international schools promote themselves as exemplary leaders of education, democracy, and humanitarianism is also visible in the mission statements of international schools across the globe. Some examples include:

> "A United World at peace – through education" - Tenby International School Group, Malaysia (2016).

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[56] Ray Taylor worked as Head of School at a number of international schools – as highlighted in the JRIE article's biography.
[57] See Chapter 4 for more on this.
[58] See Appendix 1.
[59] TIS is an online platform for educators (or prospective educators) within the international school system. It provides news, job advertisements, and research on international education.

"…to offer a program of study that is consistent with the spirit of the **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights**" – International School of Estonia, Estonia (2016, original emphasis included).

"… to provide quality education to the children, dedicated to producing leaders of the future" – The Hope International School, India (2016).

"To be a model of excellence in educating students for success in the world community" – International School Bangkok, Thailand (2016).

"…a global education leader recognized nationally and internationally for developing lifelong learners excellent in academics and values, and movers of society who make a difference in the 21st century" – Southville International School, Philippines (2016).

As Morphew and Hartley argue, mission statements "serve a legitimating function" (2006:458). The more international schools incorporate these notions into their missions, the more they validate their presence as such. Moreover, Morphew and Hartley (2006) incorporate a Bourdeiusian approach to their analysis of mission statements, claiming educational missions reinforce the 'rules of the game' – setting up the ideological framework and standards of the institution. During my observations at ISSG, teachers and administrators worked hard to ensure the school mission was incorporated into both curricular and extracurricular life. I discuss the significance and impact of ISSG's mission statement further in Chapter 4.

The scholarship conducted in the field of international school education also includes some significant strands of ethnocentrism, a fact which may similarly be attributable to the narrow scope of international school research and its interconnectivity to the school system's governing bodies. Ethnocentrism can be exhibited in a variety of ways including references to the English language, Anglophone cultures, Eurocentric approaches to pedagogy and learning, and Western-oriented educational methodologies and models. Edna Murphy, founder and editor of the *International Schools Journal* (ISJ) wrote an article published in the *Journal for International Education* (JIE) in which she made the following statement:

"The [monolingual international school] may or may not have added the word, 'international' to its name to reflect the new population it has come to serve. Its ethos is Anglo-Saxon or western; it has a curriculum (which may or may not call itself international) based on western models, probably English or American, which usually includes an emphasis upon global issues and promotes the goals of world peace and universal tolerance. Its structure, its organization, its staff and its values systems are predominantly Anglo-American or broadly western…" (2003:25-26).

She acknowledges the Anglo-American influence within international schools as problematic, as message systems are cloaked with the label, 'international'. However, the concluding remark to her paper is:

> "After all, these children have come to us from outside our cultural boundaries looking for enlightenment and help in the form of an English-language education. We must not let them down" (2003: 39).

Thus, the author ultimately sanctions the trend despite her critique of the school system's Anglo-centric bias.

Murphy's 2003 paper is an example of how 'insider' positioning within international school research has cultivated a particular discourse – her use of an 'us' / 'them' lexis highlights this further. It draws to light that the *ISJ* or *JIE* serve as platforms for debate among the relatively uniform demographic of international school educators.

The acknowledgement of Anglophone culture as a particularly valued form of cultural currency within the international school community was something I observed regularly at ISSG, and will discuss further in Chapter 5.

Another remarkable trend in international school research is that an author's expertise on subject matter is directly linked to the extent to which they have resided abroad. Notably, this is perceived as a primary marker of 'internationality' I observed in international school community discourse, and it is unsurprising that it resurfaces within scholarship. Most journal articles, for example, include self-descriptive comments in which authors identify themselves as both theoretical and empirical experts whose extensive international experience enhances their authority. Below is an example from an in-text statement of an article published in the *JRIE*:

> "I knew I wanted to be an international educator from my early years as an undergraduate student, and I have been blessed with a twenty-six year career spanning Germany; Greece; Tokyo and Kobe, Japan; Nepal; and, for the past seven years, Zimbabwe" (Poore, 2005:351).

Another example of an in-text statement comes from an article published (once again) in the JRIE: "I consider myself a career internationalist" (Canterford, 2003:62). Like most articles published in this journal, the author's name next to the title includes the name of the employing international school, and following the journal's convention, at the end of the article, the author's biography usually contains a list of countries in which they have been employed. For example:

"[He] taught in England, and in international schools in Tanzania and Korea, before moving to his current post in Bogota, Colombia" (2003:65).

The information selected for biographies in such journals indicate the value that is placed on international employment and residency – a form of cultural capital[60] within the international school system which will be explored further in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

It is also common for international school scholars to label themselves with terms such as 'Third Culture Kid' and 'Global Nomad' within their publications or in their biographies. The selection of these terms underscores the cultural currency that is placed on transnational mobility within this field. The terms are powerful markers of validity within the field of international school education – even to the point that a teacher at ISSG told me that she had been instructed by her superiors to include comments on her 'TCK' status on her resume and covering letters of future international school employment applications.

The high emphasis that is placed on international mobility, employment and residency within international school communities has shaped the scholarly approach towards them. The role of the host nation and host nationals within international school communities is an under-researched and underrepresented topic within international school literature. This is unsurprising, provided that scholarly interest has been, and still remains directed towards 'international' school objectives, curricula, missions and pedagogical approaches offered by administrators and educators within the system. The lack of research interest on the school's relationships to their host nations indicates a striking discourse I observed also in my fieldwork: the institutional pursuit of the 'global' eclipses the relevancy of the 'local'. While this has been acknowledged by Schwindt (2005) and recently by Bailey (2015), there have been very few, if any, long-term qualitative studies on the role of the host nation within international schools. Moreover, there is a large gap in literature pertaining to the role of the 'local' from a non-practitioner's perspective. In fact, I have not been able to find any literature focusing on the extracurricular activities of international school community members, and that has not been researched by a teacher or administrator of an international school. Allan (2002), Allen (2000; 2002), Jackson (2005) and Tamatea (2008) are current and former international school educators who identify and criticize the relative absence of the local within international schools. However, their primary focus is on curricular development.

A small number of scholars (and former/present international school educators or administrators) have focused on the role of the host country national within international school

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[60] See section 3.6.3 on Bourdieu.

communities. International school teacher, Schwindt (2003) argues that host country nationals (with an emphasis on teachers) are marginalized within international schools. Canterford (2003), also an international school teacher, discusses the experience of host country nationals in segmented labour markets within international schools. Former international school teacher and currently lecturing at the CEIC at the University of Bath, Bunnell (2005) explores the global-to-local connectivity and engagements through an investigation of the international school Public Relations departments. These authors acknowledge the gap within literature and the overall perception of host country nationals within international school communities as 'diluting' the 'international nature of the school[61]. Allen, a former Head of School for a variety of international schools argues:

> "Having a school with a large proportion of host-country nationals raises specific
> problems: expatriates, for instance, could view the school as 'local' rather than
> 'international'. There are also educational implications. Large proportions of any cultural
> or linguistic group affect the operation of the school. A school that proclaims itself to be
> 'British' and has a significant proportion of UK citizens may be fine. But for an
> 'international' school to have a bias towards one group is problematic" (2000:129-130).

Poore (2005), having held positions as Head of School at a variety of international schools across the globe, is strongly critical of the "superficial inclusion of the host culture in the curriculum" (2005:353) and advocates for stronger school cultures which can benefit from their local surroundings. Therefore, while there appears to be a small acknowledgement within scholarship that international schools lack connection to their host societies, there tends to be an even larger category of individuals who do not perceive the host nation as relevant, or sometimes even positive, to the international school system. I shall explore the relationship between the ISSG and host nation in Chapters 5 and 6.

Running in line with the trend in scholarship, long term ethnographic work conducted within this educational system is very limited. Tanu (2010; 2014; 2015) deserves special acknowledgement for offering one of the only larger scaled ethnographic research projects in existence, having conducted her fieldwork at two international schools in Jakarta. Exploring social hierarchies produced within the student body of these international schools, Tanu highlights classifications made through linguistic, racial and ethnic lines. In December, 2014 Tanu published an article on cultural practices at one of her Jakarta sites which produced remarkably similar findings to my own. Moreover, using a Bourdieusian approach to theoretically frame her

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[61] See Chapters 4 and 5 for my own observations on this at ISSG.

findings, Tanu (2014) argues that 'internationality' works as a form of cultural capital which allows host country community members to reaffirm their privileged social status in Indonesia. Her work offers great insight into the production of social hierarchies found within international schools based in host nations which are non-Western 'developing' countries, predominantly ethnically /racially defined as 'non-white', and involve particularly drastic social-economic class divisions between populations. In April 2016, towards the end of my thesis writing, Tanu's thesis was given public access, and I discovered that her data and findings had a strong correlation with mine – serving not only testament to the exchangeable nature of the international school system but also to the adherence to similar curricular agendas despite the vast geographical differences. She records similar cultural practices (UN Days, flag waving, and the role of 'internationality' as a form of cultural capital). However due to the context of her fieldwork site, her analytical approach to the data is largely postcolonial, and for this reason differs significantly to this study. In the context of ISSG, the vast majority of students are ethnically / racially similar to the local populations (i.e. Caucasian), and Germany's economic climate affords students comparatively minimal engagement with large socio-economic discrepancies outside of the school gates. Moreover, ISSG is physically located in what is widely regarded as one of the most affluent regions of Germany. There have been no large scale ethnographic projects on international school communities conducted in the 'Western' European context. This thesis therefore aims to contribute to an existing gap in the role of 'the local' in the community experience of both internationally-mobile families and host nationals of international school communities located in Europe.

3.4 ELITE MIGRATION

My fieldwork involved observations and interviews outside of the classroom. Contrary to what is generally documented within literature, the international school experience is particularly marked by its transcendence of classrooms and emphasis on extra-curricular life. International school communities are typically comprised of both mostly-privileged host nationals and expatriates – individuals who significantly impact, and whose lives are also impacted by the school environment. To understand international schools as communities of privileged migrants and host nationals, I also examined literature on expatriate communities. Interestingly, while literature on the 'privileged' migration experience has exponentially grown over the past decade, it generally does not use international schools as a contextual focus. This is a gap I aim to fill with this thesis.

In migration scholarship, the term, 'transnational elite' is defined by Robinson as a group which maintains through mobility or mobile lifestyles a certain monopolizing power (2000:90). As "expatriate skilled workers" (Beaverstock, 2002) or "transnational managerial elites" (Beaverstock, 2005), they are considered to have "more property, power, status, capacities, responsibilities or combinations of these properties than other groups" (Gowricharn, 2001:159). Other scholars have used the notion of the "transnational capitalist class" (Sklair, 2001) to refer to a largely delocalized, cosmopolitan group of migrants who maintain a network of transnational links connecting privileged and mutually compatible social spaces across the globe. However, Rofe warns that the notion of the 'transnational elite' is a construction which has evolved into a "social manifestation of the globalisation process" (2003:2512). He argues that elite identity formation within certain communities in urban contexts is based on imaginative constructions of 'transnational' identities. As one of his participants claims: "No longer do you have to accept what your culture says or how your parents acted...now you can go in search of the things that interest you most, you can find where you fit into the world" (Rofe, 2003:2519). This arguably romanticized, liberating image of the 'global' was also exhibited by my participants at ISSG[62].

There appears to be an insufficient amount of scholarly interest in expatriate women of international school communities. Given that literature involving the transnational elite[63] tends to address the specificities of the professional male expatriate, and by-and-large defines expatriate women and children as 'trailing' dependents within the domestic sphere (Walsh, 2006; Coles and Fechter, 2008; Yeoh and Willis, 2005), it tends to bypass the family's activities outside of the professional's workplace. This is also likely due to access[64] (Risch, 2009). Ethnographic literature on expatriate women in general has grown over the past decade. Fechter's (2007a, 2007b) work on expatriates in Jakarta sheds great ethnographic insight into the gendered experience of individuals who do not work in the host nation. She observes that the migration process for expatriates oftentimes reduces gender experiences back to a "bygone era" (2007a: 33), whereby men lead as wage earners and women maintain the household. I observed this dynamic at my fieldwork site and found it to be a frequent discussion topic in interviews and casual conversations with female expatriates at ISSG. Chapter 6 focuses primarily on the experience of the ISSG community, both in and outside of the school's physical boundaries. I have aimed to include the voices of women for this reason.

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[62] See Rizvi's 'Global Imagination' in section 3.6.1, and Chapters 4, 5 and 6.
[63] See for example, Beaverstock, 2005; 2002; Scott, 2006; and Gardner, 2008.
[64] See discussion in methodology section of this thesis (2.7).

Whilst 'trailing' mothers and children remain closely linked to the expatriate community within the respective foreign context (Beaverstock, 2002; Scott, 2006), Beaverstock (2005) discovered that the typically male 'skilled migrant' actively seeks opportunities to gain access to the local context for occupational purposes (e.g. networking, establishing personal links to local businesses and people). He found they use their "social networking in proximity to their place of residence" (Beaverstock, 2005:266), thereby establishing and maintaining links to their host country in a way the spouse and family do not frequently experience. Beaverstock's insights, supported by his access to expatriate business professionals resonate with my findings. I found that husbands were much less involved with ISSG community extracurricular activities and events. Beaverstock has received some criticism within scholarship for not including the lives of the family. Many of my participants, who were the wives of elite professionals, often expressed frustration with their spouse's lack of involvement and felt that their situations confined them to the closed worlds of family and school. In part this explained the overwhelming presence of expatriate women in the school's extracurricular world.

Walsh (2006) speaks of the connectivity between the home and the workplace in the privileged migration experience - finding that despite the establishment of certain 'local' links, her expatriate participants in Dubai generally socialized with members of similar national backgrounds outside of the work place. Therefore, while the expatriate professional is typically forced, to a certain degree, to interact with the local context for business purposes, this interaction is lost between the work place and the home – creating a seclusion, or expatriate 'bubble' for the spouse and children. Women and children typically do not appear to have these opportunities, and therefore their experience abroad is severely limited to superficial engagements with their place of residence, or, in the case of international school communities, to institutionally managed experiences of the host nation[65]. I shall return to the gendered experiences of expatriates at ISSG in the subsequent chapters.

Another trend within migration scholarship is directed at the emerging middle-class diaspora, which departs from conventions of research involving working class migrant groups. Studies involving middle-class migrants[66] and 'lifestyle' migration (e.g. Korpela, 2014) illustrate additional reasons for emigration which can be unrelated to professional development. Reasons include marriage and relationships, education, and lifestyle preferences. International schools currently attract not only members of the wealthy, diplomatic elite, but also members of the

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[65] See Chapters 5 and 6.
[66] See for example, Scott, 2006; Leinonen, 2012a; 2012b; Gardner, 2008; Torresan, 2007; and Kurotani, 2007.

middle-class (e.g. military personnel, and teachers seeking an international career), and therefore house a community of varying socio-economic backgrounds. In international school scholarship, there is also a small interest in research on the experience of international school teachers and children[67] (e.g. Cambridge, 2002; Canterford, 2003; Hayden, Rancic and Thompson, 2000). However, such studies often do not consider activities outside of the school campuses or curricular activities – areas, which I aim to examine with this thesis. Some of these studies also tend to be, to a certain extent, autobiographical.

Migration scholars have frequently shown that elite migrants construct cultural and social boundaries, despite their reputation as 'globe-trotters'. Fechter examines common metaphors which are used to describe the spaces in which transnational elites reside, including, "the bubble", "Disneyland", "the bunker", and "the hothouse" (2007b:37). Many, if not all, of these terms have been used to describe international school communities. My research participants at ISSG often referred to their lives in 'the bubble' – both regretfully and jokingly.

An overview of current literature pertaining to the transnational elite indicates a paradox: while theorized as being individuals able to navigate foreign territories with relative ease[68] empirical data indicates otherwise. Case studies involving the socialization of expatriates show that metaphorical, and oftentimes physical, boundaries are constructed in fear-based practices[69]. Fears of the unknown and unfamiliar, non-urban or non-English speaking environments prevent social activity outside the realm of the expatriate community. While the transnational elite may, or may not suffer financial burdens upon relocation, studies have shown that they suffer self-imposed or imposed exclusion from the host society (Leinonen, 2012a; 2012b; Redfield, 2012). While this is arguably a phenomenon that occurs within all forms of migrant communities, privileged 'expatriates' are largely able to use social standing and wealth to manage cultural fear and protect themselves against vulnerabilities in the host country . International schools are significant facilitators of this phenomenon – allowing families to maintain a consistent, safe environment in unfamiliar places. This will be discussed further in the subsequent chapters.

3.5 GAPS IN LITERATURE ON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

To conclude the literature review section, I summarize some of the most prominent gaps in existing literature to which this thesis aims to contribute.

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[67] See section 3.3.
[68] See for example, Hall, 1993; Ang, 2001; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; and Tanu, 2008.
[69] See for example, Walsh, 2006; and Smiley, 2010.

First, there is very little research on the power of labels and rhetoric produced within the international school market, ideology and ultimately its community. While Benjamin and Dervin (2015) have called for a re-assessment of the term, 'TCK', there are a range of other discursive practices that construct international schools and their communities as exclusive. Literature pertaining to the role of international schools in the global market is scarce. It is likely that this has occurred due to the fact that the field's authorship tends to be comprised of individuals who either personally identify with such terms (e.g. 'TCK') or have a professional career in or associated with system. Chapter 4 of this thesis explores such labels and their role in the construction of the international school market and community membership.

The second gap I have identified is the lack of research on the role of the host nation and host country national in international school communities. My supposition is that this gap has been created due to the narrow scope of the field – a field producing literature authored by individuals strongly invested in international schools, either as employees or former employees. The scholarly interest and research emphases on 'internationality' and 'globality' in curricular development and the interest in primarily internationally-mobile children in international school classrooms, has eclipsed the role of the 'local' and the presence of host nationals attending such schools. This is discussed in Chapter 5. Moreover, the international school literature also has produced the host nation and society as an oversight in the migration experience of internationally-mobile families. That is, the after-school activities, extra-curricular life and experience of residency outside of the institution have not been thoroughly ethnographically documented.

Finally, literature on privileged migration tends to focus on the expatriate community, with brief references to the respective international school(s). This may be an issue of accessibility, as it is often difficult to secure long-term research projects in international schools (Risch, 2008). With this thesis, I aim to fill these gaps by providing the stories of community members who often do not have a voice within international school literature – including mothers and 'trailing spouses', host country nationals and children. Moreover, by taking an ethnographic approach, I illustrate physical, social and cognitive mobilities outside of the international school gates that have not yet been documented. This is the focus of Chapter 6.

3.6   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As discussed in the sections above, the market of international schools has played a significant role in the development of research conducted in this context, and the academic

output has also contributed to the market. International school literature and international schools themselves are uniquely interconnected, and have, in the process, produced and reproduced what I call the 'Global Imaginary' of international school communities.

In this section I will discuss the concepts which I have found particularly useful in interpreting the data I collected. Beginning with my understanding of the 'Global Imaginary', I explain the rationale behind my use of concepts which allowed me to evaluate my ethnographic observations and conceptualize the dynamics of the ISSG community.

3.6.1   Global Imaginary

The term, 'global imaginary' has been developed primarily by Manfred Steger (2008;2009), Issac Kamola (2014) and Fazal Rizvi (2000;2007) in the social sciences, drawing on Charles Taylor's work on the 'social imaginary'. My understandings and application of the term, 'global imaginary' in this thesis are thus largely influenced by these scholars, whose work I will analyse below and discuss in relation to the context of international schools. I use this term as a means to explore the social dynamic I observed at ISSG and its relation to the overarching market of international school education.

The term, 'global imaginary' stems from the notion of a 'social imaginary', which was originally coined by psychoanalyst, Cornelius Castoriadis (1997) as a means to explore individual understandings of the world which are influenced by external forces. In 2002, Charles Taylor brought Castoriadis' term into the social sciences[70] in a historical account of Western modernity defining 'social imaginary' as:

> "the ways in which people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations" (Taylor, 2002:106).

These social imaginaries are often articulated through conventional group labels such as 'British' or 'German'; they are "carried in images, stories and legends" and built on individualized perspectives on the world, making them complex and fluid (Taylor 2002:106). He also argues that social imaginaries allow us to make sense of our particular social practices – especially as these practices become normative. He gives the interesting example of organizing a demonstration: we know that we will need banners and that we will march. We also understand

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[70] See also Kamola, 2010.

our limits while doing the demonstration – how to incite violence, and how not to. Thus the presence of a 'social imaginary' allows us to understand why individuals "understand the ritual" (Taylor, 2002:108), or routines of community daily life[71]. We create a sense of how and when these practices should be conducted, and the boundaries we face when reproducing these practices. It is important to note that a social imaginary, as Taylor (2002) argues, is not just a series of ideas, but also, what facilities the practices of a social group, which then construct our understanding of them.

Both Taylor (2002) and Rizvi (2007) stress an additional and important role in the social imaginary. That is, that it works to establish a sense of collective social legitimacy. Rizvi defines 'social imaginary' thus as:

> "…a way of thinking shared in a society by ordinary people, the common understandings that make everyday practices possible, giving them sense and legitimacy. It is embedded in ideas and practices and events, and carries within it deeper normative notions and images, constitutive of a society" (2007:121).

Rivzi (2000;2007), Steger (2008;2009) and Kamola (2010;2014) each draw on Taylor's concept of 'social imaginary' as a means to further define it – specifically in relation to today's globalizing world. Rizvi's (2000) 'global imagination' is defined as a social imaginary constructed through the process of cultural globalization. Following Appadurai's discussion on 'imagination'[72], Rizvi argues that a 'global imagination' encompasses "notions of mobility, transculturalism, and diaspora" coupled with

> "…the attempt to provide coherence between ideas and action, to provide a basis for the content of social relationships and the creation of categories with which to understand the world around us….In the past, much of the work of imagination was mediated through the nation-state. But now imagination transcends national boundaries and emerges in a variety of ways" (2000:222-223).

In particular, Rizvi argues that where in the past, imagination was contrived in relation to the nation state, today, these boundaries are traversed – inculcating a "romantic vision of the world in which people around the world [are] connected to each other" (2000:217).

Rizvi's work relates to the context of international education. He argues that the 'global imagination' is connected with the diasporic experience of 'privileged elites' studying at

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[71] See connection to Bourdieu's 'habitus' below.
[72] See Appadurai, 1996:5.

universities abroad[73]. New identities are facilitated as a "new, global generation" (2000:223) comprised of diasporic communities of 'transnational' and 'transcultural' students who "move overseas temporarily, chasing economic, social, educational and cultural opportunities" (2000:223). Rizvi's notion of 'global imagination' is described as a *product* of particular circumstances, including migration and education abroad (2000:221).

Nevertheless, as Kamola (2014) argues, social imaginaries are embedded within material realities:

> "imaginaries are not elite ideas of coalescing with material realities in some contingent and unspecified way, but rather the lived meaning that emerges as material habits and practices are organized and reorganized within particular structured, material apparatuses" (2014:522)

Kamola's (2014) take on global imaginaries therefore brings on an interesting dimension in that social imaginaries, while often illustrated by scholars as "illusions", "fantasies" or "forms of false consciousness" (Kamola, 2014:529), actually fundamentally impact how social life is constructed, and how individuals position themselves and reproduce their worlds through very specific material and economic systems and organizations.

Finally, Manfred Steger (2008;2009) discusses the 'global imaginary' as a political ideology developed after the Cold War, during which 'national imaginaries' constructed the political landscape of the time. Steger's discussion of the role of the 'national' within contemporary global imaginaries is particularly relevant to this thesis. Steger (2008;2009) considers the role of the 'local' in the construction of 'global' imaginaries. He argues that while there may be an actual rise of a popular 'global imaginary', one cannot ignore the fact that we still live in a world which is greatly defined by national borders:

> "The national is slowly losing its grip on people's minds, but the global has not yet ascended to the commanding heights once occupied by its predecessor. It erupts in fits and false starts, offering observers confusing spectacles of social fragmentation and integration that cut across old geographical hierarchies of scale in unpredictable patterns (2009:25).

Thus where the political ideological landscape may be changing, Steger acknowledges that tensions emerge as globality and locality "rub up against each other" (2009:25).

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[73] Rizvi's 2000 study was conducted in the context of international students attending universities in Australia.

All of these definitions are particularly useful for purposes of this thesis. Taylor's (2002) definition of the social imaginary helps explore how international school communities can exist as a social group, even though they are comprised of individuals stemming from a range of different cultural backgrounds. Group labels are not only confined to nationalities within ISSG – even though they are important – as members also negotiate labels that place importance on levels of 'internationality' (see Chapter 4). In addition, Taylor's assertion on social practices becoming normative has been particularly useful when analysing ethnographic data. He argues that normative practices are constructed because "we have a sense of how things usually go, but this is interwoven with an idea of how they ought to go, of what missteps would invalidate the practice" (2002:106). The social practices I observed at ISSG indicate how social imaginaries were articulated, how practices carried meaning, how those meanings contributed to the practices I observed and how they became 'normal'[74].

Rizvi's discussion on the sense of a collective social legitimacy helps explore the social imaginary of the ISSG community as an elite, globally-oriented social group, instead of just an international school. His ideas on 'global imagination' are relevant to my work in a number of ways: first, they are often expressed in international school mission statements, including that of ISSG, with notions such as 'global interconnectivity' (see Chapter 4); second, students attending international schools are also prepared as a postulated new, 'global generation' of individuals who intend to further their studies or pursue a career generally outside of their host country. Still, the word 'imagination' is somewhat problematic as it alludes to a pretend, or 'made-up', illusionary world. Within this thesis, I draw on Kamola's (2014) work to show that while a globally-oriented social imaginary does exist, it is also deeply embedded within very tangible, material realities.

Steger's (2009) discussion on the global and local is also useful[75] for my argument that the treatment of 'globality' and 'locality' as *polarized* geographies enhances the global imaginary of ISSG, while simultaneously producing a significant number of contradictions in community discourse and practices. Significantly, locality does fit (and must fit) into ISSG's global imaginary – however, in very particular, regulated ways (see Chapters 4 and 5).

These authors have been useful for my conceptualisation of the 'global imaginary' as a community symbol[76]. In addition, this thesis draws on Anthony Cohen's (1985; 1999) work on the construction of community which revolves around the notion of a common symbol (or

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[74] See Taylor, 2002:107.
[75] See also Calhoun, 2008:111.
[76] See Cohen, 1985.

symbols) which are interpreted in various ways (1985:15). The 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006) of ISSG regularly reproduced as a 'global imaginary' not only operates as a symbol in this sense, but also as a community 'aspiration' (Baumann, 1992)[77]. In the case of ISSG, and comparable other international schools within the network, I argue that the common symbol, and aspiration is the 'global' which is collectively imagined and practiced as a means to realize community membership.

3.6.2 Discourse

I begin the subsequent analysis chapters by examining how the 'global' is discursively articulated within the ISSG community. Fairclough (2003) provides a loose description of the arguably ubiquitous concept of 'discourse' that is particularly helpful to understand how the global imaginary is produced, conceptualized and ultimately practiced at ISSG:

> "Different discourses are different perspectives on the world, and they are associated with the different relations people have to the world, which in turn depends on their positions in the world, their social and personal identities, and the social relationship in which they stand to other people. Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather as it is seen to be), they are also projective imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions" (Fairclough, 2003:124).

Particularly important here is Fairclough's emphasis on social structures as constructed, reconstructed, and maintained through discourse. As will be seen in Chapter 4, my participants used the global imaginary as a means to position themselves within various social networks. Moreover, the global discourse I examine in this thesis arguably acts as a representation of the world that is contingent on the social position of the respective actors. They express what can be seen as a "regulated way of speaking that defines and produces objects of knowledge, thereby governing the way topics are talked about and practices conducted" (Barker & Galasinski, 2001:12). Given that ISSG members were institutionally grounded, it is plausible that discourse can also be conceptualized, in the Foucauldian sense, as an "institutionalized complex of signs and practices that regulates how people live socially" (Salazar, 2006:836).

I discovered that the global discourses were not just spoken or written expressions found within the ISSG community – they are symbolic and visual as well (see Chapter 4). These

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[77] This will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

expressions became particularly noticeable upon conducting my observations within classrooms and across campus. Additional data collected during my fieldwork could be made analytically accessible through this approach. For example, in the case of international schools, flags are commonly displayed to symbolize the diversity of the student body[78]. A multimodal approach which includes semiotic resources, or "actions, materials and artefacts we use for communicative purposes" (Van Leeuwen, 2005:285), allows for a more thorough investigation of the symbols that are used in the daily routines of ISSG community life. These semiotic resources shape the modes through which community discourses are constructed (Jewitt, 2009:29). Classroom projects and school events, for example, are expressed through a series of modes which can help understand how various members of the international school community articulate certain discourses. Multimodal discourse analysis allows for a more textured approach to data analysis and will be used in subsequent chapters.

I briefly turn to Bernstein in this multimodal approach as a means to understand how the global imaginary was continually reproduced as a community symbol at ISSG. Particularly useful for purposes of this thesis is his theory on 'recontextualization' of knowledge within educational settings. Recontextualization can appear through a variety of semiotic resources. He argues:

> "theories of cultural reproduction view education as a carrier of power relations external to education. From this point of view, pedagogic discourse becomes a carrier for something other than itself. It is a carrier of power relations external to the school, a carrier of patterns of dominance with respect to class, patriarchy, and race. It is a matter of great interest that the actual structure which enables power to be relayed, power to be carried, is itself not subject to analysis. Paradoxically, what is missing from theories of cultural reproduction is any internal analysis of the structure of the discourse itself and it is the structure of the discourse, the logic of this discourse, which provides the means whereby external power relations can be carried by it" (Bernstein, 1996:18).

Bernstein claims that power is manoeuvred through the process of recontextualization performed by objective structures. This is where the international school's market-driven objectives come into play in the construction of its 'global imaginary': they exist and operate through external powers which have contributed to the development of the global discourses present within their communities. These global discourses, as seen in the first section of this chapter, are also visible within academic scholarship on international schools – whereby

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[78] See Chapter 4.

particular approaches are made to reinforce the system's exclusivity. The ideological value of the IB, for example, has been academically constructed as particularly effective in international school environments, due to the alleged cultural diversity of their 'TCK' student bodies. This approach, in turn, has constructed a field of power relations – seeing international schools as uniquely qualified, as opposed to national schools, to deliver the IB curriculum due to their diverse learning environments. ISSG, in turn, must negotiate these pressures from IBO by attracting a high number of 'TCKs' as a means to maintain an authorized status as an *international* school. I shall return to this in Chapter 4.

I have found the concept of 'recontextualization' useful for this ethnography to understand the globally-oriented expressions within and across the ISSG community during my observations. It allows researchers to also understand how a school can influence their students' perspective of the world:

> "what the school does, its rituals, its ceremonies, its authority relations, its stratification, its procedures for learning, its incentives, rewards and punishments, its very image of conduct, character and manner, can modify or change a pupil's role as this has been initially shaped by the family. *Thus the number of pupils initially involved in a particular role can be modified or changed by the school itself*" (Bernstein, 1975:48-49, original emphasis included).

This leads into the focus of Chapter 5 – that is, the conceptualization of the school as a structure which can shape and mould dispositions through the transference of particular value systems. It is closely linked to Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus', delineated below. In the case of the network of international schools, the value system they bring allows for students to adjust and maintain certain dispositions (e.g. attitudes towards host cultures) as they travel from one international school context to the next (at least, in the case of internationally-mobile students and staff). In my interviews at ISSG, for example, a widely shared negative disposition towards the host society became apparent. It raised questions as to how these dispositions were produced and maintained.

> Bernstein's notions of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are instructive:

> "Curriculum defines what counts as a valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as a valid transmission of knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realization of this knowledge…" (1975:85).

I have drawn on these three Bernsteinian categories to guide my observations at ISSG. I would argue that a fourth category must be added to Bernstein's modes of transmission, in

international school research. That is, an examination of the extra-curricular activities which can be viewed as defining what counts as a valid socialization regimen and non-curricular knowledge. The extra-curricular life of international school communities significantly informs how the global imaginary is reproduced outside of the school.

3.6.3 Bourdieu

When considering how community can be constructed under a 'global imaginary', I have found the work of Pierre Bourdieu particularly significant. Coinciding with the discussion of Bernstein (above), Bourdieu's 'habitus' aids in understanding the reproduction of the international school community culture itself. Habitus is a set of habits and dispositions which we acquire through our historical trajectories through objective social structures and childhood (Gates, 1999). In Bourdieu's words:

> "Through our dispositions, the most improbable practices are excluded as unthinkable, which inclines us to be predisposed to act in ways that we have done in the past. The habitus produces practices that reproduce the regularities of experience while slightly adjusting to the demands of the situation. In practice the habitus is history turned into nature. Our unconscious is therefore the unforgetting of our history turning our actions instead into second nature…It is through this that objective structures and relations of domination reproduce themselves" (1977:72-83).

Habitus is the attitudes and habits we attain through our social standing, which has been acquired primarily through our experiences at home or at school. Habitus is a useful theoretical concept to apply to an exploration of international schools, in that it helps explain how members of such internationally-mobile communities can maintain a *sense* of community. Like Bernstein, Bourdieu argues that the school plays an essential role in the reproduction of social and cultural dispositions, along with the domestic sphere. International school children, particularly expatriates, share a comparable internationally-mobile upbringing in oftentimes very tight familial environments (Selmer & Lam, 2004:117), generally experience a similar socio-economic status, and typically have been brought up within similarly oriented educational institutions. They have very often attended private, 'globally-oriented' schools, situated within a host nation steeped in different cultural norms than the school. These shared experiences allow for a sense of mutual familiarity and inform norms of behaviour and interaction. Chapter 5 examines some of the most common norms and rituals practiced within international schools –which simultaneously aid in the construction of a 'globally-oriented' community.

Habitus is a particularly relevant conceptual tool for this thesis, in that it may help explain how international school community members are 'easily' able to group and re-group across borders and from one school setting to another. While community members stem from nations across the globe, familiarity with one school usually facilitates their transition into another, even if vast geographical distances separate them. Moreover, the notion of a 'transnational habitus' (Guarnizo, 1997:311) may prove helpful to understand the dichotomy ISSG community members experience between transnational or intra-national relocations. Guarnizo defines the 'transnational habitus' as:

> "a particular set of dualistic dispositions that inclines migrants to act and react to specific situations in a manner that can be, but is not always, calculated, and that is not simply a question of a conscious acceptance of specific behavioural or sociocultural rules…The transnational habitus results from the migration process itself, which has spread people's lives across national borders and becomes like a second nature. The transnational habitus incorporates the social position of the migrant and the context in which transmigration occurs. This accounts for the similarity in the transnational habitus of the migrants from the same social grouping (class, gender, generation) and the generation of transnational practices adjusted to specific situations" (1997:311).

Guarnizo introduces a key theme relevant to this project, in that while the migration process itself carries with it a set of normalized practices that are not 'calculated', one must still consider the social standing of the migrant as particularly relevant to the production of this habitus. Therefore, while many members of ISSG may claim they are easily able to adjust to international school communities around the world due to shared experiences of international mobility[79], it may be more of a combination of other social factors that may be seen as less 'glamorous', such as socio-economic standing, English language abilities, gender and/or generation. It also helps explain why host nationals are also easily integrated into international school communities. While they may not share the same experience in international mobility, their similar socio-economic status and educational backgrounds as their expatriate counterparts allow for the construction of similar dispositions, traits and attitudes. This will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

Bourdieu famously describes habitus as a "structured, structuring structure" (Bourdieu, 1994:170), which Maton (2008) helpfully unpacks in the following way:

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[79] See Chapter 6 for a discussion on the cultural value (capital) placed on international mobility at ISSG.

"It is "structured" by one's past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences. It is "structuring" in that one's habitus helps to shape one's present and future practices. It is a "structure" in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned" (2008:51).

However Maton is quick to point out that Bourdieu is not implying that an individual's habitus has sole autonomy over practice, or that an individual's personal and educational history dictates present practices. Rather, it is the relationship between the habitus and the social space, or 'field' in which the practice operates which determines the practice within that space (Maton, 2008). Simply: fields are shaped by the 'game that is played' within them.

This is a significant factor to consider when applying this theory to an empirical analysis of the ISSG community, in that habitus is a "relational structure" (Maton, 2008:61), and without understanding the field in which the habitus is expressed, the researcher is "abstracting it from the very contexts which give it meaning and in which it works" (Maton, 2008:61). The 'field' of ISSG is ultimately created by the players – parents, teachers, students, staff – within it and the powers which they seek as members of the community. Significantly, fields are comprised of power struggles based on varying forms of 'capital'. Capital can be divided into three main categories relevant to this thesis: cultural, social, or economic, and an individual's standing within that field is determinant on their access to the valued form of capital that is at stake.

The community discourses which will be discussed in Chapter 4 explain how ISSG's value system of capitals is constructed. If ISSG is to be considered a community which navigates a social 'field', its players inevitably will begin to negotiate their standing within it. Chapter 4 identifies cultural capital as a primary mode through which international school members negotiated their social positions within the community, and Chapter 5 explores how these positions were expressed through practice. Bourdieu's cultural capital takes shape in three particular states: 'embodied', 'objectified', and 'institutionalized'. Cultural capital in the embodied state takes shape in the form of bodily and conceptual dispositions. This state explains how community members performed rituals based on dispositions which have become normalized, habitual and unquestioned (see Chapter 5). Objectified cultural capital takes shape through material objects that are defined through their relationships with cultural capital in its embodied form (Bourdieu, 1986b:246). This form of capital is best identified through symbolic representations of these dispositions – for example, the repeated use of national flags which collectively symbolize the 'internationality' of the school community (see Chapter 4). Finally, institutionalized cultural capital takes shape through academic qualifications (e.g. in the case of ISSG, it is the IB diploma). This is significant, as international schools can arguably be perceived

as one of the only systems of education which officially endow their students with a 'global' education. These three forms of cultural capital entail cultural dispositions, competencies and qualifications which are highly valued in this particular field – including that of higher education.

One particular criticism that Bourdieu receives in relation to his field theory that is very relevant to this project, is that it is unclear when fields 'end' (Thomson, 2008; Jenkins, 2002). Originally, in terms of my own research, I had conceptualized my thesis in terms of field. However, I realized that I could not sever individual fields (e.g. the 'local' from the 'global' international school space) so easily. To address this issue, I drew on the following explanation:

> "A field is, by definition, a 'field of struggles' in which agents' strategies are concerned
> with the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining
> capital of the field" (Jenkins, 2002:85).

Therefore, by identifying the system of capitals at ISSG (Chapter 5), I was able to observe and understand where fields collided, ended or changed. Moreover, I returned to Cohen's (1985) argument that communities are constructed through relational processes in light of a communal symbol which binds them together as an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006). The 'global imaginary' as a community symbol helps to understand the field's spatial and social limitations.

3.6.4 Boundaries

As seen, ISSG works as a community, in which social relations are negotiated through a particular system of cultural currency. This system is constructed through both institutionalized and non-institutionalized discourses. Just like any community, ISSG is both internally and externally structured – leading to questions pertaining to its borders and boundaries in and through which social relations are formed and contested. Community membership can be perceived as a relational idea (Cohen, 1985), and one is only a member once so acknowledged by other members. Accordingly, communities of belonging become forged through practices which are based on differences as well as commonalities. This gives concepts of boundary construction a particular relevance for my analysis, and is the focus of Chapter 6.

Boundaries play a crucial role in the production and reproduction of community. As Cohen argues, "Boundaries exist in the imagination, and therefore may differ vastly between both community members on the inside, and also those on the outside" (1985:12). In relation to ISSG, a community which hosts both expatriates and host country nationals alike, perceptions of the 'outside' appear to vary depending on the individual. However, I would like to follow Cohen's

argument that the "symbolic expression of community and its boundaries increases in importance as the actual geo-social boundaries of the community are undermined, blurred or otherwise weakened" (1985:50). This expression has proven to be highly useful in examining the role of the 'local' within the ISSG community. 'Locality' poses a significant threat to the very foundation of the community, and in so doing, becomes a part of the global imaginary – one's position to the symbol is also contingent on one's position to the 'local'. 'Locality', which arises in a number of forms and expressions, appears to destabilize the boundaries which have been discursively constructed through the collective belief in the global symbol. I will return to this in the following chapters, and briefly in 3.6.5.

I wanted to discover a framework by which I could analyse border traversal, provided that one of the primary aims of this thesis is to investigate the lives of community members outside the physical boundaries of the institution (i.e. the school campus). It is significant to note that boundaries are sites of change, and they bring into question what occurs when fields overlap or collide – particularly when institutionalized boundaries become convoluted with personal boundaries. Hernes (2004a; 2004b) provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding organizations and their environments. He explores boundaries by defining them according to three particular categories: physical boundaries, social boundaries and mental boundaries. He argues that physical boundaries serve to regulate an environment or take form through defined material apparatuses. Social boundaries are constructed generally "between people" (2004:14) across social networks, and mental boundaries "[relate] to mechanisms, such as ideas, understanding and beliefs that tend to guide organized actions" (2004a:14). ISSG community members cross physical, social and mental boundaries through their varying degrees of engagement with the host country society. I shall draw on these categories later to discuss institutionally regulated practices (Chapter 5) and the tensions which arise at the borderlands (Chapter 6).

There have been a number of approaches to boundaries and borders – most of which can be organized within three primary categories aptly identified by Donnan and Wilson (2001) as social, cultural and territorial: Some scholars use boundaries to understand social dynamics and markers of difference and/or sameness within communities, others use them to explore cultures of meaning-making, and others examine borders related to geo-political territories and spaces (2001:19). I have found however, that international school communities operate within and across social, cultural and geo-political boundaries, and have found Hernes' (2004a) approach to conceptualizing boundaries particularly useful for this project, as it allows for an even more dynamic and fluid approach which combines all these aspects.

Lefebvre (1991) first introduced notions of 'mental', 'social', and 'physical' spaces as a means to consolidate spatial fields under a "unitary theory", relating spaces to "molecular, electromagnetic and gravitational forces [in] physics" (1991:11). He summarizes this in the following manner:

"The fields we are concerned with are, first, the *physical* – nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the *mental*, including logical and formal abstractions; and, thirdly, the *social*. In other words, we are concerned with logico-epistomological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias" (1991:11-12, original emphasis included).

One of Lefebvre's primary concerns, and one aspect that is relevant in this thesis in relation to these three spaces is that they are *interrelated.* His analysis of subjects traversing philosophical and scientific planes is complex, and makes his argumentation difficult to access. However, his conceptualization of mental, physical and social spaces sets the foundation of conceptualizing spatial relations as dynamic and relational.

Hernes (2004a) illustrates spatial construction through a dynamic interplay between, across and within these three forms of borders. Drawing on Lefebvre's (1991) work, Hernes establishes his own theoretical framework which sees mental, social and physical boundaries as additionally embodying three primary characteristics: they act as 'ordering', 'distinctions' and 'thresholds'[80]. He describes his framework as employing two dimensions: the first, is based on Lefebvre's (1991) classification of boundaries, and the second is based on the impact boundaries have on space (Hernes, 2004a). In this sense, he proposes a method which allows for social groups or communities to be explored without "[the risk of] over-emphasizing differences and separation between the categories" (Donnan & Wilson, 2001:19). Boundaries can therefore be viewed as reconstructing spaces which are fluid, overlapping, interconnecting and dynamic.

Seen in Hernes' framework, and of relevance to this thesis also, is that boundaries offer an explanation for the 'organization' of communities. As Barth (1969) argues, individuals strategically position themselves within social groups and boundaries by emphasizing or down-playing particular cultural components according to their own circumstances within time and space. He proposes that boundaries are continually reconstructed and manipulated to suit the needs and purposes of individuals as members of social groups. The 'ordering' of boundaries,

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[80] See Appendix 2.

Hernes argues, is "the extent to which boundaries regulate internal interaction" (2004a:81). This helps explain the formation of sub-groups created within the ISSG community (see Chapter 5).

Hernes (2004a) also reflects on boundaries as 'distinctions' or differentiators. Individuals use boundaries to differentiate between what is considered 'inside' and what is considered to be 'outside'. This is where notions of 'us and them' come into play within certain discourses and practices evident within the ISSG community (see subsequent chapters). Cohen's (1985; 1999) work on symbolic boundaries of communities is also reflected in this component of Hernes' theory. Cohen insists that boundaries are relational – that communities only exist in relation to other communities. The notion that boundaries are 'distinctions' plays into Cohen's (1985) theory in that communities create meaning and sense of belonging by perceiving themselves as different from those they recognize as 'outside' their community. As Smith (2002:155) states: "There can only be 'insiders' where there are also perceived to be 'outsiders'". This is particularly relevant to this thesis, as I address the discourses and practices which establish boundaries through *differentiating* between host nationals and expatriates within and outside of the school community. This, I argue, plays a significant role in the construction of the global imaginary that creates a sense of belonging to the school and the international school system.

Hernes' (2004a) final understanding of boundaries is that they work as 'thresholds'. It relates to the strength of the mental, social and/or physical boundaries in question. This is particularly useful here, as it allows for a more dynamic discussion on the 'permeability' (March & Simon, 1958) or 'leakiness' (Perrow, 1986) of boundaries. I examine the threshold of these boundaries particularly in Chapter 6. Host nationals and expatriates at ISSG appeared to experience varying thresholds of boundaries differentiating between the 'inside' (the school) and the 'outside' (the local host society). Notions of 'thresholds' speaks to Barth's (1969) argument that individuals or governing bodies can control the extent to which the strength of boundaries can be 'turned up' and 'turned down', according to the particular context.

Donnan and Wilson (2001) observe that one of the largest criticisms of research conducted using boundaries as a conceptual framework is that the focus tends to be uneven: it is either primarily focused on the 'inside' or the 'outside' of boundaries. This proves to be particularly problematic, as boundaries are often viewed within scholarship as being constructed through both internal and external social, political and cultural structures[81]. As seen, literature on international schools often primarily focuses on what occurs 'internally', and renders the role of the host nation and role of the local insignificant for school life 'within'. I argue that it is

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[81] See, for example, Barth, 1969. He argues here that boundaries are established through self-ascription and ascription from others.

significant to address the role of the host society and culture in the production of boundaries in this field.

It is also significant to note that boundaries can also be perceived as spaces of their own. Borrowing the term, 'borderlands' from Prescott (1987), these are areas in which transitions, interactions, and/or exchanges are made between spaces. They are metaphorical regions of tension, during which physical, social and mental mobility between social groups is affronted by those perceived on the 'outside'. At ISSG, one particularly noticeable region of tension is between its 'expatriates' and 'host nationals', and also between the international school community as a whole and its host country. These tensions will be discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.6.5 Spatial Mobility

Linked to boundaries is mobility. The spatial mobility of expatriates invested in the international school system is a mixture of complex physical, social and conceptual border crossings. Chapter 6 of this thesis argues that the global imaginary of international school communities influences spatial mobility. A community member's orientation to the 'global' therefore can be seen as a strategy of place-making. Members actively construct and negotiate boundaries which produce particular spaces in, and through which they are mobile.

I return briefly to my argument that a 'global' imaginary is constructed by way of conceptualizing 'locality' in a very particular way. At ISSG, members produced boundaries through a place-making strategy of polarizing 'globality' and 'locality' (i.e. in order to be 'global', one cannot be 'local'). This is an act of producing boundaries and spaces. For this reason, I would like to work from Hernes' (2004a) model of boundaries as a means to conceptualize modes of mobility. I perceive this as a lateral form of *spatial* mobility – crossing physical, social and mental borders into new spaces.

If communities are constructed as *relational* (Cohen, 1985), then a 'global' community formed by an orientation to 'the global' can be constructed as a space which is specifically not 'local'. The practice of 'othering' produces physical, social and mental boundaries, but also *spaces* through which community members are mobile. This will be discussed in Chapter 6.

'Global' place-making which excludes 'local' place-making as a legitimate strategy is vital to the international school market, which is based on the construction of these 'global' spaces. If members were to actively pursue connectivity to 'locality', the market would be threatened, as

international schools specifically provide services which cater to individuals who are disconnected – those who are unable or unwilling to navigate the host society, culture, or language. This opens up particular tensions–becoming a deliberate strategy of maintaining the 'bubble' in order to make the construction work. Moreover, this dynamic underscores the contrast between 'international schools' and the 'multicultural' schools – where stronger emphasis is placed on the 'integration' of labour migrant children.

International schools therefore provide guided, institutionalized opportunities whereby members can stay within physical, social and mental spaces which are 'globally-orientated', while simultaneously discovering and learning about their host society through managed, regulated events, excursions and activities. In Chapter 5, I discuss ISSG's simulations of local traditions, however within globally-oriented physical, social and mental spaces.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown how the international school market has had a profound impact on the way in which it is documented within scholarship. Literature on international schools has developed into a category of its own, which has been constructed not only by academics, but also significantly, by those who are, or have been professionally active within the system itself. The relatively narrow scope can be reduced to its authorship, which is often invested in the international school market and ideologies.

As international school research has developed, gaps have emerged, which I aim to address in the subsequent analysis chapters. The role of the host nation and 'locality' within the 'global' orientation of international school communities, I argue, is motivated by the international school market. This market has produced a 'global imaginary' – a community symbol which is discursively practiced not only within international school communities, but also within scholarship.

The production and reproduction of the 'global' community symbol is best understood through the concepts outlined in the second part of this chapter. A multimodal discourse analysis allows for a wider, more textured approach to understanding my ethnographic data. As a means to explore how individuals position themselves and others as 'global', I turn to Bourdieu's equation of [(habitus) (capital) + field] = practice (1986a:101). This helps to understand not only how power is negotiated within the field, but also how these negotiations become normalized community practices. Finally, to build on Bourdieu's notion of 'field', Hernes' boundaries allows for an understanding of how community members frame, and navigate spaces

according to the global imaginary. The concepts discussed here are interconnected and can be employed in a dynamic manner to understand ISSG as a community, and its self-perception as globally oriented. Individual members contribute and respond to the discourses projected by the institution through their own dispositions and understanding of community-based symbols and boundaries.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONSTRUCTION OF

'GLOBAL-MINDEDNESS' AND 'INTERNATIONALITY' AT ISSG

4.1. INTRODUCTION

My first experience returning to ISSG was for an initial meeting I had set up with the Head of School in early 2012. The meeting was to take place in his office, which was located on the top floor of the 'Schloss' – the palatial administrative building at the entrance of the ISSG campus. Before the meeting, I decided to walk around the school campus. Sticking to the pathway, I passed a long building housing classrooms for the middle school. Constructed with large glass windows, I could see easily into all of the classrooms – brightly decorated with posters hanging from the ceilings and on the walls. Across the pathway some small gardens of flowers and herbs caught my eye –one had been decorated with some student-produced colourful laminated paper symbols of the globe with signs alluding to the care and protection of the environment. The little globes not only worked to decorate the garden, but signalled the educational mission behind the activity. After seeing this, the globe symbol seemed to pop up everywhere on my brief campus tour– in hallways, in foyers and in the cafeteria. Even on my way out of the Schloss later that day, I walked past a member of the cleaning crew who was wearing a black uniform with the word 'GLOBAL' written across the back in bright green lettering. Such visual displays marked the ISSG campus with a 'global' orientation – matching its mission of 'Excellence in Education for Globally-minded Students'.

This chapter examines how the ISSG mission was defined and articulated at the school, in the community and in the ISSG literature. School missions guide educational and community practices - it is therefore important to identify the core ideological backdrop to the institution and its community-forming practices. As a *mission,* 'global-mindedness' worked as the community's aspiration (Baumann, 1992) – it defined what community members *invested* in. The community's 'aspiration' or goal, works to unite and maintain a sense of belonging under a common purpose or objective. I argue that 'global-mindedness' operated as the aspirational component of the community's 'global' imaginary. I begin with an examination the discursive construction of the ISSG community as 'global'. Following this, I then explore the extent to which the school's *brand* of 'internationality' produced powerful tensions with the proclaimed

'globalist' ideological orientation. These tensions, I argue, impacted community practices, which are discussed in the subsequent chapters.

4.2. CONSTRUCTING A 'GLOBALLY-MINDED' COMMUNITY

The term, 'global-mindedness' has been used frequently in an array of educational contexts around the world -from private international schools to public national systems of education and in higher education. Hett (1993) defines the term as, "a world view in which one sees oneself as connected to the world community and feels responsibility for its members" (1993:1)[82]. The term, while defined differently between contexts, generally alludes to an education founded on what are considered to be 'global' competencies – a dedication to human responsibility, intercultural awareness and tolerance, and environmental sustainability[83]. These skills are deemed as 'global' for the reason that they are perceived to be essential tools for future 'global citizens'. This form of education is seen to encourage "the need to foster the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviors that allow individuals to take informed decisions and assume active roles locally, nationally and globally" (UNESCO, 2016). Notions of the term, 'global-mindedness' also have been directed towards a heightened ability in critical thinking, interest in knowledge and learning, and the development of an 'open mind' (de Oliveria Andreotti, Biesta & Ahenakew, 2015). The vagueness of the term aids in its flexibility and inclusivity.

Given the ambiguous nature of the word, the ISSG website dedicated a page to define it. Here, 'global-mindedness' was outlined according to the following (also somewhat vague) four points: 'peace', 'principles', 'competence' and 'participation'[84]. The definitions allude to an inclusive education through the attainment of a 'globally-oriented' skillset. The development of this skillset at ISSG would establish a learning environment built on notions of inclusivity, equality, tolerance and universality. As one school principal put it, "At [ISSG] we value educating the whole person" (ISSG magazine, 2012) – referring to a comprehensive education as a means through which global-mindedness could be achieved. The school website further described such an educational environment as one in which students are "encouraged to develop to the full

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[82] Many scholars have also developed systems to measure, quantify or rate 'global-mindedness' or 'world-mindedness' including Sampson & Smith, 1957; Lentz, 1950, Hett, 1991; Der-Karabetian, 1992; Der-Karabetian & Metzer, 1993; and Taylor, 2013; 2014.
[83] See for example, Cook, Smith, Lan & Carpenter, 2016; de Oliveira Andreotti, Biesta, & Ahenakew, 2015; and Hett, 1993.
[84] See Appendix 3 for ISSG's original definitions of these terms in full.

their intellectual, social, moral, physical, creative, emotional and individual potential" (ISSG website, 2016).

The 'Vision' statement of the school was also regularly expressed on the ISSG website and the curricular handbooks. It reinforced the notions of a balanced, comprehensive education for the 'global' learner:

> "We will be recognized world-wide as an outstanding and innovative international school. An inspirational staff will create an exceptional learning environment that motivates all students to be globally-minded, academically successful, well balanced and prepared for future challenges and responsibilities" (ISSG website, 2014; ISSG PYP Curriculum Reference Handbook, 2013).

The primary mode through which the term 'global-mindedness' was articulated was through literature produced by the school. This included virtual writings, such as the school website and online magazine, and also paper-based materials such as curricular handbooks, posters, handouts (flyers and informational leaflets) and educational books and packets. During my fieldwork, I collected the paper-based materials, and regularly examined the website, which was updated on a weekly basis, and served as a major communication tool between the institution and its present and potential future members. I used these resources to understand community discourse – in particular, how ISSG expressed and reinforced its mission, and ultimately, its community – shaping aspirations. These aspirations were summarized poignantly by a statement written by Head of School in 2016:

> "Our mission and vision statements – whether we keep our current ones or agree upon revised ones – represent our contract and commitment to our students, families and community. They communicate to prospective families what we value, how we allocate our resources and what we are passionate about" (ISSG magazine, 2016).

The statement points to the school's promotional endeavours, of communicating the school's ideological direction to prospective clientele, while highlighting the goals and 'passions' of the entire community. It supports the notion that the school's mission and vision statements worked to unify community under a common set of ideals, which simultaneously served to attract prospective members.

I found the incorporation of a reference to the 'global' in the school mission also had a significant symbolic value: the presence of the globe symbol around campus highlighted sentiments of boundlessness, global citizenship, mobility, flexibility, and significantly,

togetherness. It was also an easily-recognizable symbol that could be used across the school to reinforce the school's collective mission.

When I arrived at ISSG in 2012, the school had recently undergone an IB evaluation which assessed its management and maintenance of its curricula. The IB evaluation results found that the school's primary 'key strength' was attained by its implementation of its mission, vision and values. In the same year, a CIS and NEASC accreditation process reported similar findings, which were then confidently summarized and published by the Head of School on the ISSG website. It was clear, that ISSG placed a significant amount of effort in relaying its ideological direction across all aspects of school and community life.

4.2.1. Global-mindedness and the IB

One particular strategy that was used to transmit the school mission throughout the school was to pair it with the IB Learner Profile. On the school website, the 'Mission, Vision and Values' of the school were available under the same tab. After boldly highlighting the mission of 'Excellence in Education for Globally-minded Students' and the Vision statement (above), ISSG acknowledged its mission's connectivity to the IB Learner Profile, which was deemed as representing the 'Values' of the community:

> "All members of the [ISSG] community strive to be: Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-minded, Risk-takers, Balanced, and Reflective" (ISSG website, 2016, as original).

This page underscored the fact that the school saw its mission and values not only as geared for students, but also its wider community. Given that ISSG was an IB-authorized institution, it was in fact obligated to uphold the initiatives delineated by the IBO (see Chapter 2.3). The categories of the IB Learner Profile were promoted across the school as desirable and aspirational human attributes, and significantly also deemed as 'global' qualities. The coupling between the school's curricula and mission of global-mindedness was annually stated and displayed on the first page of the school's curricular handbooks.

Teachers were very aware of these programmatic ideals, and were encouraged to incorporate them in their classroom activities and visual aids. This was visible across the campus: Classrooms at ISSG were typically fashioned in very similar manners – with common symbols and images decorating the walls signposting the 'global' as a guiding feature. During classroom observations, I saw students actively engaged with the IB Learner Profile, while also passively

interacting with themes relating to 'global-mindedness'. The symbol of the globe was displayed frequently in classrooms and across campus, and used as a passive or banal symbol with which students and community members regularly engaged. Most elementary school classrooms, for example, were equipped with a large floor mat depicting a colourful map of the world (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: *Globe Floor Map*[85]

Many classes which I observed in the elementary school used the mat to congregate for show and tell purposes, or for story-telling activities. I did not witness a teacher using it as an active learning tool. However this is likely due to the fact that students might have found it difficult to conceptualize the symbol systems of maps at such young ages. Still, the globe imagery served as a ubiquitous decorative feature, and in the case of the floor mat, became a centre-piece for elementary school classrooms.

Amidst the globe symbols, every classroom at ISSG had a wall space dedicated for laminated placards displaying the IB Learner Profile (see Figure 4.2). Teachers were encouraged to refer to them in a number of different circumstances and to make students aware of the curricular philosophies of the school.

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[85] Picture taken by H. Meyer in September, 2013.

Figure 4.2: *IB Learner Profile*[86]

When I was observing classes, the teachers would refer to the IB Learner Profile hanging on their classroom walls, by asking students how their particular activities could relate to it. While my presence may have motivated 'model' behaviour, it was nonetheless compelling that the students were generally able to formulate answers which related the IB Learner Profile to their particular lessons. This suggests that these were questions to which they had grown accustomed, and also underscores the role of symbols and rhetoric in the reinforcement of the institutional dogmas. The successful transmission of what was considered to be 'valued' knowledge at the school via its curriculum (Bernstein, 1975) was evident through the student responses to the IB Learner Profile in their lessons.

An example of this was when I was conducting observations in a middle school classroom in which students had been working on an environmental project involving plastic bottles. They each received a multi-paged packet with instructions on the project process, and empty spaces in which they were to write reflections on their progress. Students repeatedly were asked to write written responses to the IB Learner Profile, with questions like,

> "Which Learner Profile attributes have you demonstrated this week? (Risk-Takers, communicator, balanced, thinker, principled, knowledgeable, caring, open-minded, reflective, inquirer)" (ISSG Project Packet, 2013).

and again, towards the end of the project:

> "Self-Evaluation of the Learner Profile: How well do I display the Learner Profile attributes? Write about an example when you were showing these traits" (ISSG Project Packet, 2013).

The students were then given a graph with the IB Learner Profile, where they were meant to respond to each attribute. For example, the 'Thinkers' category looked like this[87]:

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[87] This example was taken from the project packet given to students.

T H I N K E R S	I always think carefully what I have to do to solve a task in the best possible way. I look for different solutions and make suggestions.	I try to solve problems on my own.	I usually try to find a solution to a problem on my own. I ask the teacher to make sure I have the right answer to the problem.	When I do not know what I should do, I always ask the teacher straight away.
	Example:			

(ISSG Project Packet, 2013)

The criteria under which students regularly assessed themselves were inclusive – all students could argue they were 'thinkers', for example. It therefore could be seen as an open-minded, positive and unprejudiced guidance system for classroom-based activities.

Student-written responses to the IB Learner Profile were frequently published on the school website, in which their understanding of the school values was publically documented. For example, reflections written by two 11th grade students on their 'Theory of Knowledge' (TOK) course indicated their engagement with the school values:

"Every time I am faced with certain situations I look at how other people's perspectives may be different from mine. In turn it almost maximizes your knowledge on the situation you look at every standpoint, every aspect on a given situation. Now as a critical thinker I believe I can hold a conversation to a much higher level…" (ISSG website, 2014)

And

"While writing my [extended essay] in art about the artist Edward Munch and his life, my knowledge of TOK helped me to place myself fully in his shoes and understand much better his perception of the world. I believe that my growth as a critical thinker in the first year of TOK helped me write this essay, as I was able to analyse and critically assess his life experiences and his reactions to them and his opinions of the world much better. I was able to formulate my own response to his life…" (ISSG website, 2014).

The language used in the excerpts show the extent to which students were trained to engage with their IB Learner Profile – using words such as 'critical thinker' and 'critically assess', and had successfully learned to express their personal qualities and achievements in these IB idioms.

The school produced a 40-50 paged, colourful issue of the school magazine each season, which illustrated the school's curricular, extra-curricular, and community activities and events. Magazines were published online for community members and the general public. The magazine was a useful tool to gauge how the school presented and documented itself, and where the language of pedagogy merged with the language of self-promotion and branding (see section 4.3). Each issue repeatedly included a range of 'Student Reflections' with input from elementary school-aged children to final year high school students. Reflections could be related to classroom activities, co-curricular endeavours (e.g. sport, arts, and clubs) and extra-credit experiences, such as charity work. The student reflections were selected by teachers, program leaders and organizers, coaches, counsellors, chaperones and tutors to be published in the magazine. Those chosen for publication were typically the ones that demonstrated a high awareness of the IB Learner Profile – indicating the propensity to reward students who used the related 'buzz' words, or demonstrated an awareness of the school's values and mission. Below are some student examples reflecting on their Community and Service[88] activities:

> "…To improve my community and service I would want to do more helpful things outside of the school community so that my help is worldwide. The community and service has helped me become more open and try new things. I guess I'm also a risk-taker for doing the things that I first felt uncomfortable to do….I am proud of myself for all the help I gave to people around the world by overcoming my feelings. I hope to continue to work as effectively as I have. I want to constantly improve myself and the world" (ISSG magazine, 2012)

> "I was open-minded by listening to other people's opinions, especially in the WWF project as I worked on it together with a friend. Through my CS activities I have learned about myself that I can be a lot more communicative than I thought I could be" (ISSG magazine, 2012)

> "For my Community and Service work in the past 2 years I would describe my performance as Caring, Open-Minded and being an Inquirer…..By making a difference in places as Tanzania but also [in the local town] I can establish a connection to both places, which for a globally minded school is vital. I would describe myself also as an Inquirer as for many of the projects I had to gather background information as book prices of information about the project and the difference my donation would make….I learned that I am extremely interested in particularly environmental projects, which will

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[88] The Community and Service (CS) is a service-oriented component of the MYP. Students must earn a minimum of 60 hours of service-oriented activities by the end of grade 10.

probably be a large portion of my hours in the next two years. But most importantly is that it's not always about how much money I can raise and donate but about the idea of helping other people, which at the end of the day gives one a good feeling too having helped someone, somewhere in the world" (ISSG magazine, 2012)

The fact that these reflections were selected for publication, underscores the value that was placed on student work that specifically displayed an awareness of the institutional values. These testimonials also publically documented the extent to which faculty members were able to instil the 'mission' in their students – likely further motivating staff to promote it in their lessons. Finally, the readership of the magazine (current and prospective clientele) was presented with evidence that the school successfully instilled principles and ideals in students.

What was particularly striking to me was that such language was also used when unsolicited. One of the first times I experienced this at ISSG was when I was observing 10-11 year old students engaged in a media-related project. The students had been asked to work in their small groups in a large auditorium to brain-storm ideas on how they were going to film a commercial about a recycling project they had been working on. The teacher had asked me to go along with them to supervise them. The students had dispersed themselves across the large auditorium and were secretly planning their commercials in the corners. During the hour, I asked each group to explain their projects to me. Proudly and confidently, each group excitedly told me about their ideas. On one occasion, I asked a student a question related to how he had come up with his data, and he responded, "I'm an inquirer" – referring to his independent learning and research strategies.

ISSG's ideological orientation was therefore abundant and continually reinforced - even seemingly 'everyday' activities were presented as 'globally' meaningful. An example of this was a series of science projects being annually labelled as 'One World', where "students [were] asked to identify how science is used to address a problem or issue and then to evaluate the moral, ethical, social, economic, political, cultural and/or environmental implications of the solution" (ISSG magazine, 2012). While these variables may stand within the IB curricular objectives, they were also connected to the globe imagery by the school. From technological devices, such as iPads, which were described to enhance 'global-mindedness' (ISSG magazine, 2014) to the drama department labelling its productions as 'All the World's a Stage' (ISSG magazine, 2012), and 'One Sun One World' (ISSG magazine, 2013), notions of 'global-mindedness' were ever-present. Even when the school inaugurated its state-of-the-art track and field complex in 2014, it was described in the school magazine as:

"[a] major milestone in the achievement of the school's campus expansion programme and fulfilment of its mission – excellence in education for globally-minded students. These developments expand [ISSG's] current outdoor facilities to offer students some of the best sporting facilities amongst international schools" (ISSG magazine, 2014).

This description is an example of how the school associated facets of every day school life with the global rhetoric. Additionally, extra-curricular activities groups were named in reference to the school's global orientation, such as the 'World Choir', 'Earth Choir' and 'International Honor Choir', and 'International Honor Band'. Global discourse was integrated with the mission in the ISSG Arts department:

"The arts are a critical part of the [ISSG] mission – excellence in education for globally-minded students – and provide a uniquely suitable path for intercultural communication, community and understanding" (ISSG website, 2014)

Provided that most extracurricular activities were conducted within the international school network, 'intercultural communication' appeared to be understood as an exchange made between international schools[89]. The accentuation of the 'global' across the school also constructed simultaneously a discourse which de-emphasized 'locality'. Put simply: To be 'global' meant not to be 'local'. Throughout my observations, I rarely saw any referent to the host region (music, images) on the walls of the school, except when community functions specifically called for it. This, I argue, contributed to a discourse which rejected elements of the host nation as offering a valid form of symbolic and cultural capital within the school, and also the wider international school system. I shall return to this later in more depth in Chapter 5.

ISSG's mission and values also included parents and alumni – unifying the community through a common objective based on morals and ethics deemed as 'global' competencies. They were present in promotional literature which incentivized parents to participate in a range of volunteer roles and service-oriented activities run by and through the school. For example, each year, the Athletics Department fervently searched for parent volunteers to 'house[90]' a visiting student athlete or student artist from another international school. The struggle to find volunteers to 'house' was not only often relayed to me in casual conversations, but also

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[89] See Chapter 6 for more on this.
[90] International schools facilitate extracurricular competitions, festivals and productions within its own network. Students competing on sports teams, for example, would travel to another international school to compete. When international school students travelled with their teams or groups to another international school, they would be paired up in groups of 2 or 3, and then would be allocated a 'Housing Family' of the hosting school. The Housing Family was responsible for the welfare of the visiting student group for the duration of the competition.

observable in literature produced by the school. The role of the 'housing' family was to assume responsibility to care for travelling students who arrived at the school to either compete in an athletics tournament or participate in an arts-related event. The housing family was obligated to provide meals, transportation and accommodation for the students. In one published plea for volunteers, 'housing' was described in the following manner:

> "Your children have the opportunity of an international education, probably because of your success. Success often means busy lives and complicated plans, and "housing" is one more thing to weave into that. It does however demonstrate, in my view, four of the IB Learner Profiles that we hold highly in our school – those of being open-minded communicators, principled and caring" (Housing Coordinator, ISSG Magazine, 2012).

In this instance, the IB Learner Profile was used to motivate parents into volunteering. It was also argued that housing would "give young people in [the] family a valuable lesson in hospitality" (ISSG Magazine, 2012). The framing of this volunteer position as a commitment to and demonstration of the community's values indicates the extent to which the school's mission and values were propagated across the community. Moreover, the statement equates privilege, or "success" with international education. I will discuss this further in the subsequent chapters.

Alumni were also included in such 'globally-oriented' initiatives. In 2016 ISSG was looking for written contributions for a book of the school's history, which would be published at some point in the subsequent years. Students, parents, current and former staff members and alumni were invited to submit a contribution. The invitation was framed in the following manner:

> "Using the School's Values as a guide, we invite people to submit anecdotes, tributes and other stories to create [the book]. Our values are encapsulated in the IB Learner Profile." (ISSG website, 2016).

Following the invitation, the IB Learner Profile was written in full for contributors' reference – clearly highlighting that contributions were expected to be framed according to these terms. The invitation for current and former members of the ISSG community to contribute to this publication also showed the longevity of community membership. It also reflects how significant the school values are to forging a sense of community, and most importantly, the extent to which management perceived the ideological direction as a chief component in the public documentation of the school.

4.2.2 Conceptualizing 'Global-mindedness' as a Community Member

Given that 'global-mindedness' was fundamental to the school's orientation, I wondered how the students, as the direct recipients of, and participants in these discourses conceptualized and negotiated them. In one of my focus groups, high school students responded to the prompt in the following way:

Heather: *So what does 'globally-minded' mean to you?*

                    (Long pause. Students giggle.)

Student A: *Like the IB Learner Profile for example?*

Heather: *Yeah, or just the idea of being 'globally-minded', does that mean anything to you?*

Student B: *It's kind of engrained into our brains* (all laugh) *it's kind of everywhere [here] but I can't describe it!* (laughs) (June, 2014)[91].

Despite the school's endeavours to promote the term throughout its campus and literature – to the point that the students found it as being 'engrained' – they had difficulty explaining what 'global-mindedness' actually meant to them. While students appeared to understand that the 'global' was a valued form of knowledge, it seemed as though they did not view it as an accessible, let alone demonstrable quality. The 'global' was reflected in assessed student projects, likely for the reason that it would be evaluated according to the IB and its Learner Profile. However, as indicated above, students were not able to make much use of the term. Student A referred to the IB Learner Profile as a selected, perhaps even reflexive response – supporting the fact that students engaged more with the IB attributes through guided activities, than with the school's mission directly and independently.

After this focus group session, I inquired with their teacher whether references to 'global-mindedness' were ever made by the students in general, and he stated that in his experience of working at the school, students did not appear to 'make much use' of the term. In my own exchanges with the students, I did not witness them incorporating the term into their vocabulary to define themselves, others, or anything else for that matter. It did not come up within interviews or conversations, unless specifically solicited, as seen in the excerpt above.

I received similar responses from parents, who believed in 'global-mindedness' as a quality which could be attained through an ISSG education, yet did not use the term to identify themselves, their children, or other community members. When solicited, some parents found

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[91] Published in Meyer, 2015.

'global-mindedness' to be based on notions of tolerance, however teachers and administrators appeared to be the only members within the community who used the term actively to describe the community. Ralph, a teacher, put it as follows:

> *"…I think it's interesting watching [the students] because it's like they're all in their own little worlds, but we're all in the same classroom, but then we're all part of the same world and they're in their own little worlds. They can still work together. It's really globally-minded"* (September, 2013).

And (following a conversation on British-centred and American-centred international schools):

> Heather: *Do you think [ISSG] is more of an American school or a British school?*
>
> Ralph: *We're globally-minded. I would say it just depends on who is on the curriculum team. I don't think it's either. It has a little bit of everything* (September, 2013).

In his first statement, Ralph used the term, 'globally-minded' to describe the unity between student groups in his classroom. He equated global-mindedness to the inclusive learning environment and socialization practices within it. Later, he used the term to describe the school's detachment from nationally-oriented curricula. He categorized himself with other community members as 'globally-minded' through the inclusive lexis (e.g. *"we're globally-minded"*).

Unsurprisingly, teachers and administrators who were professionally invested in the school as international education practitioners actively engaged with the notion of 'global-mindedness'. The ISSG curricular handbooks encouraged teachers to adopt and recontextualize the curriculum and their individual lesson plans to fit these objectives. Clientele, on the other hand, appeared to find the term less useful, for the reason, I argue, that it does not carry a sense of quantifiable or demonstrable cultural currency. In other words, it may prove challenging to perform or practice 'global-mindedness' in an obvious manner, other than speaking of it.

Global-mindedness as an overarching school mission, though ever-present in community discourse, acted more in the form of a community symbol. It was an idea with which all community members were acquainted, and understood as a set of valued personal attributes as identified in the IB Learner Profile. Students understood that they were assessed according to how successfully they could display it, and thus adopted the use of the Profile terms – despite the relative vagueness of the categories. The school also actively defined itself, or spoke of itself as 'globally-minded', though it seemed unclear for community members how to actually

demonstrate, or practice the school's aspiration, despite the fact that they were oriented towards it. The school mission and values, most importantly, were inclusive and universal – all community members were encouraged to strive towards these attributes together to become 'global'.

4.3 AN *INTERNATIONAL* COMMUNITY

ISSG was also faced with market-driven challenges. As seen in Chapter 3, the International Baccalaureate is not exclusive to, and does not define international schools, as it is available across all educational sectors across the world. In Germany, there were 71 IB schools at the time of this study – some of which were private, while others were public. This meant that ISSG's competitors also operated with the same educational principles. To uphold a market value, ISSG pushed its defining mission statement of 'global-mindedness', and also, significantly, its brand as an *international* school. Thus the *internationality* of the community was repeatedly referenced in school discourse to underscore the unique, 'diverse' learning environment ISSG claimed was conducive for an international education.

This section examines the tensions between ISSG's inclusive 'global' orientation and its branding as an exclusive international school. I argue here that the friction between the two institutional objectives between ideological orientation and brand constructs a unique community social imaginary at ISSG that is ideologically inclusive, however nonetheless materialized and practiced in a socially divisive and exclusive manner.

International schools regularly define themselves through the presence of several different nationality groups. The international school brand is dependent on the presence of an *international* community. I discovered that ISSG as an institution set the criteria of 'internationality' relatively clearly within written and symbolic discourse. 'Internationality' was largely determined according to three primary factors: national background, international mobility and English-language competency. 'Internationality' therefore, unlike 'global-mindedness', was based on quantifiable and observable personal attributes that could be *rated*. However, as I will argue here, the process of legitimizing community membership through quantifiable criteria established practices of exclusivity and thus generated precisely the opposite of what the school's globally-oriented mission of inclusivity mandated.

This dichotomy between 'global' educational ideologies and market branding could be seen on the official homepage of the ISSG website between 2012 and 2016. Here, a large bar of

information which defined and promoted the school in brief read as follows in large, bold lettering at the centre of the page:

"Excellence in Education for Globally-minded Students:

[ISSG]: 64 Nationalities – 1200 Global Students – 50 Years of Education – 33.8 Average IB Score – 100+ Diverse Activities"

(ISSG website, 2015;2016)

The excerpt begins with the overarching mission statement of global-mindedness, and below, a description of ISSG students as 'global'. The number of nationalities does not only signal the cultural composition of the school, but also defines the school as *international*. What was at base nothing more than the labelling of a multi-origin school community became marked as its most distinctive feature. 'Internationality' was consistently associated with two sets of terms: first, notions of exclusivity and social status which I will explore more closely in Chapter 5, and second, notions of globality, global-mindedness, and diversity. While the association of the 'inter-national' with the 'global' removed the *national* from the parochialism of nationalism, it nevertheless established it as a significant social attribute. As I will show more fully in what follows, the school addressed its members repeatedly as representatives of a 'nation' and they routinely saw each other in those terms. This practice of ideologically transcending the confines of the nation state whilst simultaneously promoting 'national' cultures and identities produced its own contradictions and tensions, as I will show further below.

When browsing through the website, amidst the references to 'global-mindedness' was a strong discourse of highlighting the cultural 'diversity' of the school. Images flooded the website with students dressed up in national-dress or draped in national flags parading around the school. Moreover, most of the covers of the school magazine showed groups of national flags strung in the background of the picture in focus. The latest issue, for example, showed the graduating class (approximately 100 students) in their regalia, standing on stage bleachers with flags hanging from a line above them. The graduation was therefore highlighted for viewers (and magazine readership) as an international event – an *international* graduation.

National flags are often used by international schools to symbolize and showcase the internationality of their communities. On the ISSG campus, national flags were consistently visible all over the school and its facilities, within its electronic and paper-based literature, during sporting and cultural events, and show-cased in student projects and demonstrations. Even the cafeteria displayed a daily 'nationality dish'. For example, 'Austria Day' in the cafeteria

would feature a glass-enclosed Wienerschnitzel as a daily special, with a small Austrian flag mounted on a toothpick.

The use of nationalities and cultural heritage as primary resources for categorization at the school led to a strong practice of mutual labelling. I saw it as the primary mode of classification in international school life. Such practices of categorizing and labelling also took place, though far less often, in relation to religion. ISSG's elementary school, for example, produced a hallway display entitled 'Religions at [ISSG]'. The display included a photo of the children from one particular class lined up according to the religion with which they most identified. The labels under which the students were required to profess themselves included: "Hindus", "Muslim", "Christian", "Jewish", "Non-Religious" and "Buddhists". Similar to the displays representing the different nationality groups seen at the school, students were asked to represent a single religion, and the showcase was used to illustrate the religious diversity of this particular classroom. These practices illustrated particularly well the tension between the global rhetoric in which differences disappeared, and the labelling exercises in which differences were re-instated and highlighted. Most importantly, these practices were often documented – either in hallways, on the website, or in the school magazine. The encouragement of community members to perform or represent their national, cultural and religious backgrounds was a significant mode through which ISSG underscored its 'diversity' and legitimized its status as an international school, both in the host country and to potential clientele.

Where 'global-mindedness' was the officially endorsed community aspiration based on values, its practical realisation was widely seen to be expressed in performances of 'internationality'. Indeed members practiced, embodied, demonstrated and observed their community membership as variously identified 'nationals'. Rather than developing a blended 'inter-nation' though, this actually reinforced static, clichéd categories based on stereotypes and social hierarchies[92].

> "Global-mindedness is an important goal for those involved with an international school and it is a particularly key element in [ISSG's] Mission Statement of *Excellence in Education for globally-minded students.* To this extent the School has a standing committee of teachers and administrators who have been meeting regularly and voluntarily after the normal school day to explore ways to strengthen the School's commitment to global-mindedness and intercultural awareness. This group, currently called the Intercultural Awareness committee, is responsible for organizing the annual

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[92] See Chapter 5 for more on social hierarchies at ISSG.

Mosaic of Cultures Day, as well as further initiatives to promote intercultural

understanding, competence and appreciation at [ISSG]" (ISSG Magazine, 2014).

This excerpt demonstrates the tensions between the mission and the brand: it declares 'global-mindedness' as the "goal" of the community, however resorts to nationality parades as a means to reinforce and "promote intercultural understanding". However, these practices of showcasing nationality groups also worked in a divisive way, as will be discussed below.

The highlight of the 'Mosaic of Cultures Day' was the 'Parade of Nations', which encouraged students, staff and parents to "wear traditional dress of their country colours" (ISSG PYP Coordinator, 2012) to school. An array of national flags were carried, worn, and painted on the faces of students and staff who participated in the event. In the parade, participants were divided into specific nationality groups and paraded together as one group representing a particular nation. After inquiring whether students were ever faced with a dilemma when having to choose a nationality to represent, one teacher agreed that the parade posed these problems, but reluctantly claimed that students "had to choose" in order to participate[93]. Therefore the event allowed for the parading of its populace, but also simultaneously constricted students and staff who may not have entirely identified with just one nationality.

Such performances are not uncommon for international schools. Tanu (2014) for example, observed a similar Parade of Nations at her fieldwork site at an international school in Jakarta. Such performances of nationalities have been criticized for the "international-mindedness lite[94]" approach in that they create an experience constructed as 'intercultural' in a superficial fashion (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004). The intent of ISSG's Mosaic of Cultures Day, for example, was to create an "enriching cultural experience through learning and sharing together" (ISSG magazine, 2012). A photographer annually took pictures on this day, which were later used to market the school throughout the rest of the academic year.

At the same time, one could argue that the school-wide event allowed for members to perform their school membership using their national background to partake in the formation and emotional experience of community. These demonstrations are described by Fortier as

"performative sites that produce the community rather than merely 'reflect' it. But more than simply being a set of performative acts, the investment in reproducing the

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[93] This however, was not always a requirement. Students were also encouraged to represent more than one nation – particularly in classroom-related projects (see Chapter 5). However, for purposes of this particular event, among some other events and projects which took place during the academic year, students were only allowed to represent one nationality.
[94] Skelton defines this as the 'buy it now: all of the good intentions but little that could be called taste-approach' (2007:380).

community through organizing various events…and then printing a record of it….is also a testimony to the investment in the promise of community" (2006:71).

The images and documentation of the day in the school magazine (e.g. ISSG, 2012) acted to validate and confirm the community. The message conveyed through such demonstrations was that the foundation of the community was based on collaborative efforts in which individual 'national representatives' were stake-holders in a much larger initiative. By participating, one was simultaneously adding to the 'internationality' of the event and ultimately legitimizing it as 'international'. Moreover, Fortier's argument of performances displaying an "investment in the promise of community" (2006:71, above) mirrors Baumann's (1992) observation that communities are strengthened by rituals which express an aspiration for change or assimilation. Both relevantly argue that a strategy of community building is through expressing a shared aspiration. In the case of ISSG, the primary objective or 'goal' of the community, as seen, was founded on being 'globally-minded', which was expressed through rituals symbolizing 'internationality'.

Apart from building and enacting community practices, parades, flags, and posters which exhibited the national, cultural and religious composition of the students also served to demarcate and protect the school's market and the staff who had a stake in it[95]. International school careers are founded and maintained in the international school network. Teachers tend to not leave the system, but make careers in it and its networks. This was supported in an interview with one teacher, who said,

> "*Once [teachers] are in the international school system they don't leave. And I also enjoy the amount of freedom that we have. And the travelling and networking within the network*" (Ralph, 2013).

The amount of freedom to which Ralph was referring was the autonomy teachers in the international school system have over curricular activity and pedagogy, in comparison to those working in national schools. Teachers with whom I engaged over the course of my fieldwork routinely mentioned their commitment to the international school system- speaking of 'having the travel bug' and being 'hooked' on the international school system. The faculty's investment in and mobility within the international school system also ultimately contributes to the cross-border consistency and sustainability of such discourses and practices.

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[95] See Heller (2006) for staff investment in school objectives.

4.3.1 International Residency and Mobility

As seen above, ISSG used the 'global-mindedness' mission to cater to *both* expatriate and host country clientele – it was an inclusive model, which considered all students, regardless of national background, language or experience abroad. This was indicated on the school website in the following way:

> "Globally-minded students are central to our School's mission. At the founding of the School in 1966, the primary aim was to provide an education that would serve the needs of a transient international community. The School has evolved in line with this changing landscape and remains well positioned to offer a first class education to the wide range of students who now attend. Whether we are offering excellence in education to students who might already be considered globally-minded or to those who wish to be, this focus is our reason for being and something that marks the [International School of Southern Germany (ISSG)] as different from many other schools" (ISSG website, 2014)

This extract indicates that the direction of the school had changed from traditional approaches, which entailed catering solely to 'transient' expatriates, to a more inclusive approach, which considered all students able to achieve 'global-mindedness' – whether they were host country nationals or not. However, despite perhaps the best intentions towards inclusivity, the statement nonetheless emphasizes a difference between students who were 'already [considered to be] globally minded' and 'those who wish to be'. Also, the emphasis on global-mindedness presents it as a desired 'community' quality or attribute – something 'international' students had, and host nationals wanted.

Rhetoric used to differentiate between the 'internationals' (expats) and 'locals' (host nationals) was frequently used in ISSG official literature. This included the school policy on admissions, as explained on the website:

> "In recognition of our mission as an International School, it is possible that, as class sizes approach the maximum, remaining places may be reserved for expatriate international students" (ISSG Admissions webpage, 2016).

ISSG placed German nationals and expatriate students in separate groupings and effectively ascribed more 'global-mindedness' to the latter. This was also reflected in the admissions procedures, which granted preference based on citizenship and /or cultural background and experience of international mobility. This highlights again the tensions between the global rhetoric and mission which insinuate borderless inclusivity, and the role of nationality in determining community membership. The impact of the school's admissions policies was seen in

socialization practices at the school. German nationals were often marginalized as not-quite-legitimate members of the community[96] and could often be seen as socializing with each other or congregating separately.

After speaking with community members, I realized that the term, 'international' was a 'loaded' term. It meant a lot to people. During interviews and casual conversations, I found that community members often referenced their degree of 'internationality', as though it carried a significant amount of value. Community members spoke of it as though I understood the term's value –likely due to my status as a former student there. I did not solicit the term in my conversations and interviews, yet nearly all of my interview transcriptions included a reference to internationality at some point. I discovered also that German members of the community tended to speak of it in more depth – as though to validate their community membership to me, in one way or another. Being 'international' was often understood as synonymous with the term 'expatriate' – if one was an expat at the school, one was seen as 'international', and thus a legitimate community member. Host nationals however were not often deemed as 'international' due to their 'local' status and thus 'internationality' seemed to be a sensitive issue for German nationals. This is best highlighted by my interview with 'Heike'.

In June 2014 I interviewed Heike, a German national, who sat on the ISSG Board of Directors. She was a mother of two high school students who had begun their education at ISSG in elementary school. She explained that the admissions process at ISSG was slightly different for German citizens (as opposed to their expatriate counterparts), confirming that ISSG granted preference to non-German nationals in the admission process. However, Heike also stated that ISSG did give preference to German applicants who demonstrated themselves to be *"international thinking and international as individuals"* (June, 2014). She identified herself as an *"international German"*, which she defined as a German national who had either lived abroad or had family members living abroad. In her particular case, she had family living in Italy and France. Given the relative length at which she discussed her level of 'internationality' with me suggested the high value she placed on the trait and the cultural capital she attached to it. It also was based on the assumption that I, as a researcher who had attended the school, would understand this system of capitals evident within this field. The clarification on her part indicated that the act of establishing herself as an 'international German' allowed her to validate herself as a rightful member of the international school community. A *"German German"*, as Heike went on to explain, was someone who was perceived to have a *"limited international social network"*, and/or someone who had not ever lived abroad. She pointed out that her position on the Board

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[96] See Chapter 5.

of Directors was due to her German nationality and socio-linguistic abilities, as only people like her could effectively negotiate with the 'local' society on behalf of the school. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Additional terminology often related to Germans in my conversations with community members (teachers, staff, parents and students) including the term 'Lifer'. I later discovered that this is a term that also appears within other international schools across the world[97]. Some participants defined the label as such:

"[Lifers are] people who are here from pre-K[98] all the way through 12[99]" (Kyle, June 2013)

and

"most of the [older students] are local. So they're Germans - local Germans - who were born and raised here, who want the private education, or want the education in English or whatever the reason is. They're the lifers. So they'll graduate from [ISSG]" (Shelly, June 2013)[100].

In these quotes, 'Lifer' takes on a slightly negative connotation – alluding to imprisonment or to immobility[101]. Interestingly, the term was typically used in reference to German nationals, and not to describe expatriate members who had attended ISSG from pre-Kindergarten. 'Lifer' thus suggested the lack of international mobility in one's family and thus of 'internationality', or demonstrable cultural capital. Shelly, an expatriate mother from the U.S. corrected herself in the extract above by clarifying the difference between "Germans" and "local Germans" – once again, suggesting the all-important presence of expatriate mobility, or lack thereof. Later in her interview, she revealed a commonly used sentiment expressed by expats namely, *"there are cultural differences in terms of whether you're an expat or a local"* (June, 2013)[102]. She felt that expatriates had a (mobile) culture of their own. Here, she may be referring to the communal 'transnational habitus' (Guarnizo, 1997) I referred to in the previous chapter. For Shelly, this included that 'locals' did not subscribe to 'internationality' in the same way and had different reasons for their children's schooling (i.e. "private education" "education in English"). I observed

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[97] In a personal communication with Danau Tanu in 2014, it emerged that her participants attending international schools in Jakarta used the term in the same manner.

[98] Pre-Kindergarten students (typically aged 3-4 years old).

[99] Final year students (typically aged 17-18 years old).

[100] Published in Meyer, 2015.

[101] The term 'lifer' is described in the Merriam-Webster (2015) dictionary as a "criminal who has been sentenced to spend the rest of his or her life in prison" and "a person who spends an entire career in the same job".

[102] See Chapter 5 for more on this.

German nationals to be 'out-grouped' based on this form of cultural capital – that is, residency abroad.

These comments present some interesting social conventions I observed at ISSG. Generally, school members felt relatively comfortable expressing a dislike for German nationals (or particular German nationals) to me. This suggests that my status as a former 'expat' student at ISSG allowed me to learn how host nationals were perceived in the expat ISSG community.

The claim to 'internationality' was thus fundamentally based on nationality, and in extension, mobility. The practice of labelling individuals based on these criteria seemed to be present at other international schools as well: In my interview with Ralph, he described the cultural composition of the teaching body at an international school located in the U.S., where he had worked prior to ISSG:

> *"The teachers at [the U.S. international school] were Latin-American, French, German, I don't think there were any –* (cuts himself off) *– everyone else was French, Spanish, German, Latin-American. They all had international backgrounds. So that kept it globally-minded. Because of the experience"* (September, 2013).

As a teacher at ISSG, he understood 'global-mindedness' as being a quality attained through international residency. It indicates once again that on an everyday or mundane level, global-mindedness' was less often interpreted as the fulfilment of the IB Learner Profile, but through the status of one's nationality in a given environment. In Ralph's testimony, 'global-mindedness' was presented as a desirable, valuable quality which was not only directly related to nationality but also to its geographical placement. While a German was 'globally-minded' in the U.S., due to being outside their national 'home', in Germany they could only be parochial. As will be shown further below, 'global-mindedness' was directly related to three factors: nationality, international mobility and language.

4.3.2. Third Culture Kid

Closely connected with notions of 'internationality' was the use of the term, 'Third Culture Kid' to mark expatriate students at ISSG. The institutional use of the term gave the label official cultural value at the school. It is thus unsurprising that the term was frequently used. ISSG dedicated an entire page to TCKs on its website. It introduced TCK-related themes including the challenges such students face when transitioning into the international school community. The needs and challenges of host country nationals were not mentioned– reinforcing the

division between Germans and expatriates. Rather, specific attention was given to internationally-mobile students:

> "At [ISSG] we understand the challenges facing these TCKs from many angles: not only are many of our students TCKs but, so too, are many of our staff and their own children. Much of what we value in our learning programmes is designed specifically to meet the needs of children who have lived and learned in many different cultures and in different languages…In addition our extensive After School Activities program is designed to ensure our young global nomads also have opportunities to develop and extend their sport and fine arts skills beyond the classroom" (ISSG website, 2014).

In this statement, ISSG positioned itself to accommodate its expatriate students, not only through its curricula, but also in after school life. 'TCK' was used to describe students who were mobile – those who had resided in "many" cultures, and were seen as 'nomadic'. The exclusive rhetoric (e.g. 'our young global nomads') identified the expatriate student clientele as central and most authentic members of the community.

Moreover, the TCK page on the ISSG website provided an online link to the website, 'TCKWorld', which is a networking site for individuals who consider themselves to be a Third Culture Kid. One can become a member by subscribing to the website, which is designed to be a support system for TCKs. This website is considered to be the 'The Official Home of Third Culture Kids'. Despite its generalist appeal, the website has a strong American-focus: the TCK of this website is largely assumed to be an American national, providing statistics, for example, on the extent to which American TCKs adjust to repatriation, and the 'high' number of American TCKs who attend university, in comparison to non-TCKs. For example one of the most recently featured articles stated:

> "What are some of our most striking findings to date? One characteristic of these adult TCKs which stands out is that the overwhelming majority of them are committed to continuing their education beyond high school graduation. Only 21 percent of the American population…have graduated from a four-year college. In sharp contrast, 81 percent of the adult TCKs have earned at least a bachelor's degree…Half of this number have gone on to earn master's degrees and doctorates" (TCKWorld, 2016).

This passage indicates the discourse of comparing TCKs with non-TCKs – which, as seen, was visible at ISSG. Moreover, it highlights the academic success rate of students who are considered to be TCKs – reinforcing the cultural capital affiliated with the term, within this network. Significantly, these articles were also, coincidentally, originally published in International Schools

Services magazines[103] – indicating the connectivity the TCK term has to the international school system and brand. As seen in Chapter 3, the global imaginary transcends the international schools themselves, and also is visible within the market of international school education.

The ISSG website therefore officially linked its expatriate 'TCK' community to mobility. A TCK status implies international residency – an experience which was arguably valued by the school, as exhibited in its message systems across campus. The Head of School, for example, stated in an interview: *If we had a permanent staff that didn't move I think we wouldn't be very international, quite honestly.* Shortly after this, he stated,

> *"I still think that if you have a monocultural person, [the curriculum] will not be delivered in the same way. So when I recruit, for example, I don't have a lot of time to judge a character….I look for 'I-want-INTERNATIONAL-in-my-career teachers'"*(June, 2013).

The term, 'monocultural' was used frequently by administrators – typically referring to 'local' host nationals, who were not considered to be internationally mobile and thus lacking in 'intercultural' or 'global' competencies. This is a common sentiment expressed within international school literature on recruitment policies in international schools. Continuous relocating is widely considered to be a necessary qualification and requisite to teach within the international school system[104].

While the school administration tended to link the term, 'TCK' to individuals who had experienced international relocations, most of the students I asked had not heard of the term at all. I received similar responses to those when I inquired about 'global-mindedness'. The following example came from my Focus Group 1, after I asked them about the term, 'TCK':

Student A: *…what's that?*

Student B: *TOK[105]?*

Heather: *No, no. TCK. It stands for Third Culture Kid.*

Student C: *It's like what we are, having to move so much somewhere, getting to know different cultures.*

Others: *Ohhhhhhh.*

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[103] These newsletters are advertised by ISS to connect the international school community by publishing papers written primarily by teachers and administrators of subscribed international schools. The newsletter's readership is therefore schools and teachers who have subscribed to ISS.
[104] See for example, Hayden, Rancic & Thompson, 2000.
[105] Theory of Knowledge. A component of the IB curriculum offered at ISSG.

Student C: *Well, I mean everyone, like most everyone here, easily more than half of our grade are TCKs. I mean, you don't walk around promoting it. It's just kind of like everyone is used to it because we're surrounded by other Third Culture Kids. Someone's like, 'I've lived in two places', and I'm like, 'Well I've lived in like five places, what's your point?'* (June, 2014)[106].

Out of the entire group, only one student had heard of the term before. Student C argued that the label was not something students used to actively identify themselves, and defined the term according to residency abroad – or expatriate status.

Adult members of the community, however, appeared to use the term quite frequently. This was likely due to the fact that they were either practitioners within an institution which officially recognized and valued its association with the label, or they were clientele (parents) who had invested in the school's orientation and value system. Several teachers had recommended the commercial book, *Third Culture Kids*[107], to me as a researcher at the facility, or had it in their classrooms as a reference for students who were struggling with international transitions. This indicates a less 'glamorous' aspect to the popular label. Cathy, a school counsellor, mentioned that the book helped popularize the social issues students deal with upon serial-relocating:

"I don't know if you know the book, 'Third Culture Kids', that's spread the awareness during the last six or seven years, but the thing for middle school kids and high school kids is it's a real issue for them leaving their friends" (June, 2013).

Given that ISSG placed special attention on the TCK, parents placed value on the term as well, which was interpreted in different ways. This is unsurprising, provided that the term was institutionally used in reference to a particular demographic of the school community and framed as unique and valued form of identity. The 'TCK' label was used often to signal a degree of exclusivity and 'uniqueness'. Categorization only works through 'othering'. While the institution and most expatriate members interpreted the term as referring to students who had transitioned to Germany from abroad, some host country nationals considered their children to be TCKs, for the reason that they had been educated in the 'international' environment facilitated by ISSG and its network of international schools. Parents therefore fashioned the term according to their own particular circumstances. Veronika, a German parent of two elementary

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[106] Published in Meyer, 2015.

[107] *Third Culture Kids: Growing up Among Worlds* by David C. Pollock and Ruth van Reken (1999) is widely recommended by schools and peer-groups to students who are perceived to fit the profile of 'TCK' in that particular context. The book provides accounts of individuals who navigated their changing identities as they entered new countries of residence and returned 'home' to their passport countries.

school children who had attended ISSG since pre-Kindergarten, explained to me that her children were TCKs due to the English-medium, international education they received. She argued that because her children had received this form of education, they exhibited a greater potential to live abroad in comparison to students educated in the German school system. Interestingly, Veronika was the only German participant who used the term 'Lifer' to describe her own children. When she used it, she shrugged and cringed – suggesting she acknowledged the negative connotation the term had within the school community. She identified her children as Third Culture Kids nonetheless, which indicates the extent to which the term was valued within this cultural context.

The TCK label is particular, in that it was developed outside of the international school realm (see Chapter 3.2) and has evolved over the past few decades into becoming a widely used and referenced term. Its popularity gives it particular cultural value, or capital – granting its referent a degree of exclusivity and status. This is not only seen within international school communities, but also within the global marketplace (Selmer and Lam, 2004) and in popular culture. Many commercial books promoted in international schools, and/or authored by international school staff use the term in a relatively enthusiastic manner, labelling 'TCK's as "young phenomena" (Van Reken, 2014:xxiii), "the prototype of the future" (Ota, 2014:LIV) or as a "unique population" (Storti, 2001:175). It is therefore unsurprising that the international school system uses the label for promotional purposes, and that the term implicitly holds high status within international school communities. Thus parents, as clientele, generally found this term attractive and regularly used it to signal their sense of belonging to the international school community and its global imaginary.

4.3.3. 'Internationality' and Anglophone Culture

In my first year of fieldwork, I was invited by an American teacher to conduct a series of classroom observations in the middle school. The class I was observing on this particular day was an IT class of 12-13 year olds using laptops which had been wheeled on a cart into a regular classroom. Glancing around, the classroom had been decorated with referents to Anglophone literature and literary artists, including Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice'. Next to the white board was a referent to 'global-mindedness' and beneath that, the usual display of colourful, laminated placards of the IB Learner Profile. As students worked on their computers, a student in the corner asked the teacher what the expression, 'too far down the rabbit hole' meant. Another student quickly responded before the

teacher, *"Like Peter Rabbit!"* Some students laughed. He then asked, *"What's Peter Rabbit?"* The teacher looked up and said, *"You don't know what Peter Rabbit is?"* Students in the background giggled again. Blushing a bit, he nodded his head, 'no'. The teacher then recommended to him that his 'homework' was to go to the elementary school and check the book out from the children's library. Visibly embarrassed, the student quietly agreed, and continued working.

The exchange, amidst a background of Anglo-cultural referents, showed the extent to which the school not only placed value on English (as the target language), but also on particular cultural elements of the Anglo-world. Thus, classroom activities and materials, the international curricula (excluding foreign language classes), extra-curricular programs, community events and official literature were in English and, by extension, exhibited a strong Anglo-cultural bias. This has been also documented in literature[108], and a component of the international school brand.

Curiously however, I found that administrators, principals and faculty members regularly rejected the notion that their classrooms were particularly influenced by specifically British or American culture. In fact, when speaking with an administrator, I used the word 'soccer' and she corrected me saying, *"It's football. We're not American. We're international"* (June, 2014). Elementary school teacher Ralph also stated that his class was not specific to any culture, but rather, 'globally-minded' – using the mission to suggest that the school transcended cultural boundaries. I received similar comments when inquiring about the teaching staff demographics – administrators and teachers did not like to state that most teaching staff did in fact come from Anglophone countries. However, the school's own data published on its website supports that most faculty members were indeed English L1 speakers[109].

In fact, English and Anglophone cultures were often equated with 'internationality'. Classrooms were 'internationalized' by containing objects, brands and images typically found in British, Canadian and US classrooms: 'Scholastic' and 'Northwest Regional Education Library' posters, materials on 'imperial' measurement systems, yellow number 2 pencils[110], 'Highlights[111]' magazines, and references to literary works from nearly exclusively British or American novelists, poets and writers. Where certain objects (like pencils) were obviously available in Germany, the number 2 yellow pencils symbolically 'internationalized' the classroom: they added an object

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[108] See for example, Canterford (2003); Deveney (2005); Tanu (2014).
[109] See Appendix 4.
[110] The use of these pencils has been commonplace in U.S. classrooms since the early 20th Century. The number 2 refers to the lead's strength.
[111] This is a children's educational magazine that was developed in the 1920's in the U.S. It is common to see it in U.S. classrooms, and is available for institutional and individual subscription (Highlights, 2016).

that was not readily available in local stores. It created an environment which was exclusive, and most importantly: specifically not local and thus, 'international'.

Nearly all of the elementary school and middle school classrooms in which I conducted my observations had little bookshelves in the classroom corner on which English-medium novels, children's books, and poetry booklets were displayed. The emphasis on Anglophone literature was so stark at ISSG, that the school ran an initiative in 2012 to enhance 'heritage language' learning through the provision of a new, elaborate collection of translated British and American literary 'classics' in other languages including: 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 'To Kill a Mocking Bird' and 'Pride and Prejudice' in Spanish; 'Macbeth', 'Wuthering Heights' and 'Romeo and Juliet' in German; 'Jane Eyre' and 'Lord of the Flies' in Swedish; and 'Of Mice and Men' and 'Animal Farm' in Italian. In this particular case, the method was to cultivate heritage languages through British and American culture.

In interviews and formal discussions community members associated English language proficiency with 'internationality'. An example of this came from a statement made by my participant, Chloe – a U.S. national working as a member of staff at the school, in which she explained:

> *"…we have an instructor who is German that comes from the outside, he's been with the school for [several] years…and has a great connection with the kids because he can speak their language…I haven't encountered anyone that primarily speaks German because as the school policy [instructors] are supposed to speak the international language at the school. And that's English"* (May, 2013).

Chloe described the instructor as coming from the 'outside', suggesting an 'outsider', non-member status. Moreover, she equated English proficiency as a skill that belonged to 'them' (the kids) – using the possessive article, 'their language' over a more inclusive, definite article, 'the language'. Finally, she equated the English language spoken at ISSG as 'the international language'. As an American expatriate, Chloe was also able to claim the 'international' language as her own, which worked to enhance her position as a member of the 'international' school community. Language-based social hierarchies were in evidence at ISSG[112].

I also observed linguistic variety in English to play a role in the construction of 'internationality' as cultural capital at the school. Some members referred to an 'international' accent, which was argued to be acquired through prolonged international school education. The accent, however, was interpreted in various ways to me across the community. Some members

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[112] This is also documented within other international school communities (e.g. Tanu, 2010; 2014).

referred to the accent as a variety which was generated through exposure to other individuals who were considered to be 'international'. One ISSG alumna and British national proudly stated at a reunion dinner[113], *"I think my international accent is coming back"* (May, 2014). Here, she was referring to an American-influenced accent that was 'coming back' after spending the day with alumni of the international school. Others within the community argued the 'international accent' was British-influenced:

> *You know, there are people who are here from pre-K all the way through 12. And just even their international accents – they might be British, but it's not quite a British accent* (Kyle, June 2013).

While there was a disagreement about which accent qualified most as 'international', it was undisputed that it derived from either American or British English and that it was important to acquire it. Interestingly, Kyle, as a Canadian member of the community, considered the 'international accent' to be British-based, whereas the British national considered it to be American-influenced.

The emphasis placed on the English language stemmed from the school's language program objectives. Students were meant to use the target language during contact hours (curricular and extracurricular). The emphasis on English led to regulatory practices, and circumstances in which groups and individuals were categorized according to their language capabilities.

Chloe explained to me that there had been an after school activities instructor, who had brought on a high level of criticism from kids and parents that he taught in German, and not in English. After further investigating, she discovered that while he was speaking English, his counting and some cuing was in German:

> *"As a policy on campus, instructors that are hired outside of the campus are to speak English. Unfortunately because this instructor learned to dance with the German language and taught outside the school also in German, it was a challenge for him to remember every time to count in English and to cue in English. So it started out with 22 kids and it dropped to a mere 5. So we had to drop the program"* (Chloe, May 2013).

This resistance to the host nation language (German) and strong emphasis on English reflected the wider practices of regulating the German influence and fostering Anglophone culture and

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[113] I was invited to a 10-year reunion dinner for students who graduated in 2004. Even though I did not graduate from ISSG, and attended the school for 2.5 years only, I was still considered to be a member enough to receive an invitation.

the way in which these were tied in with the notions of exclusionary and exceptionalism on which the school's brand relied.

Language use was regulated from the beginning: Upon entry to ISSG, students were categorized by their English language proficiency or deficiency. Within the ISSG program structure, middle school and elementary school students who were not considered to be proficient in English did not receive instruction in their homerooms[114], but rather, would briefly meet in their homerooms, and then were separated from their peers to attend ESL-specific classes. These were content classes, however at a pace conducive to the English language proficiency level of the students involved. While it allowed for students to progress quickly in their language learning, the physical removal of these students from their classroom was problematic for some students. This included Jack, a Dutch high school student, who described his experience arriving as a first-grader without any previous knowledge of English:

> *"I just couldn't stop crying. I'd sit on my brother's lap – he was in fourth grade – actually everyone was trying to be nice to me, and I didn't understand what they were saying and I was just freaking out the whole time, so what they do is they put me in ESL – English as a Second Language – throughout the whole first grade almost. So instead of going to classes, I'd go to ESL"* (June, 2014).

Talmy (2004) argues that students who are cast into ESL classes may find it difficult to distance themselves from the label as an ESL student. International schools can also be particularly accommodating with language-based socialization issues. At ISSG, nationality appeared to be the primary marker connected to perceptions of English language level, as discussed in one of my focus groups involving a group of high school students:

> Student A[115]:   *I'm in English B[116]…It's really to get easy grades…because we've all[117] been here way long enough to be in English A[118] but it's just like, BECAUSE we're half-German, they're letting us in the course, so then*

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[114] A homeroom for the elementary school and middle school at ISSG is the classroom in which the young student is assigned for the entire year. The homeroom teacher is the primary teacher and is responsible for the teaching of all core subjects to their homeroom class. In the high school, homeroom teachers were only responsible for a 45 minute period at the beginning of the day, in which administrative issues were sorted out, role is taken, or during which assemblies took place. If nothing else was going on, the homeroom teacher supervised a free study period for his/her respective homeroom during this 45-minute time.

[115] This student identified herself as a half-German, half-American national.

[116] "Language B is a foreign language-learning course, which enables students to gain competence in a modern language other than their own mother tongu3e

[117] Here she is referring to a specific group of 'Half-German' students.

[118] Language A is defined by ISSG as a course designed for 'native, or near-native' speakers of English (ISSG website, 2015).

> *everyone is just taking it because it's easy- like, you get THREE IB points –*
> *so easy!*

Heather: *And could you say, 'I feel like being in English B', would they let you [drop*
            from English A], as an American?

Student B[119]:   *Um…NO!*

            (both laugh) (June, 2014).

Student A was able to use her German nationality to negotiate her attendance in an English program which she felt was no longer appropriate to her advanced level of English. Both students A and B responded similarly when I suggested the possibility of an American national attempting the same thing – believing the idea to be absurd enough to laugh about. Their response signalled that students were acutely aware of the link between cultural capital attained through nationality and language competency. The students knew that nationality could be used as a form of currency in relation to their English lessons, and that nationality overrode language proficiency level and class placement. Irrespective of the actual proficiency they had, nationals from Anglophone nations were often assumed to speak a particular level of English, and it seemed inconceivable for an 'American', for example, to attend an English B level course at ISSG. Students were aware of these tensions, and in the case of Student A, were able to use them to their advantage. Interestingly, Student B was born and raised in Germany, just like Student A. The only difference was that Student B had two American parents, and Student A only had one American parent.

This indicates some striking tensions within the school's management of its language program. The discourse of labelling based on fixed conceptions of national belonging and language ideologies was often institutionally facilitated, despite some of the school's principal objectives outlined in its definition of 'global-mindedness'. In 2013 for example, I observed a class in the elementary school that was primarily comprised of German nationals. When I inquired why German students were pooled together into one class, the teacher stated that it was primarily due to their German and English language abilities. They were nearly exclusively L1 German speakers, and learning English together at approximately the same level and pace.

The school administration had thus chosen to minimize the number of German students from each class in the grade, by placing them all together in one. However, when observing the

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[119] This student identified herself as 'American'.

class, I noticed that there were a handful of students who did not speak or understand German. After the class I asked the teacher about it:

Heather: *In your class, most of them are German, and they speak a lot of German together. How does that work with the students who don't?*

Ralph: *That is one of the biggest things that kind of- one of the biggest rules in my class is that they only speak English, and I mean, of course they do speak [German] but it's not fair to students like [Example 1] and [Example 2]. And they do get left out, and they end up just sitting there, like, not knowing what to do. So they need constant reminding – well, not constant, but need reminding of speaking English. But yeah, they do get left out* (September, 2013).

In an informal discussion after our interview, Ralph remarked that his class had been formed slightly later than the other classes in that grade level, due to a last-minute influx of new students that year. He confirmed that the school management had decided to keep the Germans together, and made him the teacher of this class due to his bilingual German/English abilities. The decision to use nationalities to divide the students is another example of the practices of categorization that are so heavily prevalent at the school. Moreover, a curious feature was that German L1 speakers were put together in this instance, versus for example, English L1 speakers. A homeroom full of American students or solely British students did not exist at ISSG. With the exception of three or four (out of around twenty-five), Ralph's class was German. Priority therefore appears to be placed on establishing 'international' classrooms for individuals who match the criteria identified in this chapter: nationality, international-mobility, and proficiency in Anglophone language and culture. The creation of a primarily German class seems to have been motivated by the school's regulation of host national influence.

4.4 CONCLUSION

As seen, ISSG regularly resorted to its inclusive mission to evoke a communal sentiment of unity, universality, tolerance and equality through the characteristics expressed in the IB Learner Profile. These were seen to be defining traits of a holistic or 'global' learner.

A closer look at the IB Learner Profile however shows that these traits are so open and individual, that they are difficult to demonstrate – let alone rate or measure. More importantly, these characteristics are not dependent on someone's nationality, but can be learned and

cultivated in any IB school around the world. They are disputably not qualities one can objectively and clearly demonstrate on a CV, in a college application, or in a job interview. Moreover, they are not quantifiable qualities – and, after conducting my observations and researching the IB, I am confident they were specifically designed not to be. The IB was created to enhance what are perceived to be fundamental human characteristics (IBO, 2016) – uninfluenced by national, cultural, religious, social, economic or political background. The IB Learner Profile is particularly vague, yet exhibits criteria to which every person – regardless of background – can strive.

Following Bourdieu (1986b), communities are fields of power struggles. He argues that agents in social groups negotiate various forms of capital to gain status within the field. This is well suited to reflect on community practices at ISSG. While the official community aspirations were repeatedly reinforced in classrooms, online, in school magazines, and in extra-curricular life, members nonetheless resorted to other criteria to assume their status positions within the community and rank each other. As seen, the most tangible, quantifiable resources through which members could gauge social standing was through degrees of 'internationality'. Notions of 'internationality' were also regularly institutionally reinforced and supported, and were based on three primary conditions.

The first resource of 'internationality' and common form of labelling was nationality. The school frequently represented and marketed itself by the number of nationalities in its community. Such emphases on nationhood, however, immediately signalled a member's status as either an 'international expatriate' or a 'local'. As seen, these terms carried a significant amount of cultural currency, as the institution enforced a policy that would grant expatriates priority status in admissions, and also regularly referred to its curricula as designed particularly for its 'international' expatriates. These claims and policies implicitly marginalized German members, and as seen by Heike's statement, left German nationals in a position in which their community membership had to be validated.

The second criterion which was used by members to assume status and assert belonging was the extent to which they were, or had been internationally mobile. Residency abroad and the number of countries in which one had previously resided were seen as indications of valid community belonging. This related to employment, as expressed by the Head of School: teachers at ISSG were recruited largely on their international professional experiences. It also referred to children's mobility: the term, Third Culture Kid, as defined on the ISSG website, marks the child as an expatriate- and thus valid member of the community. The school's endorsement of the website, TCKWorld reinforces the connectivity between the international school brand and the

TCK term. The opening page of the TCK Academy 'About' page show an image of a group of approximately 20 children dressed up in varying national dresses. The image is labelled, 'International School Kids', and beneath it, information about supporting expatriate communities of TCKs and ATCKs[120][121].

While ISSG officially recognized its TCKs as internationally-mobile, this was contested by German parents, who believed their children could also be TCKs. The fact that community members could mould the rhetoric to suit their personal circumstances indicates the presence of a (globally-oriented) community social *imaginary.* This global imaginary, I argue, is structured by the international school market and branding objectives.

Finally, the third mode through which members performed their 'internationality' and ranked others was through their English language proficiency and understanding of Anglophone culture. An English-medium school, ISSG exhibited a degree of an Anglo-cultural bias. Further community divisions and ranking practices were made between those who could speak English proficiently, with an American or British linguistic variety, and those who could not. Students were aware of these issues, and used them to their advantage at times. With this, there was an additional discursive layer in which particularly German linguistic or cultural skills and traits were devalued.

The ISSG community was constructed through a shared community aspiration (Baumann, 1992) or symbol (Cohen, 1985). For ISSG, it was its 'globally-oriented' ideology. The globe as the most used community symbol is particularly useful for purposes of community building, for the reason that it is so vague, ambiguous and immeasurable. This way, *all* community members could feel a particular affinity towards it, albeit in varying ways:

> "Not *all* social categories are so variable in meaning. But those whose meanings are the
> most elusive, the hardest to pin down, tend to be those also hedged around by the most
> ambiguous symbolism. In these cases the content of the categories is so unclear that
> they exist largely or only in terms of their symbolic boundaries. Such categories as justice,
> goodness, patriotism, duty, love, peace, are almost impossible to spell out with precision.
> The attempt to do so invariably generates argument, sometimes worse. But their *range*
> of meanings can be glossed over in a commonly accepted symbol – precisely because it
> allows its adherents to attach their own meanings to it" (Cohen, 1985:15).

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[120] Adult Third Culture Kids.
[121] To access further materials via TCKWorld and become a member, one must pay a subscription fee. (TCK Academy, 2016)

In highlighting its global orientation, ISSG could operate with an inclusive ideology. However, as Cohen points out, the attempt to define an ambiguous community symbol any further can generate conflict. This is where the ISSG brand of internationality posed tensions within the community. Internationality was clearly defined by the institution through written, spoken and visual discourse. These three aforementioned criteria through which 'internationality' was largely evaluated by the school and its members produced a divisive ranking system within community – leading to ideologically contradictory and out-grouping practices.

The global imaginary of the ISSG community was centred on the idealised aspirations of the school, yet continuously materialized according to the limiting criteria of 'internationality' which significantly impacted the socialization experience of its members. The subsequent chapters will further examine how community members negotiated and performed their social imaginaries according to the discourses identified in this chapter. Chapter 5 explores how nationality played a role in the construction of community and the production of community-based practices. It examines the construction and materialization of social hierarchies on the ISSG school campus. Chapter 6 subsequently examines these practices as they traverse spatial boundaries - focusing on how institutional rituals, practices, and discourses are reproduced in spaces off campus.

CHAPTER 5

NEGOTIATING INTER-NATIONALITY AT ISSG

5.1. INTRODUCTION

One of my first classroom observations at ISSG was conducted in September 2013 at the discretion of a primary school teacher. She commented to me that *"the [kids] like to hang on to stereotypes because it reminds them of home. I think that's normal – you want to identify with something"*. While walking around her empty classroom, I started looking at some posters produced by her students who were at lunch. I had seen a number of similar displays throughout the campus already – posters exhibiting symbols of national, cultural or linguistic identity. In this instance, students created A4-sized, colourful posters under the title, "What is important to you?" As I looked closer, and following her remark, it was indeed a collage of conventional cultural and national references. Nearly every poster contained at least one national flag, coupled with a variety of predictable symbols. For example, a student from the United States produced a poster with an American flag, Boston Celtics and a hamburger; another's, from Italy, contained images of the Italian flag, a pizza and the A.C. Milan emblem; and a student identifying himself as British included a picture of the Union Jack, a Manchester United emblem, and references to James Bond '007'. Students who identified with more than one nationality (who, I later found out, students often referred to as 'Halfies') organized their posters, literally, in halves: One side dedicated to the specific symbols of one nation, and the other to the additional nationality. Clichéd icons associated with national cultures, such as food, sport and flags appeared across the school.

When students returned from lunch, they were asked to bring their 'Unique Posters', a homework project, to the centre of the classroom, and to take a seat somewhere on the globe floor mat[122] for a show-and-tell activity. One by one, students shared their posters, and the reasons why they considered themselves to be unique. Similar to the posters they had produced a few weeks prior and which were hanging on the classroom walls, references were given to nationality, sport, travelling, and culturally-specific cuisine. Moreover, the students appeared to understand the value of particular cultural traits – attributes that would grant them status in their social environment. One student said, "*I think I'm unique because I was born in Ireland but have an American accent"*. Another student said, *"I think I'm unique because I'm Indian"*.

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[122] See Figure 4.2.

Interestingly German students did not focus on their nationality in this exercise, unless they considered themselves to be 'Halfies', but rather generally referred to hobbies or material things they enjoyed. For example, one said, *"I think I'm unique because I like riding"*, and another said, *"I think I'm unique because I have a yacht".*

It was also noticeable that a large majority of the students in the class were wearing popular American brands such as 'Abercrombie and Fitch' or 'Hollister', and used linguistic colloquialisms familiar from American youth language. This particular student introduced a theme that became increasingly visible to me across campus and the community – that is, the value that was placed on American cultural traits. Claiming allegiance to a nation state, forming 'nationality groups' and performing cultural attributes which were deemed intrinsic to particular national geographies underscored the creation of the 'inter-national' space, and the social imaginary of the community. Moreover these practices appeared to be the most striking features of community life.

I use the hyphenated term 'inter-national' in this chapter in reference to collaborative efforts in which nationalities are represented by community members collectively. Where Chapter 4 used the term 'internationality' in reference to the three categories by which community members quantified their community membership and affirmed cultural capital (i.e. nationality, international mobility, and English language competencies), here, 'inter-nationality' refers to the efforts made to collectively practice and visually display an amalgamation of 'nationalities' together as a community. I argue that practices of inter-nationality during community-based events and activities reinforced social hierarchies founded primarily on individual national backgrounds.

This chapter explores categorization practices used by members to socially position themselves and others, and the extent to which these practices played a role in the reproduction and enhancement of the global imaginary. 'Group-making'[123] is therefore a fundamental theme in this chapter. With the school's market-driven objectives to enhance and document its outward-facing 'inter-nationality', came also frequent opportunities for members to perform the categories that had been made available to them at the school. As seen in the example with the classroom activities (above), students were regularly encouraged to engage with their nationalities at ISSG. Therefore, in addition to the strong fault line between 'international' expatriates and 'local' host nationals (Chapter 4), individuals socialized into sub-categories based

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[123] Brubaker (2002:170-171) argues that group-making is a social, political and cultural process which 'transforms' labels into groups and increases levels of 'groupness'. Thus, categories are not 'groups', but rather "at best a potential basis for group-formation or 'groupness'" (2002:169).

on their nationalities – formulating additional borders and new social hierarchies. This was best highlighted in an exchange I had with one of my focus groups of high school students, which evidenced these dynamics:

> Heather: *So who are the popular kids?*
>
> All: *Americans.*
>
> Student A: *There are a lot of cliques. Or gangs, well, you can't call it gangs.*
>
> Heather: *Is it really cliquey here?*
>
> All: *Yeah.*
>
> Student A: *I don't want to sound arrogant, I think you* (indicating to the other students) *could all agree, but I feel I can go through all groups. I don't like to be with just one group. I like to move around a bit. There's the American one, the British one, the German one, the second-degree German one-*
>
> Heather: *What's the second-degree German one?*
>
> Student A: *They're the ones that need to be the machos* (all students laugh, and gesture to indicate agreement) (June, 2014).

The exchange reflects not only the out-grouping process targeting host nationals, but also highlights the role expatriate nationalities played in socialization. Student A specifically presented American, British and German groups using a direct article, 'the' to suggest that he perceived these groups to be exclusive. These also, were the largest student nationality groups at the school that year[124]. This student also used the term, 'second-degree German' to indicate a social hierarchy amongst host national students - just as Heike used the terms, 'international German' and 'German German' (Chapter 4) to differentiate between the 'types' of 'Germans' in the ISSG community. Moreover, the term, 'machos' also shows tensions with a particular group of host nationals based on the impression that this group needed to 'prove' something to others. This perception will be discussed further in Section 5.3 below.

Drawing on the categories identified in this thesis so far, I examine here how members "do *things* with categories" (Brubaker, 2002:169). I argue that the institution cultivated socialization practices 'from above', which articulated both a market-driven and a socially manifest culture of 'inter-nationality'. Brubaker relevantly argues:

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[124] See Appendix 4.

"From above, we can focus on the ways in which categories are proposed, propagated, imposed, institutionalized, discursively articulated, organizationally entrenched and generally embedded in multifarious forms of 'governmentality'[125]….From below, we can study the 'micropolitics' of categories, the ways in which the categorized appropriate, internalize, subvert, evade or transform the categories that are imposed on them[126]" (Brubaker, 2002:170).

In Chapter 4, I discussed primarily the stance from 'above': how the school brand of 'internationality' was constructed and articulated through institutional discourse. This chapter builds on this to discuss the 'micropolitics' (Brubaker, 2002:170) as exhibited through practices from 'below'.

A brief example of this process is when I discovered posters in the elementary school entry way, which were displayed to welcome new families who had arrived halfway through the academic year. A4 posters were mounted on the wall under the title, "New [Elementary] School Students: A Warm Welcome to Our [Elementary] School Families". Each poster had a picture of the new student, and information according to the following categories: name, grade, nationality, the country from which they had just moved, and their hobbies. The emphasis on nationality and international mobility promoted the school as 'international' using the categories mentioned in Chapter 4. These students then were marked, from the beginning, according to the labels that had been given to them by ISSG.

I begin this chapter by exploring how members realized their community membership and related to others according to national background. I examine how these categories became institutionalized and normalized through practices of 'inter-nationality' – involving the participation of the entire community. Such performances articulated how cultural capital was negotiated at the school and by its members. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 then examine how this value system of cultural capital was interpreted by marginalized groups at the school. I show how host nationals used their social and economic capital to contest their marginalized status at the school, and gain influence in the community.

5.2   PERFORMING 'INTER-NATIONALITY' AND 'DIVERSITY'

Classroom observations were scheduled to ensure I always had a free moment with the teacher – either before or after the lesson. It allowed me to get to know the teacher, their

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[125] See also Noiriel, 1991; Slezkine, 1994; Brubaker, 1994; & Torpey, 2000.
[126] See also Domínguez, 1986.

approach towards and an explanation of the lessons I had come to watch, and significantly, their experience as a teacher at an international school and with the particular group of students I was observing. I found that teachers always resorted to two primary ways to describe their students: either through nationality (e.g. 'He is half-German, half-British or 'She is Indian') or through language proficiency level (e.g. He's English A-Level' or, 'Her English is very weak'). Students' linguistic ability and national identity therefore were consistently the primary forms of categorization amongst the faculty I met.

Students tended to follow this trend by not only ranking themselves according to nationality and language proficiency levels, but also used this method to rank me. Students always asked me about my nationality, and after responding 'American', they would often follow my answer by inquiring whether I could speak German. If I answered with 'yes', they would nearly always ask me why. If I answered with 'no', there would be no additional queries. Puzzled by this, I asked a teacher what she made of it. Her response was, *'Most people are shocked if Americans can speak German'* (July, 2015). The response may be linked to the fact that many teachers and adult figures with American accents at the school did not speak much German. This trend underscored the tensions between its mission of 'global-mindedness' and what occurred in practice: members referring to static and preconceived notions based on national and/or linguistic backgrounds. The popular practice encouraging students to identify themselves with reference to nationality or culture for learning purposes in classrooms (as seen by the 'What is Important to you?' activity described at the beginning of the Chapter) may have aided in the cultivation of these social conventions.

The significance of language in the formation of social groups was visible during my observations in the school cafeteria. The ISSG lunch hours were split between the three schools and particular grade levels within these schools. Typically, students between two grades would have lunch during the same 30 minutes, then, would be called outside when a new group of students entered. This time of day gave me the opportunity to compare how students across all grade levels socialized. The space was not very big, so it also made access to students easy for me. I observed how students chose where to sit and with whom, and how they socialized with others from their grade level and that above or below them. One particularly noticeable feature about socialization across all schools (elementary, middle and high school) was that student groups were often formed based on shared language and language variety. Also, during each rotation there was always the presence of a specifically German-speaking group.

Teachers also convened in the corner of the cafeteria to eat their lunches together. They also had meetings in this space, and coffee breaks. On my first day of observations, two Spanish

teachers were sitting having coffee together, playing Spanish guitar music from an iPhone while they chatted.

These social practices were discussed in an interview with a Canadian member of the ISSG faculty, 'Kyle'. He began his international school career twelve years prior to the interview date, and provided an interesting insight into the social dynamic amongst students. He had built his teaching career previously in a Canadian inner-city school comprised of students from lower-income families. This was not a particularly common career pathway, in comparison to other faculty members, who began their teaching careers in international education and schools. To Kyle, ISSG was socially cohesive and incomparable to the racial, socio-economic, and ethnic tensions he had experienced in the public school system in Canada. He stated:

> *There are always going to be cliques and I never try to force students to artificially be best friends with someone else. I mean, eventually you're going to want to speak your own language. So the Swedish people hang out with the Swedish people and the Germans with the Germans and the Japanese with the Japanese. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that. But I think in general, people- they're very integrated with each other here* (June, 2013).

While Kyle reported that students often socialized with others who shared the same linguistic background, he also stressed that students were not rigidly bound to these groups – suggesting the fluidity, and dynamic nature of social networks and groups within this school. Students did not solely interact with others holding the same passport or those who spoke the same 'native language'. However, in actual practice this was regularly called for, in so-called 'internationalization' activities, such as: events put on by PTO nationality groups, UN or Mosaic of Cultures parades, classroom activities involving nationality groups and groupings and additional educational exercises whereby students and faculty 'represented' 'nations', 'cultures' or 'languages'. Through the continuous emphasis on representing oneself and categorizing one's cultural and/or linguistic background, students in turn internalized these classifications of themselves and others. This also occurred amongst the ISSG body of parents.

5.2.1 ISSG's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The activities and events run by the school's PTO – a principally expatriate group – provide useful examples of how the strong classification system at ISSG came to life. As seen in Chapter 2, PTO membership was required by all members of the community. However active participation in its events and activities was by choice. This was a significant, powerful group that

involved the entire community in extracurricular life, and for this reason will be the main focus of this chapter.

I am confident that my role as a U.S. national helped me access certain powerful groups in this community – particularly the PTO. Clearly my nationality and American accent gave me the cultural knowledge and skills to approach and easily 'fit in' with PTO leaders. Moreover, my background helped me access other groups of parents in the community. In 2014, for example, I attended an 'evening out'[127] with a group of approximately ten mothers who had actually all met on a bus during a school-organized weekly ski programme. Each week during the winter ski season, they took the same bus with other ISSG community members, to travel to the Alps for English-medium ski lessons. They met on the 'Spanish Bus' that had been created for the 'Spanish-speaking Group' several years prior. To fill the bus, the 'Spanish-speaking Group' admitted non-Spanish speakers each year. Interestingly however, the group of mothers going out that evening were all English L1 speakers – more specifically, American and British women – having formed an English-speaking group on the Spanish-speaking bus. The same group of British and American women were also active in the PTO nationality groups – once again, suggesting the group's character and socialization practices, and the networks that were formed around shared linguistic and cultural traits. This has been said to be a common feature of international school communities[128].

Sub-groups based on nationality or linguistic background were regularly created and reproduced by the PTO, with institutional backing. Nationality groups and events such as the 'Dutch Walk and Lunch' or the 'British Group New Year Brunch' were advertised not only through the PTO, but also on the official school calendars, newsletters and magazines. The rationale behind these PTO nationality groups was described to me in the following manner by a former PTO President:

> *"Each nationality plays an important role within an international community, and at [ISSG]. So then we have new members coming say for instance, from the Netherlands. We put that person in touch with the nationality representative and they then organize coffee mornings, tours, exhibitions, galleries, so that provides a great network for them. Initially I think the concern is that moms are not speaking English at all, so then we try to also engage them with a nationality so then that person can just feel welcomed so that she can learn either English or German and help with that transition* (June, 2013).

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[127] This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.
[128] See also Tanu, 2010; 2013; 2014.

Nationality groups therefore were seen as playing a significant role for individuals who were unable to speak English or German. They served to establish an instant social network for the new ISSG member. Provided that the community was comprised of a majority of 'expatriate' families, the PTO operated as the largest, most accessible pathway for incoming families to make friends quickly. It was therefore a very strong, important organization in the community. However, the emphasis on nationality groups within the PTO also worked to reinforce nationality-based boundaries, and reaffirm the strong division between expatriates and host nationals. As was mentioned by the PTO President (above), nationality groups also organized outings, in the respective language. Therefore, cultural experiences of the host nation were largely institutionally organized and facilitated through the perspective of the nationality group proposed by the PTO.

I also noticed there were some strong tensions between nationality groups in the PTO – very similar to the tensions I observed in the student body. Some of the strongest were between the 'expatriates' and the 'Germans'. Most of the PTO members were expatriates, and in particular, American. Contrastingly, German participation in the PTO was highly irregular, if not rare.

In June, 2013, I interviewed an American PTO member, Shelly, who was actively involved in the organization. She had two young children attending ISSG, and had been a member of the PTO in her children's former school in the USA prior to moving to Germany. She equated the success of her social life to her participation in the PTO, and told me that she had sought leadership positions in the organization as a means to build a social network in the community. She also told me that she had attempted to establish a social network with a women's group for U.S. expatriates located closer to where she lived, towards the beginning of her residency in Germany. However, she felt she had more 'in common' with the international school community, and wanted to meet other mothers who had children the same age as her own. She recognized "cultural differences" at the school and spoke of them to me.

> *There are cultural differences. Americans understand PTO because it's an important part of most public school systems, and I think for Germans, PTO – they just don't understand what PTO is at all. I think for Germans you send your child to school, and there is no home-school connection, and there is no fundraising expectation, and just culturally, they don't feel that a parent has a place interacting with the school community. Whereas I think for Americans it's second-nature. I think you feel more of a responsibility to be involved in your child's education* (Shelly, 2013).

Shelly's statements illustrate a sentiment I commonly encountered when speaking with PTO mothers. Due to the high presence of German nationals at ISSG, PTO members were particularly sensitive to German contribution within their organization, despite the fact that there may have been other nationality groups which also did not regularly participate. They attributed low German participation within the organization to 'cultural differences' and alluded to a lack of interest among German parents in their child(ren)'s education.

The 'cultural differences' perceived by many members of the PTO towards Germans was based on an interpretation of German parenting methods. Expats and participating PTO members believed that Germans took a passive stance towards their children's schooling. However Ralph, an American teacher at ISSG argued otherwise:

Heather: *What are the parents like? I have heard that German parents aren't really as involved as American parents.*

Ralph: *I would actually say the opposite. The German parents are much more involved. The American parents just let their teachers do their job.*

Heather: *Oh really?*

Ralph: *The German parents are much more inquisitive: 'What are you doing?' 'Why is my child doing this?'*

Heather: *That's interesting because a lot of people were telling me that German parents, in terms of afterschool activities, at least, weren't very involved.*

Ralph: *Yeah, because they have their own Vereins[129], and they're more involved in the community. Whereas Americans, this is all they have* (September, 2014).

As a teacher, Ralph had experienced the involvement of German parents in the community in an entirely contrasting way to that described to me by the PTO members. He brought up an interesting point that 'Americans' relied much more on the ISSG community for socialization, in comparison to Germans, who were able to partake in events outside of the ISSG community.

This suggests that the rationale for minimal PTO participation from German parents may not have been based on 'cultural differences' but on a sense of German alienation from the sentiments circulating in the PTO. Moreover, evidence of 'othering' appears in the form of

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[129] Vereine (German). The term, 'Vereins' came up often in conversations and interviews, and it was used frequently within the school's vernacular. The 's' added to the end was used to pluralize the word – following English grammar. Similar words also appeared in conversations and interviews including: 'Imbisses', 'Hausmeisters', 'Grundschules' 'Winter-, Frühlingsfests' and Tennisplatzes'.

normalized, or 'doxic'[130] (Bourdieu, 1986a) practices as seen in the following interview excerpt from PTO member Carol:

Heather: *So you [mentioned you] find that there are cultural differences then that kind of interfere with the running of the PTO?*

Carol: *Well those cultures are very similar – Anglo-Saxon cultures – it's like sitting at the dinner table with your family, you are all basically understanding the same way about going about your job or whatever it is that you are doing. Everyone is welcome to join the PTO.*

Heather: *So the ones that go to the PTO meetings are-*

Carol: *Largely Anglo-Saxons….*

Heather: *…do you have a German nationality group within the PTO?*

Carol: *Oh, that's a really good question…(pause)…That's a very, very good question. You know, now that I think about it…(pause)…actually now that you're saying, I don't remember seeing like a 'German Coffee' because you'll go down the weekly newsletter and see that the Dutch are having a meeting and the Americans, and the Spanish- but no, I don't remember ever seeing a German one. It would be great to have them because it might get them coming – more involved* (June, 2014).

Carol used the term, 'Anglo-Saxon' to describe the dominant group in the PTO – a group in which she included herself as an insider. The fact that German nationals did not seem to have a regularly active nationality group in the PTO, and the fact that she had not necessarily thought about its absence, indicates the 'othering' that appears in the form of normalized exclusionary practices. Carol seemed actually very surprised once she realized that she had been unaware of a German nationality group in the PTO. Moreover, it also shows that German members had not yet approached her, as a seasoned 'New Families Coordinator'[131] – indicating the lack of interest on their end. Returning to Ralph's observation, the lack of German participation in the PTO was likely more due to their connectivity to German society.

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[130] Doxa is explained by Warquant as: "the coincidence of the objective structures and the internalized structures which provides the illusion of immediate understanding, characteristic of practical experience of the familiar universe, and which at the same time excludes from the experience any inquiry as to its own conditions of possibility" (1989:50).
[131] Her role in this position, as she described to me, was to create opportunities for new incoming families each year to become more engaged with the ISSG community.

I also discovered from a teacher connected to an 'outside' expat Japanese community, that many of ISSG's Chinese and Japanese members were very involved in respective nationality communities in the city. Many sent their children to language schools on the weekend, and this may indicate why there was less visible participation from these families in the PTO community. However PTO members tended to equate 'Asian' participation to language barriers more than anything, and therefore treated the lack of participation with more tolerance.

Thus German, Chinese and Japanese nationality groups were also less reliant on the PTO as the sole provider of socialization opportunities in the host country, than perhaps other expat nationality groups. The limited participation of these groups – particularly in leadership roles – impacted the conceptual direction of PTO organized community events, such as the annual Frühlingsfest and Winterfest.

5.2.2   ISSG Frühlingsfest and Winterfest

In what follows, I will discuss two significant annual PTO-orchestrated events which I observed during two consecutive years (2013 and 2014): the Frühlingsfest and the Winterfest. They both took on similar characteristics and are comparable in size and number of participants. These 'Feste' or festivals, were the largest, most visible community events taking place on campus, which attracted the highest number of students, parents and alumni at once. I have chosen to examine these two events in particular, as they are useful to illustrate how socialization occurred during large events involving the entire community. They highlight the emphasis placed on nationalities as primary identity markers, and the role performances of nationality played on the construction of an 'inter-national' community. Moreover, these festivals also show the extent to which certain nationality groups held higher cultural capital than others, and the ways in which members negotiated them to socially position themselves as community members. The Feste therefore best demonstrate how the global imaginary comes to life through community practices.

The primary objective of both the Frühlingsfest and the Winterfest each year was to raise money for various projects and facilities at the school. This was done through the provision of games and activities which attracted participation and interest among attendees. Proceeds were allocated to support projects to improve the school, for example playgrounds, sports, or IT equipment, books for the library, or materials to aesthetically enhance the school. Thus for instance, one year money was allocated for flat screen TVs for the middle school entryway.

The PTO operated under a Board comprised of the organization's President, Vice President and Secretary, who appointed individual event coordinators who led particular activities seen at the festivals, such as games, food, and other forms of entertainment. These two events were popular among parents and primarily younger children (generally Kindergarten – 8th grade). Each year, the PTO made efforts, as explained to me by a number of active members, to attract high school students by offering opportunities to participate. These opportunities were largely focused on 'service' projects, such as charity stands for the accumulation of CAS points, football tournaments against the ISSG alumni, and, as of 2014, track and field relay races against alumni, parents and staff. Both the Frühlingsfest and Winterfest offered opportunities for the entire ISSG community to get together and actively display their membership in a 'global' network.

Both the Frühlingsfest and Winterfest were thematically influenced by regional festivals, customs and traditions. The Frühlingsfest, for example, mirrored local German Frühlingsfeste – taking place also in May and displaying traditions seen elsewhere across the region. These included the presence of a 'beer tent', with long benches, the regional colours and patterns of blue and white checkered decorations and folk music. Community members were encouraged to dress up in Lederhosen and Dirndl – even though I found that the majority of them did not. Dressing up in folkloristic national/regional costumes was frequently encouraged at ISSG, so the call for this at these particular festivals was not entirely out of the ordinary.

The Frühlingsfest tradition at ISSG had taken place each year since the 1970s, and I remember it being advertised within the community when I attended. At the time, I had found the festival unappealing because of my age (as a high schooler, it was not 'cool' at the time to attend), and also because the 'real' ones were available to me in my village and the city. As a former student however, I knew that the festival meant a lot to community members – particularly mothers involved in the PTO- and for this reason, I planned my research trips to ensure I attended them all.

In 2013, I attended my first Frühlingsfest. The campus had been transformed overnight – colorful laminated flower signs (in light of the 'Frühling' theme) along the school entrance pathway directed attendees to the different events. In the school gymnasium was a bouncy castle, pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey and similar games, face-painting and arts and crafts for children. Here, parents could drop their small children off in an area supervised by PTO volunteers. For slightly older students, there was a talent show (several hours long), where students could perform and/or watch their friends perform. Outside on the lawns, beer benches had been decorated with blue and white table cloths, wild flowers in beer steins for centre

pieces, and walls and school pillars of the cafeteria had been decorated with blue and white checkered gift wrap used for wallpaper. The cafeteria tables were also similarly decorated and teachers and PTO volunteers were serving beer.

However, these regionally-specific thematic decorations were strongly overpowered by imagery which illustrated the cultural diversity of the community. Once again, the school brand shone through via internationalization efforts. These were later published online and in the school magazine to highlight the school's 'diversity', and by extension, its exclusive position in the host region as 'international'. An example of this is the 'international food hall' that was annually set up, and repeatedly portrayed as the highlight of the festivals. Its production involved the participation of the PTO nationality groups. The 'international food hall' was featured, in both years (and according to tradition), as the main gathering point of the Frühlingsfest. It offered a number of food stands which were decorated with 'expat' national flags and symbols. However the games, activities, food hall and charity zones of the festival projected notions of national belonging more than anything. The presence of recurring themes of 'nationality' indicates how the school implicated its 'others' as "cultural referents" (Baumann, 1992:102).

This tendency to 'internationalize' the Feste through highlighting non-German nationality groups and cultural references was also evident at the Frühlingsfest in 2014, where the PTO chose to adopt a Brazilian theme in light of the FIFA World Cup in Brazil that year. While the schedule included displays of German folklore as always, the 2014 Frühlingsfest offered simultaneously a Capoeira show of Brazilian dancers and music, and a salsa band named 'Salsa Roja' for entertainment in the beer tent[132]. Despite the fact that salsa music is not intrinsically 'Brazilian' as it was presented here, it was nonetheless chosen to simulate a culturally 'diverse' space through the presentation of a distant culture. Thus each year the expatriate PTO members organized these Feste, which aimed to establish the space as 'international'.

As mentioned briefly above, the school cafeteria was rearranged[133] for both events to allow several different nationality groups the opportunity to sell a 'national' dish. The nationality groups were comprised of PTO members who had volunteered to represent their nationality at the event. In 2013, I interviewed Mariel, a Brazilian national, who had become an active PTO

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[132] Details of the 2014 Frühlingsfest event proceedings are available in Appendix 7.
[133] At both ISSG Winterfeste and Frühlingsfeste. See Appendix 5 for an example of how the space was typically distributed amongst nationality groups. The space was used slightly differently during each event, however the space took on similar patterns regarding nationality allocations.

member immediately after arriving with her family half-way through the academic year. She described her Brazilian nationality booth at the 2013 Frühlingsfest in this way:

> *We're a very tiny [Brazilian] community here. One of the ladies just told me, 'hey I would love to run the Brazilian table, let's do it!' and it was very sweet, so each of us contributed towards that table. So she ran the Brazilian table and I was very proud in a way, and it was very sweet that she wanted to present Brazil* (June, 2013).

Mariel's Brazilian table was decorated with a yellow table cloth and a set of large poster boards which were mounted behind the nationality representatives running the booth. The poster boards were decorated with an array of Brazilian flags and pictures of Brazilian landscapes and festivals. Brazilian flags were strung around the pillars behind the booth to augment the booth even further. The notion of individuals 'presenting' a nation was a common way of perceiving the purpose of activities in the food hall. 'Presentations' spanned from an array of nations. ISSG published the following statement to thank its volunteers:

> "Thanks to the following groups for their generosity: UK and Eire, the Spanish Speaking group, South Korea, Thailand, the Netherlands, Sweden, US, Russia, Italy, Germany and India" (ISSG website, 2014).

The statement not only supports the presence of a 'Spanish Speaking Group', it also officially documents its legitimacy as institutionally recognized amongst other 'nationality' groups. Spanish speakers were uniquely pooled together as a 'language group' at such events. The Spanish Speaking Group was also referred to a number of times by my PTO interviewees as a means through which Mexican, Argentinian, Spanish and Peruvian members were categorized (outwardly and inwardly) within the community. Therefore, while members 'performed' their nationality, they also showcased their countries according to how they, and more significantly, how more dominant players perceived and/or expected them to be.

The spatial arrangements of the international food halls of the Feste reflected a Western perspective of 'internationality'. The organization placed 'preferred' nationality groups at the front, including Anglophone, Western nations (USA, Great Britain, Australia) and European countries, in addition to others predominantly speaking European languages (i.e. Latin American countries); and finally, non-European nationality groups in the corners and in the back. Asian representation was consistently not placed in the major gangways, and Hispanic Latin Americans were featured through language as a group. South Africa was the only country that was represented from the African continent – this table, when it was featured, was placed at the front of the space.

While their counterparts in the main gangways of the cafeteria did not opt to dress in traditional national costumes while serving their respective cuisine (i.e. Mariel did not "present" Brazil through dress), those volunteering in the 'Asian' section of the food court tended to dress in elaborate costumes. The stands sported traditional artefacts and national symbols and flags. ISSG's Asian community did appear, at times, to be treated as an exoticised or folklorized group. When elementary school and middle school students learned about Asian cultures, for example, it often involved a degree of 'dressing up', and was frequently documented in school magazines and website. For example, 'India Day' involved interested students dressing up and performing in saris at a museum off campus. When speaking with a German administrator at the school about nationality groups, she said, *"People think it's nice to see the Asian children parade in their costumes"* (June, 2014). Where European countries were grouped together through nationality in community discourse, 'Asians' were often seen or spoken of as one homogenous, 'passive[134]' group. Shelly referred to the 'cultural differences' in the following statement:

> *Of course you have the Asian population, many of them don't feel confident enough even in their English language speaking skills, so they're happy to, you know, make sushi for the Winterfest or whatever, but in terms of a leadership role or any sort of volunteer role that involves emailing or corresponding – there are just cultural differences* (June 2013).

While Europeans and North Americans at ISSG were classified according to individual nation states in these regions of the world, individuals who identified themselves as nationals of 'Asian' countries and Hispanic Latin American countries tended to be lumped together as one large regional group or language group. As Shelly's statement shows, she equated 'Asians' as the ones supplying 'sushi or whatever' to the Frühlingsfest. As definite minority nationality groups in the school (see Appendix 4), they were often classified according to the European/Anglo Western perspective of 'the Other'. In conversations, the word, 'Asians' came up far more frequently than individual nationalities, as used to classify Europeans or North Americans. The following Western-centric labels were common: 'Asians', 'Dutch', 'Swedes', 'Germans', 'Americans', and 'Spanish-speakers'. The visual display of 'nationality' tables at the Feste also mirrored these perceptions – 'Asians' at the back, 'Spanish Speakers' together, and all the other nationality groups at the front of the room.

The 'German' table, which was annually organized by a group of German mothers, represented an interesting exception to the conventions expressed in the international food halls of the Feste. Unlike other nationality groups, it did not display any national symbols (flags,

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[134] See also Deveney, 2005; Poor, 2005.

colors, banners, etc.) but was set up solely as a generic coffee and cake stand. The first time I attended an event involving an international food court at ISSG, I walked around the cafeteria several times searching for a 'German' table, before realizing that it was the unmarked coffee, tea and cake stand. It was always located amidst other Western nationality stands (see Appendix 5). From the events I attended, each year, the tables were constructed in a similar manner and order. One PTO member claimed that the ordering of the tables was primarily due to the electrical outlets available in the cafeteria – raising the issue that the 'Asians' needed to be by electrical outlets for their 'rice cookers'. However, I also observed that the 'Spanish Speaking Group', among others, had extension cables. Another PTO member argued there was no 'logic' to the ordering of the tables, and that it was unclear why German PTO members did not participate in the decorating of their 'nationality' table. The German table was described to me by Brazilian expatriate, Mariel, in the following way:

> *You know, people have the option if they want to participate or not, so not everybody wants to volunteer baking or cooking and being available that day…As a tradition, the German group always wants to serve teas, coffees and cakes. They were the table right next to the Brazilian table….So basically we all donate cakes and brownies and effectively they run the coffee and tea"* (June, 2013).

Mariel, like other actively involved PTO members, was referring in this statement to the lack of German participation in PTO events and activities. As seen at the beginning of this chapter, the PTO was largely comprised of expatriate leaders and volunteers, and Germans did not hold powerful positions in this organization. Mariel's statement supports this degree of inactivity from German nationals, and my impression was that she was slightly agitated by this lack of participation. While German mothers agreed to serve teas, coffees and cakes, the PTO was, in turn, annually responsible for finding volunteers to bake the goods that the German members would serve – breaking the customary procedure. Mariel's comment mirrors other statements I received in interviews and conversations with actively involved (expat) PTO members, including the following statement by Carol:

> Carol: *It would be really nice to have some local German help because they can speak the language and can facilitate some of the things so much more easily. We'll be like, decorating for the Winterfest and thinking, 'Where do we get the linens?'[135] 'Where do I get skewers?'[136] I don't know what the word for that is [in German].*

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[135] She was referring to the tablecloths.

> Heather: *So Germans don't participate?*
>
> Carol: *No. Not at all. I would say there are one, two, THREE that I see all the time. But interestingly they have all had expat experiences in English speaking countries, so I think that influenced them heavily. Otherwise not a peep. But yeah, that's pretty frustrating because then it just becomes the same expat group – like a little subculture* (June, 2014).

During our conversation, I got the sense that Carol was trying to figure out why German members of the community were practicing subgroups of their own. For Carol, only the German subgroup was problematic. She also referred to the ISSG German group as 'local German' – connecting them with locality, which some German members at ISSG strongly opposed[137].

The Frühlingsfest offered another opportunity for members to reaffirm their membership in an inter-national community by partaking in activities which called for performances and representations of nationality. While the event was regularly promoted as a community effort to highlight the 'diversity' of the school, there were nonetheless power structures based on nationality and language evident in the organizing body (PTO) and in the rest of the community. The cultural capital equated with not only 'expatriate' status, but also particular nationalities – especially American. The way in which community members spoke of other nationality groups, was reflected in the production of the space each year.

5.2.3 American Cultural Capital

> Student: *I actually didn't want to move here. I had a pretty cool high school [in the U.S.]*
>
> Heather: *Is there something particular you miss about it?*
>
> Student: *I dunno, just that-* (pause) *everyone there is American.* (June, 2014)

Americans made up the second largest nationality group in the ISSG student body[138]. It was therefore not surprising, that this nationality group brought to the school a degree of American culture.

Americans held a high status within ISSG. In the focus group, the student quoted above was deemed as one of the 'popular kids' by his peers. He felt it was socially acceptable to make

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[136] She was referring to the skewers used for the American BBQ.
[137] See Chapters 4 and 6.
[138] See Appendix 4 for ISSG nationality groups in 2014.

such a statement – even in a group in which Americans were in the minority. This form of confidence stemmed from being 'American'. 'Americanness' was primarily exhibited by linguistic variety claimed through an 'American' accent, and knowledge of U.S. popular culture. American slang, music, food, movies, TV shows and fashion brands were often used, displayed or referred to by students, parents and staff. When observing a classroom in the ISSG elementary school, for example, young students repeatedly used American slang words like, 'epic' and 'awesome', 'kickass' and 'sick' to express excitement for something. 'American Eagle' and 'Abercrombie and Fitch' were popular clothing brands worn by students – and readily associated with American cultural styles[139]. These brands were already popular when I attended the school in the 1990s.

During my observations, American products and practices regularly resurfaced as desirable. The 'popular' kids, for example, were nearly always marked as 'American'. The fact that students who were able to demonstrate an affinity to, knowledge of, or a skill equated to 'American' culture were seen as the most 'popular' members of the community also indicates that these dispositions and skills were a form of cultural capital at ISSG. Thus despite the inclusive idealism promoted by ISSG, 'being American' stood out as an (exceptional) asset.

Similarly, those elected for leadership positions in the PTO tended to be American nationals. Therefore, the PTO was also largely influenced by PTO models originating in the United States. It adopted a series of fund-raising ideas from the U.S., for example, the tradition of Basket Bonanzas (seen at each Winterfest and Frühlingsfest), and bake sales offering 'American' baked goods throughout the year. The PTO gave most of its activities a distinct 'American' flavour. This also goes along with the traditional approach to the Frühlingsfest. In the early 1970s the U.S. 'Boy Scouts of America' group at ISSG would be in charge of serving hamburgers at the Feste. The U.S. table at the 2013 and 2014 Frühlingsfest was run by this group. It featured two large American flags, American flag table cloth and a large sign that said, 'U.S. Boy Scouts'. While selling American food, the table also was dedicated to signing students up for Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. All students were welcome to join – regardless of nationality.

In 2013, active PTO members voted to include an American cowboy theme at that year's Frühlingsfest. This is another example of how national cultures are folklorized and appropriated at the school in light of performing an 'international', culturally 'diverse' ritual. The event involved, once again, the community dressing up in folklorized attire. The event was (temporarily) renamed 'Frühlings West', a term hardly comprehensible to anyone outside of the school community. The logo (see Figure 5.1) depicted a 'tree of nations' – highlighting, again, the

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[139] These companies promote in particular, 'All American Clothing' (American Eagle, 2016) and 'America's favorite denim brand' (Abercrombie & Fitch, 2016).

nationalities of the school, and the theme of Spring (Frühling) to correspond with other 'Frühlingsfeste' seen regionally. The cowboy hat covering the top of the tree suggested the dominance of the American West theme. The logo represented some standard features of international school life: the national flags to underscore the inter-nationality and diversity of the school, the flags attached to a single tree to represent the universal, inclusive orientation of the school mission, and above all, a clear association of 'internationality' with Anglophone cultural conventions. The logo also symbolized blatantly the American influence within this particular school community. The size of the hat in comparison to the tree, and the alteration of the original German title (from Frühlingsfest to Frühlings West) heightened the new 'hybrid' cultural focus of the event. Moreover, the lowest leaf on the logo's 'tree of nations' is one that represents 'Germany'. It is unclear whether this was intentional, however this may have also contributed to some of the criticism the new American Western theme attracted. Mariel, PTO President of the time, told me that she had received some disapproval from a few German members of the community, who viewed the new logo and theme as controversial[140].

Figure 5.1: *ISSG Frühlings West Logo* (2013)

During this period, I discovered that there were strong political issues occurring at the school. In fact, some of these issues affected my fieldwork. For example, some employees and Board Members did not want to be recorded for their interviews – citing these political issues. One concern pertained to German parents who were contesting the manner in which the German language was treated. They objected to the fact that German was not handled as a first language in the same manner as English for L1 speakers. The Head of School briefly mentioned this to me

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[140] I was unable to find out who the individuals were, that were particularly averse to the theme.

in our interview in June 2013, stating that German parents had complained, but he argued that placing more of an emphasis on the German language was not an objective of this school. Moreover, according to Claudia, a German administrator, the school made a decision in 2013 to minimize the American influence that was seen to be taking form across the school (see Chapter 4). It is unclear whether this decision was connected to the 'American West' theme of the 2013 Frühlingsfest. However, it is plausible that the decision to overtly 'Americanise' the school's Frühlingsfest exacerbated an already conflictual atmosphere between the school and its German community.

The logo was featured on posters across the school campus (see Figure 5.2), on the website, at the event, and in a number of newsletters and promotional literature distributed throughout the school. In fact, it played a large role in the event marketing campaign, as seen below in Figure 5.2, where the PTO posted a sign specifically dedicated to the promotion of the new logo (bottom left). This board was featured at the entrance way by the security checkpoint. The event was not advertised outside of the school community or campus.

Figure 5.2. *Frühlings West PTO Bulletin Board*[141]

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[141] Picture taken by H. Meyer in May 2013.

I learned that in 2013, the ISSG Frühlingsfest had been given a cultural theme for the first time. Mariel explained:

> Mariel: *And this year was different. We had a theme…we went for* (laughs) *a West theme so we called it actually Frühlings West…to which [the Germans] weren't quite sure about. Frühlings West [they thought] 'it's not making sense' and I can understand* (laughs).
>
> Heather: *So members from the PTO from Germany? They kind of were against, or kind of sceptical of it all?*
>
> Mariel: *They weren't sure because we just wanted to make it different, 'hey let's make a theme and call it Frühlings West!'* (June, 2013)

Mariel's explanation for the small minority of German PTO members' dissatisfaction with the Frühlings West theme was based on logic *("it's not making sense")* and fear of change *("they weren't sure because we just wanted to make it different")*. The view that Germans were averse to 'change' was conveyed to me in a series of interviews and conversations, including in the interview with the Head of School:

> "*It's a very good school, but moving things in this environment – CHANGE is very difficult*" (June, 2013).

And again:

> "*It's very difficult to move this school…in terms of risk, in terms of culture, these types of things, you know if you really want to do something, you have an idea, broadly speaking, you develop it a bit, and you get to the point where you can take the risk and give it a shot, and you say, 'okay good to go! We can figure it out!' Not here. And certainly NOT in Germany*" (June, 2013).

The Head of School, like other community members, attributed 'German culture' to the lack of change occurring at the school. He explained that German bureaucracy had prevented them from actualizing the changes that he had wanted to make. Citing 'cultural differences' as an explanation for problems, was a common rhetoric within the ISSG community.

While some German members of the PTO opposed the American West theme, the decision to override their concerns was based on the claim that the chosen theme would improve the "diversity" of the event for marketing purposes:

> *In past years there hadn't been a theme. [The PTO President] really felt that it would help with the decorations, and the diversity and just putting a new twist on it. Because it's an*

annual event, and because it's maybe more appealing to [primary school] students, each
year they're sort of always looking for a new twist to make it fresh again and more
attractive, especially for the older kids, so that was her suggestion, and I think it worked
out really well (Shelly, June 2013).

Shelly described the American influence as advancing the 'diversity' of the event – reinforcing the idea that German cultural traditions did not offer a successful 'diversity' appeal, particularly to 'older kids' – a group which was consistently deficient in number each year. Minimal attendance from these students was also likely due to the juvenile games and attractions designed for young children while parents could congregate and socialize with other adults. During each event, I noticed the older students participated mostly upstairs in the 'Charity Zone' – either to run a booth, or visit the booths of their friends (see Appendix 6). The consensus within the PTO, as argued by both Mariel and Shelly, was that the Frühlingsfest tradition as a stand-alone custom did not attract sufficient interest. Both participants claimed the Frühlingsfest West theme proved to be highly successful in terms of participation and financial profit. While it is difficult to judge whether these statements were accurate, since I only attended a few other community events against which I could compare it, these statements seem exaggerated.

The incorporation of American folklorized culture was therefore used as a strategy to gain financial profit – a common practice in the international school system. Its success relied on both a high recognition value and general attractiveness of cultural themes among members of the school.

The Frühlings West was therefore integrated with American West imagery and decor in addition to the blue and white-checkered decorations used in previous years. WANTED posters were scattered across the campus (see Figure 5.2 centre), in search of staff members 'wanted' for the cowboy-themed 'Sponge-the-Teacher' platform. All doors within the main building and other buildings featuring Frühlings West attractions were covered with placards depicting red barn doors with white trim (see Figure 5.3) – a common feature found on barns located in the countryside of New England and the Mid-Western states of the U.S. While they are not commonly associated with the Country Western motif in general, they worked as familiar symbols of 'America'. Much like the presence of a Salsa band during the Brazilian-themed Frühlingsfest in the following year – the barn doors are not present in Germany and therefore constructed an environment which was 'international' and thus specifically not 'local'. This highlighted the continuous effort to construct the school environment as 'international', both in symbolic and sensory manifest ways: attendees were offered 'internationality' for visual, aural and gustatory consumption.

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Figure 5.3: *Frühlings West*[142]

The 'internationalization' of such events therefore meant the use of 'traditional' cultural materials, romanticized or clichéd notions of particular groups and distant localities, and the regulation of 'local' host culture influence. They also worked as re-signified, imagined representations for the purpose of group-making within the community. The incorporation of symbols, images, styles, games, dances, dress and food of the 'other' was used as a strategy to produce a new 'international' self.

What is particularly interesting is that the abundance of 'American' culture at ISSG also worked simultaneously to re-bond the community through a dominant, however distant (and thus non-local) 'culture' - as exemplified at the Frühlings West. For example, Beate, a German administrator at the school argued that she was able to 'understand' the ISSG school culture because she had previously lived in various states in the U.S. The fact that she saw the school culture as similar to that of the U.S. indicated the strong normative influence of U.S. culture at ISSG. Where Beate did not mention her German heritage and upbringing as contributing to her 'assimilation' into the school community, her time in the U.S. did. Thus community members also accepted that German cultural traits, skills and knowledge were largely irrelevant in achieving 'community' within this institution.

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[142] Picture taken by H. Meyer in May, 2013.

The American West-themed decor was juxtaposed against the decor commonly associated with Frühlingsfeste in the region: long beer-benches were set up outside (see Figure 5.4). However they were not very popular, likely because the weather was overcast and they seemed too far removed from the indoor attractions (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: *Beer Benches, Frühlings West*[143]

Beer was available for collection from the 'saloon' stand in the cafeteria, which had been decorated to depict an American Western-style bar. Additional attractions depicted the theme, including the provision of a Bucking Bronco ride in one auditorium which appeared to be immensely popular for students of all ages. A Bucking Bronco ride is a mechanical bull that simulates the riding of a bucking animal. These machines are typically on offer at American rodeos as an attraction, and have become popular in the U.S. as party attractions. The Frühlings West replaced local brass band music used in previous years with the 'Rockability Trio' – an American folk music band which was based in a neighbouring city[144]. The band was sought out by Mariel and the PTO to entertain the international school community. The band members did not stay to socialize or participate in the attractions on offer after they finished playing.

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[143] Picture taken by H. Meyer in May, 2013.
[144] I was unable to find out whether the members of this band were German nationals, as I lost contact with Mariel after she relocated. I believe she provided the incorrect name of the band during our email correspondence and interview in 2013 and 2014, as I have not been able to find them online or elsewhere.

The American theme was also visible at the annual Winterfeste. The primary objective of the Winterfest was to emulate the aesthetic flavour of local Christmas customs on the school campus as a means to raise money for the school. Below is the colourful 2014 advertisement published by the PTO on the ISSG website, which describes some of the main attractions to promote the event:

> "The finishing touches are being made. Volunteers are pushing back their sleeves and decorations are going up. Pots, pans, ovens and baking trays are being prepped for magical flavours and the Weihnachtsmarkt[145] vendors are loading their goodies. The students involved in the Charity Zone are ready to entertain you and receive your support. Santa's pulled out the sleigh and the [ISSG] Hausmeisters[146] have their ladders and tools ready for action. The Mini Bonanza baskets[147] look fantastic, waiting to be won (be sure to buy your ticket!). Voices have been warmed up, awaiting your warm applause during the concert […] as well as your participating at the Sing-Along[148]" (ISSG website, 2014).

The advertisement was targeting ISSG community members, and interpreted German Christmas traditions (e.g. the Weihnachtsmarkt) with those from other countries (in this case, particularly American). Similar to the Frühlingsfest, the event took place on the school campus, spanning across five primary areas: the cafeteria (for the international food hall), the auditorium (for high school students to set up their booths for their respective CAS projects), the concert hall (for the school music bands and choral groups to perform throughout the day), a classroom for the 'Santa's Grotto', and an area for a 'German' Christmas market[149] (Weihnachtsmarkt).

The presence of a 'Santa's Grotto' is an example in which particularly 'American' cultural traditions became normalized as 'doxic' practices in school life. A 'Santa's Grotto' is an American tradition in which parents bring their child(ren) to sit on Santa Clause's lap to wish for a Christmas toy. It is typically an opportunity to have a Christmas picture taken of the child(ren). This long-standing tradition at the school was organized annually by the PTO. While the PTO Board changed nearly entirely in representation each year, it remained an unquestionable 'given' that the Santa's Grotto, among other American Christmas traditions, was a major component of the Winterfest. Provided that the 'Santa's Grotto' was advertised annually in ISSG literature (e.g.

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[145] Christmas market. In the region they are also referred to as 'Christkindlmärkte' – street markets which open in light of the first advent.
[146] Janitors or groundskeepers.
[147] A Basket Bonanza is a raffle, popular in the United States for school fundraising.
[148] The ISSG elementary school choir concert involving some audience participation.
[149] See Appendix 5 for typical location of the 'Weihnachtsmarkt' at each Winterfest.

website and magazine), and that it had been running for at least two decades, shows that this convention was regularly accepted as a legitimate practice. In 2014, it was advertised on the website in the following way:

> "Enjoy the festive atmosphere and take in the magical decorations and beautifully decorated Christmas trees. Kids, be on your best behaviour – you never know if our jolly white-bearded and red-clothed celebrity with a big tummy will join us again this year (you might even be able to have your photo taken with him)! You will be able to buy some presents for Mom and Dad ON YOUR OWN at Santa's Secret Workshop[150]. Moms and dads, you can have a family photo taken and savour the various international dishes on offer at the international food tables or try a tasty burger from our BBQ" (ISSG website, 2014).

The advertisement shows how American culture is framed as a separate, unique entity to the international flair of the event. Santa Clause, and Santa's Secret Workshop and burgers are event attractions based on American culture. The presence of the international food court allows other members to represent their cultures, however nonetheless contained and regulated. The particularly 'American' customs at the school's community events not only underscores the fact that 'exceptions' were made for Americans, but also highlights the attractiveness of American cultural practices and knowledge. To identify with, or associate the attraction as desirable was a demonstration of the cultural capital particularly valued at ISSG. Also, by imitating or participating in 'cultural' activities, ISSG members could be seen as successfully 'performing' 'intercultural competence' and thus achieving a valuable in-group position.

The experience of such community events is therefore different, depending on the extent to which members have been previously exposed to Western, Anglophone or American cultures. American students enter the institution with a habitus that matches the dominant practices presented at the school. Others were placed in a position of struggle for higher cultural capital and were made to adapt to the collective habitus of the institution. For example, the international food court at the 2013 Winterfest contained on its walls a variety of posters which had been produced by some of ISSG's elementary school students under the title, 'What Christmas means in your country'. Renderings produced by students depicted remarkably uniform illustrations of snow-covered Christmas trees, Santa Clause, wrapped gifts, candy canes,

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[150] This was a classroom which was dedicated to provide young students the opportunity to buy gifts for their parents. Items were brought in by ISSG parents prior to the event for resale. The objects were typically very cheap as to make them affordable for young students.

reindeer, and stockings hanging over fireplaces – all connoting typically Anglo-cultural associations with Christmas. Representations included how Christmas is celebrated in (for example) India, Japan, Turkey, the U.S., Switzerland, and Germany (among others). While there was a small possibility that all students participating in this project actually celebrated Christmas at home, it seemed more likely that the students were adapting their artwork to dominant notions of the festival projected by their environment.

The "cultural authority" (Mohr & DiMaggio, 1995:168) was visible throughout the Winterfest through the provision of not only a 'Santa's Grotto' and a 'Santa's Secret Workshop', but also a choral recital with students wearing Santa hats, and in some years, (e.g. 2012 and 2014) an American grocery store in the Weihnachtsmarkt. Moreover, in 2012, the Winterfest was promoted by PTO organizers by an image posted on the main Winterfest webpage showing them wearing matching reindeer headbands. Provided that this branch of the school was controlled by expatriates, the extent to which it influenced the extracurricular life (particularly for adults) was largely based on the demands, expectations and desires of the school's American community.

When walking around the perimeter of the cafeteria, I noticed that nearly all the artwork was centred on the theme of nationality- very similar to the posters described in section 5.1. For example, one set of posters on one wall were displayed under the title, 'How your family celebrates New Year's'. By looking at the display, it was clear that students were either given the prompt to relate to nationalities in their posters, or perhaps even assumed this agenda naturally. The posters included representations from countries such as Sweden, India, Great Britain and the U.S. In fact, at first glance at the display, I thought the objective had been for students to speak about 'their' countries, however the title suggested otherwise. Another display further on was a Christmas tree decorated with laminated paper Christmas bulbs – each bulb was decorated with the colors of the respective student's national flag (or a drawing of the national flag itself). Both displays stood in the major gangways of the international food court – particularly the Christmas tree, which acted as a corner focal point. The tree – very similar to the 'tree of nations' on the Frühlingsfest West logo – symbolized the inter-nationality of the school, with the familiar images of national flags used so prominently in international schools.

The staging of Christmas traditions at the Winterfest widely perceived to be 'American' (i.e. the assumption that students and parents alike would find such attractions desirable or even necessary) indicated not simply a cultural bias, but contradicted the inclusive mission to which the school and its members habitually subscribed.

Many other attractions available at the Frühlingsfest and Winterfest were similarly based on the assumption that all community members would find them appealing or valuable. Following Bourdieu, Harker (1990) explains:

> "capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange, and the term is extended to 'all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worth being sought after in a particular social formation" (1990:13)

This explanation can be applied to the international school's PTO organized events, in which (intentional, or not) specifically American cultural norms were portrayed over others, and consequently imposed a frame in which the rest of the community was encouraged to stand. Dunk tanks, American BBQ and other American edibles, and a Basket Bonanza were advertised each year as both Frühlingsfest and Winterfest highlights. The American BBQ had, over the past several years, been organized and run for each event by the ISSG Board of Directors, which also contributed to the message that 'American taste' was valued by those in positions of power. Moreover, it supported the notion that U.S. cultural themes and consumption patterns worked to unite community, and yet simultaneously upheld the 'international' flair of the school. The American BBQ included American-brand hamburger buns, mustard, relish and cheese- items which involve going to specialty stores or even the American Army BX/PX, which are tax-free commissaries for army and air-force personnel stationed in Germany. Other items acquired from the army base that were sold at the events included 'Nerds', 'Bubblicious Gum', 'Lucky Charms', Girl Scout cookies, 'Baby Ruth' candy bars, and 'Mountain Dew'.

The Basket Bonanzas featured at both Feste is another example of the American cultural authority at the school. Basket Bonanzas are raffles conventionally run by the Parent Teacher Organization of American schools each year. It is a fund-raising activity in which a number of baskets full of products are displayed, and ultimately bid on by community members for a set price. The baskets displayed at each ISSG event consistently were marked for an assumed 'American' taste – offering American candy, baking goods and appliances, and beauty products unavailable in Germany and sold solely in the U.S.. Other baskets included a trip to Spain, spa treatments, skin care products, FUJI cameras, eyelash extension vouchers and various Apple products (iPods, iPhones, etc.). The baskets therefore signposted the "culturally valued taste and consumption patterns" (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002:22) within the wider community, which highlighted the desirability of American products and up-market consumer goods. Most products were catered to female consumers – likely reflecting the nearly exclusively female PTO volunteers who had assembled the baskets. After interviewing the chair and coordinator of the Basket Bonanza which occurred during the Frühlings West, I discovered that the PTO was indeed

aware that the American nature of the attraction might have resonated differently across the diverse community. She stated, *"this is a very American thing, again, there are just these cultural differences, and it seems to be a very American concept"* (Shelly, June 2013). She also highlighted that the event was a success, despite the "cultural differences" in that it raised money for the school. As seen previously, 'cultural differences' were often used to hint at disagreements or areas of tensions within the community. Despite the fact that these 'cultural differences' were regularly cited, it did seem as though they were habitually dismissed – particularly in relation to the Feste, as these traditions were present even when I was a student.

The fact that it was assumed that such commodities were desirable for all members of the ISSG community indicated a degree of conformity towards up-market consumer culture and the economic and symbolic value it represented. Exchange is politically and socially charged and significantly, produces *value* (Appadurai, 1994:76). The institution's PTO reinforced the value embedded in American consumer goods by selling them as desirable, valuable products in the raffle. Each year, a week before the event, the Basket Bonanzas were advertised within school literature, in daily announcements in homerooms, and during after school activities to sell tickets to students, staff and parents. They were set up a week in advance in the school cafeteria, on display, monitored by a member of the PTO. The fact that participation was institutionally encouraged, and that the drawing was conducted by the Head of School on the day of the event, underscores the value of the event within the community. The expression of desire (i.e. to show interest and buy a raffle ticket) also contributed to the reproduction of the social space as one that valued and appreciated specific cultural commodities.

Significantly, 'value coherence' is circumstantial (Appadurai, 1994:83) and contingent on the situational set of realities experienced or expressed by interested consumers. Therefore, while members of the school community may have operated within a system which placed particular value on American taste, they may have encountered an entirely different set of circumstances once outside the community boundaries (see Chapter 6), where commodity value may be understood and expressed in other forms.

I originally believed that the value placed on such conventional notions of 'American culture' at ISSG to be intrinsic to community events organized by the PTO, due to the fact that the organization was based on an educational practice commonly found in the U.S. This would have explained the heightened display of American culture only at ISST PTO events. However, after further observations within and across the school community boundaries, I realized that these practices were also visible within events organized by other extracurricular departments at

the school. In particular, the ISSG's Athletic Department, Sportverein and Arts Department assumed a similar stance.

American influence was seen for example in annual 'Ski Swap[151]' advertisements, which featured hot dogs, coca cola and hamburgers as assumptive incentives for members to attend.

Figure 5.5: *ISSG Ski Swap Leaflet* (2014)[152]

In fact, most promotional material produced by the PTO and Sportverein for community events, between 2012 and 2015 included such American-influenced features as a means to

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[151] The Ski Swap at ISSG was an annual event in which community members could buy or trade used winter attire and equipment. Often it was described to me as a 'flea market', particularly designed for families intending to relocate outside of Germany to pass on gently-used ski gear and attire to newly arriving families. See Figure 5.5.

[152] Provided to H. Meyer by ISSG PTO in 2014.

incentivize members to attend. The fact that this was repeatedly used as a marketing tool, suggests that it was regularly successful.

Another example is the ISSG Sportverein's 'Imbiss[153] which was on offer during sporting or arts events taking place on the school campus during after-school hours. ISSG's Imbiss in 2013 and 2014 was run by American members of the community who volunteered for the role – once again underscoring the American presence in leadership positions across the school. The Imbiss sold various food products for students and parents, and also for visiting students from other international schools. Particularly during sporting events, the Imbiss was immensely popular on the ISSG campus. It was physically isolated and students could not walk elsewhere to get food during tournaments. The products on sale were displayed under the assumption that all student athletes would share the same taste and recognition of the presumed value of the commodities on offer. Aside from the usual offerings (hamburgers, hot dogs, etc.), American baked goods were also for sale. I learned from the Imbiss coordinators that the baked goods were typically brought into the school by community volunteers, from varying national backgrounds. Interesting, was the fact that many volunteers chose to bake a product associated with 'American' taste, such as brownies, cupcakes, cookies and peanut butter crepes (see Figure 5.6 below). Moreover, students travelling oftentimes far distances from other countries to compete in sporting or arts competitions taking place on the international school campus were not exposed to 'German' or other 'international' foods. Instead, U.S. products dominated consumption choices. One of the only options that was not culturally specific to American tastes available at the Imbiss during the 2014 ISST track and field tournament ISSG hosted was a small fruit basket with a handful of bananas, which had been placed off to the side for most of the tournament. Provided that there were approximately 350-400 people at the event, the Imbiss, as the only available food station within reasonable distance, was very busy. I offered to volunteer, after seeing how short-handed the parent volunteers were – at which point one of the mothers yelled to me, *'Quick! I need you to make some quesadillas[154] and grilled cheese sandwiches! We're slammed!'* I did not receive any further instruction, but it was expected that I knew what these were and how to make them.

Significantly, students found these items immensely popular. The queue for the Imbiss wrapped around the outdoor tent, and students stood patiently in line to await their treats. I did

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[153] ISSG community members used the German word when referring to their snack bar. While the German word was used, the 'Imbiss' did not sell locally-available items. Rather, it served primarily imported edibles from the U.S. and baked goods provided by the community.

[154] Made with American-brand flour tortillas and KRAFT American cheese packets. American, 'Tex-Mex'-style quesadillas are cooked in the same fashion as a grilled cheese sandwich.

not have anyone ask me, during my few hours of volunteering, for a healthier or otherwise different option.

BEVERAGES

Water (0,5L)	1 €
Water (1,5L)	2 €
Soda	1 €
Energy Drinks	1,50 €
Powerade	2 €
Fitness Drinks	1 €

BAKED GOODS

Muffin	0,50 €
Cookie	1 €
Brownie	1 €
Cupcake	1 €

WARM BEVERAGES

Hot Chocolate	1 €
Coffee	1 €
Tea	1 €

FRESH FRUIT

Banana	0,50 €
Apple	0,50 €

FOOD & SNACKS

Crépe (Nutella, Peanut Butter)	2 €
Quesadilla	2 €
Hot dogs	2 €
Cheese Toastie (with ham - 2 €)	1 €
Popcorn	2 €
Chocolate Bar	1 €

Figure 5.6: *ISSG Imbiss Generic Menu* (2014)[155]

It is worth noting that 'American' tastes and goods are also present within mainstream German society. Cafes and bakeries offering 'typical American' foods such as cupcakes, doughnuts and chocolate chip cookies are seen in increasing amounts within the region and across Europe. However, ISSG had practiced these conventions for at least 18 years, as I recall buying (and even selling) chocolate chip cookies, brownies, hamburgers and hotdogs at the international school – items, which were not as readily available for purchase in the region then as they are today.

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[155] Provided to H. Meyer by ISSG Imbiss, 2014.

This section (5.2) has primarily focused on the expatriate perspective and practices through which cultural capital was negotiated within the social and political structures established across the varying branches of the school. Of particular focus here was the PTO – an organization nearly entirely comprised of expatriate community members – to illustrate the methods expats used to position themselves within the community. The 'sense of distinction' (Bourdieu, 1986a) was established through community practices which were seen to highlight the 'international' and 'diverse' nature of the school, which was also expressed in a relative rejection and dismissal of cultural codes seen as derived from the host nation. Expatriate members stratified themselves within the social hierarchy of the school based on implicit and often explicit privilege of Anglo-American cultural and symbolic traits. Bourdieu (1986a) explains these processes of distinction as:

> "The genuinely intentional strategies through which members of a group seek to distinguish themselves from the group immediately below (or believed to be so), which they use as a foil, and to identify themselves with the group immediately above (or believed to be so), which they thus recognize as the possessor of the legitimate life-style, only ensure full efficacy, by intentional reduplication, for the automatic, unconscious effects of the dialectic of the rare and the common, the new and the dated, which is inscribed in the objective differentiation of conditions and dispositions" (1986a:246).

This excerpt relates to polarization practices between the 'dominant' and the 'dominated' (Bourdieu, 1986a:469), and illustrates the relevance of relational strategies within groups as a means to understand their position within the social space. Cultural practices and rituals at ISSG showed that performances of 'diversity' (interpreted as not 'local') were an expression of 'internationality'. Moreover, the cultural capital that was of particular value in the community was based on what is perceived as 'Anglocultural' tastes, traits and skills. It is with these perceptions that social hierarchies were created and facilitated by the school, and the wider international school community.

5.2.4 'Othering' the Local

Strategies of marginalizing host nationals within the community contributed to the reproduction of the global imaginary of the school. However such strategies were often masked in advertising. For example, in 2014, the Frühlingsfest was promoted on the school website in the following way:

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"Whilst Frülingsfests may have changed in size and style over the years, it remains an important opportunity for the school to foster relationships with the surrounding community. Beer, [Regional] Bands, and Spring have remained constant" (ISSG website, 2014, as original).

This particular Frühlingsfest hosted the opening of the school's elaborate, new track and field complex, in the presence of select German individuals unaffiliated with the school. Standing in the bleachers with an audience of approximately 150 adults (most of whom were parents), I watched a parade led by a brass band procession of men and women in traditional regional dress. They were followed by a large number of elementary school-aged children carrying national flags (not specific to their own national background(s)) over their shoulders who marched around the track to the traditional music of the region. After completing the lap, the musicians took a seat in the bleachers and the students remained on the track, facing us, hoisting their flags to salute the ISSG Board of Directors, the Head of School, and the mayor of the neighbouring town, who had prepared speeches for the event. One by one, each individual made a brief speech to a silent and motionless audience. AS the last speaker of the day, the mayor of the local town, approached the podium, the people around me suddenly appeared to become restless. The mayor began his speech – in German – thanking us for attending, and congratulating the international school on the opening of the third largest track and field complex in the entire region. While he spoke, people began to chat, walk down the bleacher stairs to exit the facility back to the Frühlingsfest, and chase after their children who began following the crowd. Visibly uncomfortable, one of the individuals on the track yelled out for people to be quiet – however their efforts were in vain. The mayor finished his speech to the remaining individuals, and shortly after, he left.

While the band members and the mayor of the city were invited to attend the event, likely due to the fact that the state provides subsidiaries for building costs[156], they were also used to contribute to its visual and aural spectacle. They did not stay for the festival nor appear to interact with any of the school community members after performing. They left the premises shortly after the ceremony. The display of international symbols, wealth, the modern architecture of the elaborate complex, and the geographically displaced nature of the school featured as a significant contrast to the presence of the school's local invitees. They performed as folklorized, rural and indigenous characters, which worked to alienate and 'other' them from the ISSG members. While the statement (above) from the official ISSG website maintains that the school aimed to "[foster] relationships with the surrounding community" (ISSG website,

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[156] See comments on 'Ergänzungsschule' in Chapter 2.

2014) with its annual Frühlingsfest, the inclusion of members of the surrounding population was ironically exclusionary. However, I am not suggesting that this display of 'othering' was intentionally organized by the school – rather, I would argue that the performance of 'internationality' at ISSG emerges, perhaps inadvertently, at the expense of marginalizing and ignoring the presence of host country nationals and local cultures. Moreover, the reaction from the audience to their guests was indicative of the social insignificance by which non-members were perceived more generally, regardless of their social and political stature or reputation (i.e. the mayor of the town). During my fieldwork I also heard of similar instances occurring at the inaugurations of other newly-built ISSG buildings from some teachers who had experienced similar reactions from ISSG audiences. The track and field grand opening therefore was not the first time the mayor of the town had spoken in front of ISSG members.

The presence of the mayor and musicians from the neighbouring town offered a symbolic performance of 'othering'. The procession demarcated and defined difference, which in turn consolidated the school's recognition and understanding of its "own internal values and meanings" (Baumann, 1992:100). This public ritual can be seen as a significant component to group definition, as it documented and displayed the community's global imaginary as expressed through the marginalization of 'locality'.

While members of the public were not regularly *openly* invited to Frühlingsfeste[157], with the exception of the bands and for the inauguration of the track (above), particular local vendors were individually invited to participate in the ISSG Winterfest Weihnachtsmarkt. This Winterfest attraction also took on a coupling of local traditions and folkloristic decorations amidst (once again) themes of 'internationality'. Unlike markets available in surrounding towns, the school Christmas market was conducted solely in English and offered largely 'upscale' items from local vendors. Highly-priced jewellery, furs and wools, paintings, ceramics, hand-made clothing and handbags, and additional trinkets were catered specifically to a wealthy, 'international' community'.

At the 2013 Winterfest, the ISSG 'Weihnachtsmarkt' was located in a small space around the corner from the international food hall. The room was oval-shaped, with the booths displayed around the perimeter. Four tables had been designated to expat community mothers, who were selling products (e.g. jewellery, ceramics and ornaments) from their own businesses. These tables were to the left of the circular space, and had been set up for the four expats. To

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[157] Technically, ISSG invited the general public, however did not publicize the information on the public website (information was safeguarded with an ISSG password or username) and it was also not publically advertised in the town. For this reason, I never saw any non-member attend this school function.

the right, in the opposite side of the oval, were the booths of two German vendors, who had been invited by the PTO from the 'outside' to participate. I took a seat at a set of tables next to a vending machine and watched the dynamic between the two groups.

The expat section was also divided: three American women had claimed booths next to each other, which made the Japanese woman a 'bridge' between the Americans and Germans in the room. Where many of the 'customers' engaged with the American expats – asking questions about their personal lives, and the rationale behind their jewellery and ceramics businesses, I did not see many people (if any) engage with the Japanese expat, who was selling maneki-neko, lucky charm figurines, and hand-made magnets and key chains. The community 'customers' repeatedly bypassed the Japanese woman - only briefly glancing at her booth. I did not see anyone inquire. It is an example of how particular groups of the ISSG community – particularly Asian women – became invisible. Moreover, interest in Japanese commodities was visibly not as attractive to 'customers' in comparison to items sold at other booths. Similarly, the food booths in the international food hall representing Asian nationality groups (Japan, China, South Korea, India) tended to be less frequented by community 'customers'. Also, due to the demographics of the school, Asian community members were already a minority, and while continuously encouraged to run booths in these events, the items sold did not seem to gain as much traction in comparison to the other booths. However, it is important also to note that these nationality groups were regularly documented and promoted as contributors in these events. So while very visible in the school's written discourse to promote the diversity of the school, in practice, they were far less visible.

The exchange made between 'customers' and the 'outside' German vendors was also different. It was conducted generally far more formally and directly: customers engaged in conversation only in topics pertaining solely to the product(s) on offer (these included wool clothing items and shoes, and traditional costumes). Similar to the brass band invitees at the track and field inauguration discussed above, local vendors at the ISSG Winterfest did not stay for the additional attractions of the festival, nor did they appear to engage with ISSG community members as fellow event attendees.

The Weihnachtsmarkt is an example of what Precott (1987) refers to as the 'borderlands', that is, the "transition zone" (1987:13-14) between spatial fields. These are areas of tension in which the definitions between boundaries become increasingly indistinct (Cohen, 1985). In this case, the Weihnachtsmarkt was a space where cultural practices of the ISSG community and host society merged. Cultural ownership is also relevant here, in the sense that German vendors were catering a regional custom to ISSG members within a space in which 'local'

culture appeared to be significantly regulated. Shelly described the 2012 Winterfest in our interview in the following way:

> *"[The Weihnachtsmarkt] is set up in the auditorium and that's an opportunity for the community to reach out to the [nearby town] and we allow vendors, you know, from outside the [ISSG] community to come in and sell their goods. So it's kind of like a mini Christmas market. [You] walk through the auditorium and the vendors sell their stuff"* (June, 2013).

This statement indicates a discourse that was prevalent within the community – that is, the host country nationals who were not affiliated with the community were often perceived as being in a lower position of power. Local vendors were seen as being 'allowed' to come into the school during the Winterfest, and the ISSG community was largely viewed as being in the position to "reach out" to the local community (instead of vice versa). It places the school, as seen at the Frühlingsfeste, in a position of control (regulating the degree of locality at the event) and power (granting access to particular individuals under specific conditions). Each year, vendors were asked to cater to the international community. They were expected to speak English, and produce business cards and pamphlets in English. In the process, they validated the symbolic dominance of English for the ISSG community.

The fact that the 2013 Weihnachtsmarkt had been located in a space which was somewhat hidden from the other attractions was striking to me, as it was, and had been in years past, advertised online and across campus as a primary feature of the Winterfest. However, while the event was promoted precisely through its provision of a Weihnachtsmarkt, it was marginal on the actual day. This was also seen at the Frühlingsfeste.

Provided that both the Feste had been taking place for over four decades, I was curious to discover the extent to which those in power may have contributed to the practice of marginalizing and folklorizing the host culture and society. One of the most tenured members of the ISSG staff at the time was 'Jeremy', who began teaching at the school in the late 1960s – only a few years after its inception. In our interview, he described how he had seen the perceptions and attitudes towards the host society and culture change, according to the orientation of the school's administration:

Jeremy: *You could have a cultural interchange with the German community, but it doesn't happen.*

Heather: *Do you happen to know why nothing really happens?*

Jeremy: *Because [people] may pay lip-service to it, but no one does anything*
             except with the exception of [one particular Head of School]. That was
             one of his missions in life. He really enjoyed the idea of being [in this
             region], its traditions, the May pole, the Frühlingsfest, women wearing
             dirndls and men in lederhosen. And yeah, he kind of enjoyed being a part
             of it. But that's an exception. Out of the nine Heads of School that I have
             been through, he's the only one. But yeah, he really enjoyed that. He
             forged personal links with other people in the community. The Head of
             the [city's] Gymnasium, the mayor of [the nearby town], and we were
             invited to events. So it was a definite cultivating of those contacts.
             Nothing- NOTHING happens now (June, 2013).

Jeremy discussed the impact a particular school leadership could have on ISSG's relationship to
its host community, and the degree of self-isolation within its environment. He spoke of a 'lip-
service' whereby the school maintained intentions to establish connections to its surroundings,
but such intentions rarely actualized in practice. Jeremy went on to describe ISSG as a *"little bit*
of a ghetto" for the reason that:

   Most people really enjoy the variety that 35-36 different nationalities bring – the sort of
   international way of thinking, is often better – or no, I can't say BETTER – than the local
   national (June 2013).

In this interview passage, Jeremy highlighted some of the major recurring themes and
perceptions visible within the international school system. He also spoke of the community
enjoying an 'international way of thinking' – a phrase that I repeatedly heard from other
members of the school community. Moreover, he compared the 'international' with the 'local
national' – a discourse which occurred frequently – treating the two spheres as opposites. This
was seen in practices at community events like the Frühlingsfest and Winterfest, during which
the 'local national' was often juxtaposed to the 'global' or 'international'.

Jeremy's testimony also highlights another more widely shared pattern of perception
which distinctly folklorized German culture. For example, his association of the local population
with the May pole and traditional dress was a typical comment that could be heard amongst
expats. Shortly later, he argued that the number of nationalities was a major asset to the school.
This was commonly emphasized by members and highlights the ideological value that was
placed on nationality as both a fundamental trait of the individual and, aside from the host
nation, a resource of a (vaguely defined) 'globalism'.

5.3 HOST NATIONALS AND THE NEGOTIATION OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CAPITAL

One of the most fascinating elements of conducting ethnographic research in schools is that there are two modes of student behaviour occurring throughout the school day. One is an institutionalized mode of behaviour – that is, the way in which students conducted themselves in the classroom. They understood that they must speak in English, use a particular register, and display the behavioural standards set by the instructor and the wider educational institution. The other mode is one that is witnessed outside of the classroom – in the hallways, on the playground, and in the cafeteria. Students addressed each other and expressed themselves differently, categorized each other according to their own terms, and behaved differently. These are spaces in which students made choices which are less regulated than in the classroom. Because of this, I made a marked effort to be both in the hallways and classrooms – where students convened by their lockers during their breaks and chatted. Social groups and friendship circles were quite easily identifiable in these cases, and, as an 'outsider' who was not in a position to discipline them, students did not seem affected by my presence.

During such hallway observations, I found that I was able to spot the German groups relatively quickly. This was likely due to my 'insider' position, in the sense that I was perhaps more sensitive to the cues I learned as a student of the school. First, it was the language that caught my attention. Then there was the marked display of wealth through dress and accessories. Luxury brands in fashion clothing, bags and eyewear were particularly evident among the German students who tended to wear expensive brands. This was a characteristic by which they were known amongst others, and also became evident in the following focus group interview with a set of non-German students. Participants equated the ostensible 'German' taste in fashion, among other things, with arrogance:

Student 1:   *They smoke a lot.*

Student 2:   *When we go out they're always like, a bit cocky. Like, they copy.*

Student 3:   *They're just cocky – too arrogant.*

Heather: *The German kids your age?*

Student 1:   *Yeah, and their fashion sense. White pants?*

Student 2:   *Hey! You're describing what I'm wearing!*

                      (Students all laugh)

> Student 1:   *No, not you! I'm talking about the,* (pause) *like, the SWAG.*

> Student 3:   *Like hats with a sticker* (June, 2014).

In this exchange the students were using an us/them lexis – suggesting they saw themselves as different to the Germans. There also was an interesting sense of cultural authority or ownership going on – as Student 2 pointed out, he felt that 'Germans' 'copy'. The students then went on to explain that it was the sense of attitude and style – the 'swag' - that they found problematic. 'Swag' refers to an American hip-hop style through which a specific "attitude and behaviour [is] used by men to project a sense of masculinity, identity and style" (Callier, 2016:175). The hat with the sticker is a reference to expensive hip-hop clothing they felt 'Germans' were 'copying' from an urban cultural/lifestyle movement that originated in the United States. Callier (2016) argues that this form of style is, in fact, a part of a 'global youth culture', and is adopted and re-interpreted by individuals to express machismo[158]. The students' earlier reference to 'second-degree Germans' being the 'machos' also runs in line with this reference.

Conversations about German students usually resulted in deprecating comments relating to fashion and dress. I never encountered similar statements directed towards other nationality groups at the school. This dynamic raised questions as to why German community members displayed wealth in this manner, provoking negative reactions from their peers.

From the beginning of the admissions process, German nationals were evaluated and classified slightly differently to expatriates by the school administration and wider community[159]. Host nationals nonetheless were able to provide the school with a stable, long-term financial plan for their child(ren)'s education at ISSG. German nationals were typically not sponsored by an employer but paid 'out of pocket', and also held the primary position as the main financial patrons of the school.

Therefore, status for a host national was obtained largely through economic capital. With the economic capital comes the social capital: German nationals were also able to bridge the school with powerful individuals, organizations and societies which ultimately contributed to the elite reputation of ISSG locally and further afield.

For instance, they were capable of connecting the school with exclusive local spaces. ISSG hosted a number of celebrity children – with parents ranging from famous athletes and renowned artists to royalty. These families were able to utilize their social and economic capital to gain status within the school. For example, a famous footballer parent connected the school

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[158] Callier's (2016) research focuses on the articulation of hip hop in Hong Kong youth culture.
[159] See Chapter 3.

with a charity involving a Bundesliga football club – creating interest in participants, and attracting a significant amount of attention at the school. Similarly, a few famous opera singers whose children attended ISSG, connected the school's music department with opportunities to perform in exclusive spaces – including palaces, at celebrity concerts, and other highly regarded, exclusive tourist attractions in the region. Students, for example, annually sang atop the old Rathaus[160] of the major nearby city during the Christmas season. This monument is a major tourist attraction. While these activities were not negotiable as 'international', they were nevertheless marketable, and frequently highlighted and promoted on the school website. In this sense, these high-profile German families heightened the school's exclusive reputation by providing access to elite cultural spaces.

German nationals therefore followed slightly different "rules of the game" (Bourdieu & Warquant, 1992). Where the ISSG community was comprised of affluent expatriates and host nationals, German families were continually being referred to as 'the rich Germans'. This phrase came up repeatedly during conversations with expats. The alienation and sometimes even contempt directed against this social group, coupled with the *response* from German nationals through the deliberate display of wealth and status – even within an already wealthy community – indicates that this particular social group was *doing* something different. The lack of conformity to particular school activities and conventions (e.g. lack of participation in After School Activities; not adhering to the international food hall traditions; etc.) caused conflict with expatriates. Moreover, the fact that Germans had privileged access to the 'outside', irked community members who did not. (See Chapter 6 for more on this).

It is the habitus which seeks a similar habitus within social fields – and in this case, was visible in the manner by which German nationals formed very tight social circles at ISSG. Social groups can be seen as sharing the "internalized structures, dispositions, tendencies, habits, ways of acting, that are both individualistic and yet typical of [their] social groups, communities, family and historical position" (Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010:56). This distinction, or habitus, contributes also to processes of alienation. While German members of the ISSG community were being marginalized and even ignored by the dominant expatriate group through the hierarchical system based on cultural capital inherent on 'internationality', their access to economic capital nevertheless reinforced rather than alleviated their outsider status. German students appeared, as a group, to outwardly display wealth more than any other nationality group.

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[160] City hall.

Cathy, an American ISSG school counsellor who had worked at the institution for nearly two decades, told me that these demonstrations were often perceived as problematic by others:

> *"Well I think for students there still is this gap between that certain group of affluent Germans, you know, the really really wealthy ones…I think it's having to feel like a part of the [international school] culture…and I also think there's an economic thing that says, 'We're a small group', and it spews out, and 'we are who we are, look at us'. You know? It's especially evident in individuals whose parents are the ones who are famous"* (June, 2013).

Cathy highlighted behaviour that I witnessed during my observations. No other 'group' displayed fashion with the same manner of distinctiveness and flaunted confidence. In addition, often labelled as 'the Germans', they stood out through their open use of German that nearly everyone in the community could at least identify (making them a larger target), and size (it was the largest nationality group at the school). Cathy's critique of the German students as arrogant was widely shared and expressed to me multiple times- both by German employees at the school and expatriate mothers and students. The negative feeling towards them was often explained by their ostensible display of wealth.

Significantly, the community was also comprised of some very wealthy expatriates, who displayed their wealth in clothing and accessories in a similar manner. However, the fact that these individuals could not be consistently pin-pointed as sharing nationality and language, made them difficult to be categorized together. Expatriates already had the cultural capital necessary to validate their member status in the community, and for this reason, such displays were largely overlooked or disregarded as particularly relevant.

As a school counsellor, Cathy also evaluated the behaviour of host nationals as a response to the international school environment. She argued that German students reacted in this way to *"feel like a part of the [international school] culture".* She argued, *"So that group really has its own certain mentality that is perpetuated from home"* (June, 2013), suggesting that the desire to display wealth stemmed from these students' domestic sphere. The habitus develops primarily in both the home and at school (Bourdieu, 1986a). German students were less active in the extra-curricular activities of the school. They were more socially involved outside of the school arena, in affluent social networks of the surrounding area and in those encouraged by their parents who were typically well-connected with elite social circles of the region. Thus they exhibited dispositions, values, skills and knowledge which were fostered through socialization practices across both environments (the international school and the elite

host society). For example, the 'certain mentality' of which Cathy spoke, and the 'arrogance' and 'cockiness' the focus group students discussed, may stem from the students' private social spheres outside of the community. Proving one's level of social connectivity with the country's 'elite' played a role in gaining status in the ISSG community. They assumed and negotiated a form of capital that expatriates often lacked in Germany.

Contrastingly, expat families tended to be more dependent on the international school system for socialization, and were largely disconnected from the host society.

My interview with Cathy was particularly interesting, as she was experienced with behavioural issues at the school, and was well aware of the tensions between the 'expatriates' and the 'Germans'. She argued that some of the German students struggled with their acclimation to the school culture, which was in 'their' country:

> *"Although it's different in every grade, and some grades are more than others (lowers voice) Germans are the ones with more of a clique – having to feel like a part of the culture – of THEIR culture, you know?"* (June, 2013).

Cathy felt that German students tended to band together through the shared experience of being institutionally encouraged to 'internationalize' in a social space which was actually located within 'their' culture. German students were also, as seen previously, continuously reminded of their status as host country nationals in community discourses and practices. However some of them were also being sent to the school by their parents who were attracted to the promise of an 'international education' and deliberately removed them from local schools.

Cathy claimed that the transition from the German national school system in neighbouring towns, cities and villages to the international school system could be extremely difficult for German students, who sometimes developed behavioural problems as a result. She stated:

> *"I had a student that was German, and we couldn't figure out why she wasn't performing. She was very capable and that kind of thing. She just seemed really angry and upset. So I started talking to her, and found out that her parents had decided to take her out of the German school in 4th grade. You know, they make their transition, and put her into [ISSG] without talking to her. She was literally pulled out and plopped here at [ISSG] even though her friends were still close by"* (June, 2013).

Many of ISSG's German students transferred into the school in the later grades – particularly in the 5th grade – a time at which local schools branch into separate high schools depending on

academic performance and/or potential[161]. The transition is oftentimes difficult for these students, particularly because they gradually lose their local friends in the process. Anger and resentment, Cathy argued, was often visible in the students' academic performance or socially. She suggested this might explain why particularly German students had gained a reputation for being 'bullies', as expressed by my participant Carol:

> *"My son is lightly bullied every day. It's all German kids. German kids are on my shit list*
> *right now, I mean what is it about them? WHAT is it?"* (June, 2014).

Carol expressed a desire to understand why German students were "bullies", and even asked me to hold a discussion group within the PTO about possibly organizing an 'intercultural awareness group' to tackle these issues[162]. A number of teachers, students and staff referred to German students as demonstrating some behavioural problems – particularly against expatriates.

I attempted several times to ask German high school students about how they perceived themselves within the school, and also to comment on how they were perceived by their peers. Each time, the students would acknowledge that 'German' groups existed and that they were distinct through socialization and linguistic practices. However, they would not include themselves within the elusive group of 'Germans' that had gained this reputation. An example of this is in the following focus group excerpt between an American national (Student A) and a German national (B):

Student A: *I've only got one German friend here at this school. But…*(pause, lowers
                        voice a bit)*…I mean, Germans tend to talk to each other and sit with*
                        each other a bit more –

Student B: (interrupts) *OK yeah I mean I can see it, because there's this group that*
                        has been here since like, first grade and they know each other. So there's
                        definitely like, 'the Germans', but there's also a group of 'Americans'. So I
                        guess it's like, the comfortable language for them. I don't know, like, I
                        guess it's like, because they're more comfortable like, speaking German.

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[161] See Chapter 2 for more on German education system.
[162] This, I believe, was brought on by the fact that she really 'opened up' to me about her son during and after our interview together. I suggested that perhaps it was due to the fact that German students may feel pressure to meet the standards of the school (i.e. feeling as though they are not welcome or not 'international' enough). She then became very interested in understanding this as a possible answer to her son's social issues at the school. She was also aware that I had access to the groups she found inaccessible, because I could understand German. I did not end up following through with this suggestion, as I ran out of time on this fieldwork trip.

I mean, if you like, know each other and you speak the same language, it's just like, easier that way (June, 2014).

During our interview, Student B identified herself as 'German', and spoke with an inclusive 'we' when referencing German students. However, at this point, she switched to referring to these particular German students as 'them'. It allowed her to distance herself from negative connotations regularly associated with Germans at ISSG. Also, she became slightly defensive after Student A (an American national) had made comments about 'Germans' – adding the comment 'there's also definitely a group of 'Americans''. The way in which Student B responded, could suggest that this was a sensitive issue for her. Finally, the sociolect seemed to also change when Student B felt challenged – she inserted more 'likes' into her sentences, which marked an American linguistic discourse. This may have been because she seemed nervous in that particular moment in our interview, however it is also plausible she did this to distance herself from being 'German' in this instance.

Wealth, and the power of economic and social capital for German nationals transcended the boundaries of the international school. Access to exclusive spaces, lifestyles, 'high' culture, and social networks aids in the reproduction of the habitus. This 'sense of distinction' (Bourdieu, 1986a) places these individuals at the top of the social structures available – in this case, locally, as well as at ISSG. ISSG, as an exclusive educational institution, acts to reinforce the status of exclusivity. I discovered that German parents sent their children to ISSG for varying reasons – however all of which tended to be based on granting their child an education that was different and more exclusive to that available locally.

In my interview with Heike, she described how her two children (born and raised in the area) attended local schools until approximately age 8, where they transferred into ISSG to obtain an English-medium education. She viewed ISSG as a gateway into an 'international' life. I met her in a cafe, per her request, in the town in which she and her family lived. The town is also where her children attended primary school before transferring to ISSG. It is known to be one of the most affluent areas in the region – attracting a high percentage of wealthy locals, celebrities and members of the cultural elite, as well as expatriate homeowners. The area also hosts a number of expatriate social groups. However, in our interview, she mentioned several times that she did not feel connected to the town anymore, since becoming involved with the ISSG community. She expressed numerous times the value of this exclusivity, and told me she was proud that her children were 'international', stating *"The difference is local and global. My children are global"* (June, 2014). She also stated that her children had 'no need' to have local friends, as they wouldn't be able to connect with them anyways. This was seen as something

positive – reinforcing the role ISSG played on reproducing and reinforcing exclusive social positions for German nationals outside of the school. For Heike, connectivity to the international school meant exclusivity beyond what was available locally.

This perception was not specific to Heike. Other German parents with children at ISSG often saw the school as a means to express their cultural and social distinction in the host nation. I interviewed a few German administrators, who brought up this issue to me. Claudia, a German receptionist at ISSG without children attending the school stated, *"Germans here tend to see themselves above locals, and that's also not OK"* (May, 2014). She told me that she often struggled with disrespect from German parents who, she believed, saw her as a 'local' because of her lowly position as a "secretary" (May, 2014). She was adamant that it was her occupation and presumed socio-economic status which triggered their disrespect[163]. Her use of the word 'local' was sometimes contradictory. In some instances, she used it to describe herself, and in others, she would use it to indicate Germans from outside the school.

These accounts suggested that nationality/cultural background played less of a role for Germans, as there was little cultural capital associated with this classification at the school. Rather, they used wealth and the social networks wealth created to gain status at ISSG. Connectivity to the school was symbolic for wealth and internationality – both of which promised a form of exclusivity that was unattainable locally, including in the regular German education system. Thus those who subscribed to the school's programme found themselves in a position to improve their 'international' credentials while downplaying both locality and 'Germanness'.

5.4. THE MARGINALIZATION OF OTHER GROUPS

In my first week of conducting observations at ISSG, I decided to amble around the cafeteria. I watched class after class enter for their lunch hour, order their food, sit with their friends, and leave at the sound of the bell. I watched students order their food exclusively in German. However, some expatriate students struggled greatly to get the German words out. Originally, I thought this was either a school rule, as a means to encourage students to practice their German, or that the cafeteria staff did not speak English. However, after a few days of watching this routine, I realized that faculty members communicated with the cafeteria staff in English. I later inquired about this, and was told by a teacher that students and parents

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[163] I followed up by asking if she felt perhaps gender played a role. She did not feel this was a relevant factor.

approached the cafeteria staff under the assumption that they did not speak English. It was not an educational policy to speak German when ordering food, and she was not sure how the practice began.

The cafeteria staff was largely comprised of first-generation 'immigrants' from Eastern Europe. They were fluent in both English and in German, as I witnessed myself during the fieldwork. While they were full-time employees of the school, and thus technically members of the community, they did not attend social events nor were they included in school activities, unlike teachers or administrators. I never saw cafeteria staff partake in the Frühlingsfest or the Winterfest, or any other events which called for 'national' representation. Given that these individuals could easily be deemed 'international', they were nevertheless ignored by the other community members. This is likely because they did not hold the cultural, social nor economic capital that was particularly valued in this social field. Their notional status as 'labour migrants' positioned them in a separate category of 'international mobility' and did not constitute an 'expatriate' status as validated in this field.

The fact that the students and parents consistently chose to speak German with the cafeteria staff suggested that they equated the German language with locality (permanency), and even a social status inferior to their own. The difference between the 'internationality' of the students and parents and that of the cafeteria staff is socio-economic. Using German, a local language, to address cafeteria staff, evidences practices of symbolic violence – that is, an arbitrary social practice which underscores the dominance of a particular group. Schubert's (2008) explanation illustrates this in a manner which is particularly useful here:

> "[Symbolic violence] is *everywhere*[164] in that we all live in symbolic systems that, in the process of classifying and categorizing impose hierarchies and ways of being and knowing the world that unevenly distribute suffering and limit even the ways in which we can imagine the possibility of an alternative world. It is also *nowhere* because, in its gentleness and its subtleness, we fail to recognize its very existence, let alone the way it is at the root of much violence and suffering" (2008:195-196).

The use of language, in this case, is a practice of categorization. It places the individual making that choice (i.e. the student opting to address these particular members of staff in German, and precisely not in the school's 'target' language) in a position of power. Schubert (2008) describes the subtlety of such practices, which is also evident here, in that students and their parents did

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[164] Schubert (2008) is expanding here on Bourdieu's argument: "Symbolic, domination...is something you absorb like air, something you don't feel pressured by; it is everywhere and nowhere, and to escape from that is very difficult" (Bourdieu, in Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992:115).

not seem to question, or contest the inconsistency of language use in the cafeteria. It was a practice that demarcated, and arguably discriminated, this group within the community, through a choice that had become normalized. Aside from the mandatory German lessons[165], this was the only time and location in which students spoke with a member of staff in a language other than English.

'Locality', like 'internationality' is a dynamic and fluid conception that is used to classify others according to varying interpretations, and plays a significant role in the reproduction of the community's global imaginary. The shifting boundaries between whom or what is considered to be 'international' and 'local' allow for hierarchies of discrimination to be formed. These perceptions are only valid within spaces which make them valid- hence the normalization of such practices allow for community members to understand, and realize their position within the social space.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to examine how community members socially positioned themselves at the school via practices of 'inter-nationality', and to discuss how these practices contributed to the global imaginary of the community. Nationality therefore played a central role in how members became inculcated into community and how socialization occurred at ISSG, as seen in the practices exhibited at the annual Frühlingsfeste and Winterfeste. The manner in which these Feste were conducted was particularly indicative of stratification codes working through language, nationality, international mobility and even class. These codes took on a physical and sensory dimension— as seen in the international food halls, for example.

Social groupings based on national background were not only institutionally encouraged, promoted and reinforced, but also reinstated and cultivated on an everyday basis. The dichotomy between acknowledging, for example, 'American' cultural traits as particularly valuable or desirable, and the stigmatization of 'Germanness' as carrying little cultural currency underscores the significance of national background in the social ranking system at ISSG. Notably, ISSG was comprised of a very 'diverse' body of individuals that was largely eclipsed by practices which classified its members in arguably clichéd and one-dimensional nationality-based categories. The material and bodily performances enacted at the Feste, for instance, can be perceived as relatively 'shallow' or 'empty' cultural practices. Scholars already noted nearly 20 years ago the clichéd role of national background in international education, identifying

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[165] German at ISSG was mandatory until grade 11.

superficial spectacles of 'saris, samosas and steel bands' (Pasternak, 1998:260), or the persistent reduction of culture to the 'Five F's': "food, fashion, fiestas, folklore and famous people" (Begler, 1998:272). However the continued repetition of such rituals since they were first criticized raises questions as to why such (arguably) 'empty' practices mean so much to community members and the institution.

In the case of ISSG, I saw the following cultural purposes in these practices: First, on an individual level, repeated rituals of performing national identity – regardless of how stereotypical or superficial they were – granted expatriate members an opportunity to practice a sense of belonging to place. For instance, in the case of the 'Spanish Speaking Group', this sense of belonging was practiced through language and the categorization of the 'Spanish Speaking' world as a wider spatial category. Referring to the quote from the teacher documented at the beginning of this chapter: *'[the kids] like to hang on to stereotypes because it reminds them of home'* – from a postcolonial perspective, such perceptions might be politically complex for some students. These cultural practices – whether it was wearing national dress and colours, baking national dishes, or listening to traditional 'national' music – reconnected ISSG expat members with a tangible, familiar, and safe distant geography.

I argue therefore that a particular connection between space and belonging plays a strong role in the affirmation of community membership at ISSG. The maintenance of links to distant geographies was seen as privileged currency in the international school system. The more members practice their affinity to distant geographies, the more they confirm their status as 'international' (and thus specifically not 'local'), and ultimately justify their community membership at ISSG. It goes also further than this: nationality labels play a vital role in the construction of the global imaginary. Affiliation with a distant geography reaffirms an uprooted identity, and validates vulnerabilities experienced once outside the school. In other words, by distancing oneself from locality by implicitly and explicitly identifying with a distant geography, expats negotiate a weakened or vulnerable status in the host society.

This provides one explanation why 'Germanness' was so heavily regulated and negatively perceived by many in the ISSG community – It confronted expats seeking to belong to a familiar, safe environment despite language barriers and circumstances in which they may have found themselves unversed and inexperienced. German resistance to the limited cultural capital placed on 'Germanness' further marginalized the group as they capitalized on other means which gave them status at the school. Social and economic capital allowed them to contribute in the development of the school as locally exclusive by granting access to other exclusive local spaces, and to heighten their status within their social networks, as seen in the

interview with Heike. Germans held a large footing in the school's Board of Directors in which significant financial, networking and legal decisions were made. Therefore, German representation in particular branches of the school was desirable, however also carefully managed. Host nationals were placed in a conflicting position: on one hand, they were required by the school to perform nationality-based practices, however on the other hand, they were simultaneously classified according to that very nationality as 'local' – a devalued category at ISSG. This was often contested through bold exhibitions of wealth and social status.

Performances of nationality were important not only for the individual, but also for the institution which depended on the reaffirmation of itself as 'inter-national' to uphold its position in the education market that catered to expats in Germany. The arguably banal use of 'inter-nationality' also underscored the striking link between the pedagogical program and market-oriented self-promotion, as shown in Chapter 4.

This simultaneously highlights the centrality of 'locality' in the production of the community's 'global imaginary'. The cultural capital associated with distant (non-local) geographies reinforces the notion that the community is constructed on a globally-oriented *imaginary.* It is an entirely relative system of social ranking that changes based on the location of the school. An example of this is a conversation I had with a Swedish mother of two high schoolers attending ISSG. Prior to arriving in Germany, her children had attended an international school in Brazil. She argued that ISSG was 'much better' and 'more international' because there were 'less Germans'. She contrasted this with her previous experience in Brazil, where there had been 'too many Brazilians' at the international school. While 'Brazilians' were deemed as 'international' at ISSG[166], in Brazil, they were not. This example shows that the construction of the global imaginary within international school communities generates a highly ambivalent relationship with host nationals and the host nation.

This relationship indicates a strong boundary culture at the school as determined by nationalities. Such boundary constructions were deeply entrenched in the community, and as I observed, often taken for granted. The stereotyping of assets, behaviours and conflicts was 'nationalized' so identities were often reduced to specific 'nationality'-based attributes. This also conflicts with the 'global' orientation of the school, whereby individual and personal development was encouraged, as seen in the program's IB Learner Profile. The boundaries

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[166] Mariel, for example, made the following statement about her Brazilian nationality: *"And so [my friends] spoke to me and said, 'You'd be a great fit for PTO President because you know, you're Brazilian, you're quite international'. You have three main nationalities here who are the Germans ultimately, then the British and the Americans. So she said, 'at least you've brought a new branch [to] the whole PTO"* (June, 2013). Published in Meyer, 2015.

charted between nationality groups I argue, transcended into more marginal spaces of community and residential life. The subsequent chapter therefore focuses on how boundary construction impacted cultural practices and mobilities within, across and between the community, the international school network, and the host nation.

CHAPTER 6

ISOLATIONISM AND THE BOUNDARIES OF COMMUNITY

6.1. INTRODUCTION

ISSG was nestled within a small forested area amidst fields of farmland. It was not visible from a highway that runs nearby, nor was it signposted within the area or nearby towns. The school referred to security reasons to explain this seclusion. The highway divided the school parking lot and the school – an additional security measure, as one could not easily drive a vehicle into the school grounds. To enter the school, a paved walkway guided visitors into a tunnel passage below the highway, ending at a security checkpoint. Each visitor was meant to go through a security clearance process. This included a confirmation of appointment (or reason for entering the campus), signing into a log book, and the collection of a 'visitor' badge which was to be worn at all times. Parents with particular roles at the school (e.g. those holding leadership positions in the PTO) received a badge with their name, picture, and role at the school, so that they could enter in a more efficient manner. After passing through the security checkpoint, the environment changed from the surrounding rural landscapes: campus signs were in English, people spoke in English, the surrounding farmlands evolved into manicured gardens, and the palatial facade of the 'Schloss' greeted newcomers as the main reception point of the school.

These differences are examples of what Lefebvre (1991) describes as physical boundaries of space. Physical boundaries can be material boundaries, such as the security checkpoint at ISSG, or they can be defined by formal rules and conventions, such as speaking English on campus. Such physical boundaries establish the spatial dimensions of the community and its mobility. Hernes (2004a) argues that boundaries prescribe practice. The strong physical boundaries which determine the borders of the school community prompted students, teachers, parents and staff to switch to a new mode of practice once on campus. For example, students knew that on campus, they were meant to speak English. This impacts also socialization practices and constructs cognitive (mental) boundaries. Communities are thus constructed through a series of dynamic boundaries – boundaries which are areas of tension between spaces (Douglas, 1966; Cohen, 1985). This chapter aims to examine the extent to which community was practiced and regulated within marginal spaces. I interpret them as 'marginal' because they include areas in which community members were granted opportunities to engage with the host society and culture in the school's curricular and extracurricular programs. As such they are spaces which, to

varying degrees, tested the boundaries between the school and 'the outside', and in which members were confronted with their residential role in Germany. I discuss the management of mobilities within, between and across spatial boundaries, and explore the ramifications of these practices on the local lives of expatriate and host country nationals. To explore such marginal spaces, I use Hernes' (2004a) three-tiered theoretical framework of interpreting boundaries[167], which follows Lefebvre's (1991) work on physical, social and mental boundaries. This Chapter is divided into the following subsections: The first section (6.2) investigates curricular modes of student engagement with the host language, culture and society, using the framework proposed by Hernes (2004a, 2004b). The following section (6.3) explores ISSG's extracurricular activities designed for students to attain credentials of 'internationality' through travel. International mobility, as seen in Chapter 4, was promoted and negotiated as a form of cultural capital in the international school network, and as I argue, was practiced through navigating very specific physical, social, and mental boundaries. The final two sections (6.4 and 6.5) move from the student experience to that of parents to discuss the way in which cultural isolationism informed the residential lives of both expats and host nationals.

6.2 SPATIAL BOUNDARIES OF THE ISSG CURRICULUM

This section investigates how boundaries are constructed and institutionally regulated through the ISSG curriculum. I have chosen three arenas within the wider IB curriculum offered at ISSG which specifically provided students opportunities to engage with the host society, culture and/or language. These arenas include the German language program (6.2.1), Field Trips (6.2.2) and Community, Action, Service (CAS) (6.2.3). I will argue that the format through which these arenas were institutionally conducted and discursively packaged isolated students from locality, in light of the school's 'global' initiatives.

6.2.1. German Language Program

Students at ISSG received an average of 3 hours of compulsory German lessons per week up until grade 10. From grade 11, students could drop the subject.

ISSG students after grade 6 engaged with two foreign languages. On top of the 3 hours of German, they took an additional 3 hours of another language from options including French, Spanish and Chinese. Therefore, after Middle School, German was treated as just another

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[167] See Chapter 3 and Appendix 2.

foreign language amidst the other language offerings. As seen in Chapter 4, classrooms visually articulated and reinforced the school mission and the objectives of the IB. These representations directed the observer to notions of globality, multicultural learning, and intercultural exchange. However, curiously, these exchanges rarely involved anything German. Out of all classrooms, only one, an English literature classroom which was used by the German department for weekly German lessons, contained some German-medium posters. Topics included: 'Gesundheit und miteinander leben[168]', 'Umwelt[169]', 'Keine Hälfte der Welt kann ohne die andere Hälfte der Welt überleben[170]' and 'Retten Sie die hübschen Wale[171]'. While these posters chimed the school's widely used rhetoric of global humanitarianism, they were void of themes of locality. They were also relatively out-of-date – a few dated to the 1990's.

Upon entering my first set of German class observations, the teacher had not yet arrived. I started talking to the students and asked them which level of German this class was. They responded, *"We're the worst ones!"* and *"Our German sucks!"* After the teacher arrived, the students were given a task to 'give directions' to places on campus. The overall demeanour was relatively discouraging in this particular class– some students were leaning far back in their chairs chatting in English with the other students in the row behind, others were fanning themselves with paper, one student had his head in his arms, while another had his baseball cap dipped down over his face dozing off. Some of the more engaged students gave directions, though the activity incorporated English vocabulary related to the school. Some of my field notes include questions such as, 'Wie finde ich die Cafeteria?', 'Wie komme ich zum IT Room?' and 'Wo ist die High School?'

In many ways, the activity symbolized what I had been observing about ISSG's relationship with locality. Even in their German lessons, students were still engaging with the language within the boundaries of the school environment, and in some cases, conveyed a lack of seriousness.

Language teachers were very limited in terms of resources. The Head of German told me that she was very frustrated with the fact that the school did not allocate language specific rooms and expected German teachers, like other foreign language teachers, to teach in other subject-specific classrooms. *"What am I supposed to do in a science lab?"* She told me that she

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[168] Wellbeing and living together.
[169] Environment.
[170] One half of the world cannot survive without the other.
[171] Save the pretty whales.

had stopped bringing maps and other learning materials because there was no place to hang them.

Thus while the school's orientation and its IB curriculum was centred on a wider, 'global' approach, the teaching of the local language and culture was repeatedly side-lined and marginalized. When I asked the Head of School about German, he responded in the following way:

I think exposure to [German] language and the culture, generally is done with the German classes. Well, I suppose the kids have games against local teams, field trips, that's about it. Aside from the local culture I think the one thing I would like to move more towards here, which needs more than just one person to do it, is creating a greater intercultural awareness amongst students. Which is not specific to local culture, but a culture of itself. And, how the environment that we're in, not only does it affect us, but we affect it (June, 2013).

And later:

Judging by the most recent survey, it seems to be mostly the Germans who want something more from the German program. Hard to know what, because our kids do pretty well. I mean, you can't emulate [a] German school because it's not trying to be [one] (June, 2013).

During this exchange, I got the impression that he wanted me to understand the 'global' and 'international' nature of the school and its mission of creating an 'intercultural' learning environment. As I was recording our interview, he may have felt particularly inclined to push the school objectives. In the statements above, he actively dismissed the issue as relevant to the school and its overarching objectives. Intercultural awareness, he argued, was something to be achieved *within* the school. He also refuted the notion that the German program was in need of improvement, and suggested that the expectations expressed by German parents were peculiar. This attitude was visible throughout regular curricular practices – the educational focus being either insular (practiced by, for, and within the school) or on distant (non-local) issues, places and themes. It also corresponds with the reflected in community practices discussed in previous chapters.

As the Head of School claimed, the primary mode through which students engaged with the German language was in their weekly German lessons. However I discovered that many students felt their German was not progressing due to the structure of the program. The school divided its German language program between two strands: German A (for 'Germans') and

German B (for the rest). German B was divided further into three groups: German lower (for beginning levels), German standard (for lower-intermediate levels), and German higher (for higher intermediate levels). The program was described in the following way in one of my focus groups of expat students:

Heather: *How's your German?*

Student 1:   *Well… (sighs)*

            (All laugh and fidget around)

Student 2:   *You and [Student 3] are like in the second year, and-*

Student 1:   *I'm a beginner.*

Heather: *Beginner. Okay.*

Student 4:   *Well I'm a fifth year, so me and [Student 2] are like…* (pause)

Heather: *Top level?*

Student 2:   *Well, I was kicked out of the top level. She didn't like me, mostly because of my personality.*

            (All students laugh)

Heather: *Where did they put you?*

Student 2*:*   *German B higher.*

Heather: *So is that kind of like in between?*

Student 3:   *I'm in German B standard, with most German 4th and 5th years, maybe even 6th year. We're all in German B standard.*

Student 2:   *The thing is, German A is too challenging for me as well as many others, so they go to German B higher, but that's too simple – not simple, but we feel that we are going back.*

Heather: *So German B has got a huge group of different levels thrown together?*

Student 3:   *Yeah, so there are huge discrepancies in the levels. The German B standard class is so huge that there are people who have been here since like 2nd and 3rd grade, and then there are people that came here like only 2 years ago.*

Heather: *So is German A what Germans do?*

Student 2:   *Yeah, so they call it German for Germans- 'Deutsch für Deutsche'*

<div align="right">(June, 2014)</div>

Because the German program was divided into only 4 stages (ab initio, lower-intermediate, higher-intermediate and then classes for only 'Germans' or L1 speakers), students did not progress through the language programme very quickly, but were 'stuck' in the same German stage for many years.

In 2014 I had a conversation with an American high school student in the hallway during a break. This conversation stood out to me as particularly striking and exemplifies how the de-emphasis on German language impacts the physical, social and mental mobility of school members. 'Sarah' was born and raised in Germany and had two American parents. While her parents were involved with the U.S. Army, she had always lived off of the army bases. She was entirely educated in the international school system within Germany. She had attended one located in a different part of Germany, and joined ISSG when she was in middle school. She stated that she had no 'German' friends and that her German was 'okay', and chuckled when I asked if she would attend a local university – showing she deemed the question absurd: she felt her German was not good enough. She also mentioned that her mathematics credits from ISSG were not recognized by German universities, and stated, "I can't go to a German university even if I wanted to". What was particularly striking about this conversation was that she was going 'back' to her 'home country' to study. Her affinity to the U.S. was very clear – a place she considered 'home', despite having never lived there. When I asked her about how she felt about the transition, she expressed concerns, hoping that she would 'fit in okay' in U.S. university life.

We also chatted about her social life. She told me about how she and her family were involved in ISSG-related activities and her friends were all ISSG students. She lived 1.5 hours away from the school and commuted long distances every day. On the weekends, she and her family would often go to the U.S. army base closer to her home, and play softball, or go to the American cinema there. She told me she did not speak German outside of her German B higher classes at ISSG.

This particular case shows the extent to which physical boundaries, such as the curricular regulation of German, have an impact on social and cognitive mobility. Sarah's German proficiency level and her lack of confidence in her language abilities impacted her socialization activities outside of the school. The continued lack of exposure to German society and minimal engagement with the language interfered with her ability to construct and maintain a sense of belonging in the country where she was born and raised.

<div align="right">160</div>

6.2.2. Curricular Field Trips

Connecting students to distant geographies, cultures and societies was also reinforced through curricular field trips. Travel was seen as an important component of curricular and extracurricular life, as stated on the school website:

"Trips are encouraged, so that the students are well travelled by the end of their time with us" (ISSG website, 2015).

As seen in Chapter 4, international mobility was constructed as a form of cultural capital at ISSG. While international residency was particularly valued, international travel was seen to instil a sense of 'intercultural awareness'.

Even field trips within Germany continually took on an 'international' dimension – again, regulating the extent to which the host society and culture was experienced. The school offered field trips which were built into its curriculum for particular age groups, and intent of the field trip was typically placed on cultures perceived as 'international' within Germany. An example is the annual, "Multi-Cultural Interdisciplinary Day at the Museum" (ISSG magazine, 2012) 6th grade field trip to the 'Museum Fünf Kontinente[172]', in which students were exposed to galleries of non-European art and culture. The rationale behind this trip was to create a 'multicultural learning space' in which students were exposed to foreign countries and cultures. In this particular case, students looked at "African Masks, Art from Oceania, Islamic Art and South American pottery and textiles" (ISSG magazine, 2012). Students were given materials to draw what they saw and took notes over the course of the day. The school's Spanish department also attended to expose first-year students to Latin American cultures. It is plausible that the school had established links with this museum, as it was a preferred venue for local field trips.

The museum became the preferred setting of 'intercultural learning' where students were expected to experience distant places and partially enact 'exotic' cultural styles (e.g. Bollywood dancing) themselves. In many ways these were practices of consumption and tourism. In her study involving mobile professionals affiliated with an international organization, Nowicka suggests that expatriate communities display tendencies of engaging with cultures in the format of tourism:

"they consume places; they get to know few locals; they try out 'exotic' dishes. They remain at the surface, which stays in contradiction to their own self-descriptions" (Nowicka, 2012:8).

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[172] Museum Five Continents. This museum offers collections of non-European artwork and cultural artefacts.

Similar practices were observable at ISSG. Field trips largely involved the consumption of 'culture' as well as global and local 'folklore' in ways that kept the host society and culture out-of-focus and carefully managed the actual degree of interaction. An example of this was during the ISSG 2014 Frühlingsfest and track and field inauguration during which the local town's brass band was invited to 'parade' with the international children around the track in front of an audience of community spectators (see Chapter 5).

Day field trips also tended to take on objectives set by the particular grade level's curricular agendas. These included a trip to Berchtesgaden, which aligned with the 5th grade geography unit on regional topography; a trip to the Dachau concentration camp, which corresponded with the 8th grade English unit on Holocaust literature; and nature/camping trips and retreats in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades to remote locations in the Alps, in fulfilment of the 'leadership' components of the IB curriculum. The exposure to German society and culture in the form of travel was present, though relatively minimal, and often cloaked with alternative objectives which satisfied the wider aims of the IB curriculum.

I was told field trips put on by the German department were extremely rare, for the reason that students were separated across language stages. Therefore, those that did occur were often on offer as 'extra credit' options for after school. This stood in marked contrast to field trip opportunities to Spain or France provided for high schoolers enrolled in Spanish and French. This again placed a preference on international travel - further minimizing exposure to the host country.

6.2.3 Creativity, Action, Service (CAS)

Aside from various field trips on offer, ISSG, as an accredited IB World School, provided additional opportunities for students to engage with their host culture and society through the IB's 'Creativity, Action, Service[173]' program for the 11th and 12th graders, and its affiliated programs, 'Community and Service[174]' for younger students. I became very interested in this, as it was one of the primary curricular pathways for students to engage with their host nation. All middle school and high school students attending ISSG were obligated to participate in a community service project each year, and were closely monitored by grade-specific CAS and C&S staff to ensure they fulfilled these requirements as a means to continue onto the next grade level. The IB's CAS program was linked to a set of ambitions and aims. It should enable students

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[173] Students in the 11th and 12th grade participate in this program as a component of the IBDP.
[174] Students from grades 5-10 participate in this program as components of the IBMYP program.

to "undertake new challenges", "increase awareness of strength and areas for growth", "plan and initiate activities", "work collaboratively with others", "show perseverance and commitment", "engage with issues of global importance", "consider ethical implications", and "develop new skills" (CAS, 2016). It is a three-stranded program in which students are required to complete a total of 150 hours over the course of two years. Strands include 'Creativity', which involves the participation in a creative project of some kind; 'Activity', which involves performing any form of organized physical activity; and 'Service' which involves a community service project. Each student must therefore perform 50 hours across the three strands within the 2 year time frame. The CAS program is not formally assessed, but monitored by the school CAS coordinator(s). Completion of the 150 hours is required to fulfil the CAS component of the IB diploma and, thus, to graduate.

This program has been seen to grant students the opportunity to forge links with the host society in which they reside (Bunnell, 2005; Allen, 2002; Kulundu & Hayden, 2002). It is also prominently associated with the rhetoric on achieving 'global-mindedness' through 'taking risks' and forming intercultural bonds formed through these community service acts. These objectives mirror those promoted by ISSG. As supported by Kulundu & Hayden (2002), the Service component of the program is not designed to 'serve', but rather to create a learning experience for students beyond the classroom. Therefore, it is meant to provide an avenue for international school students to traverse physical, social and mental boundaries which may normally restrict their experience.

However, a number of practical barriers, or 'physical boundaries' (Hernes, 2004a), hinder many expatriate students from accessing local resources which may be required to complete this component. Kyle and Anja, both working as educators at ISSG at the time, found that students who did not speak German found it difficult to realize this requirement because they lacked the 'know-how' to navigate the local environment, or demonstrated reluctance to negotiate through 'uncharted' waters. Instead, many expat students opted to create service projects within the boundaries of the international school system, which, as Kyle and Anja claimed, circumvented potential feelings of vulnerability and anxiety involved with non-institutionalized intercultural exchanges. They raised money through on-campus bake sales, helped with events organized and run by the PTO, or assistant-coached and/or refereed in the After School Activities program for younger students. Thus, they regularly conducted their projects on campus – maintaining a physical presence within the borders of the school, socially engaging with the school's social network, and were able to still operate in a mental space with which they were familiar.

In many ways, students simply mirrored their parents' involvement with charity-related activities run through the community. As seen, the PTO was heavily involved in fundraising – albeit within the boundaries of the community. Students produced bake sales throughout the year – very similar to what their parents in the PTO did. Moreover, classes created a 'Weihnachtsmarkt' – mirroring that produced at the ISSG Winterfest[175]. This was institutionally organized – the teachers of a particular grade level aided in the organization, construction and running of the events, and they took place on the ISSG campus. Similar to the Winterfest, a BBQ was arranged, and baked goods from different 'nations' were put on offer to raise money for charities. Charities over the years have included the 'Deutsche Umwelthilfe'[176] and the 'Elterninitiative Krebskranke Kinder[177]'. While it is plausible that students involved in these charities may have experienced an engagement with a German organization, the main emphasis of these service activities was placed on raising money.

Kyle and Anja told me in separate interviews that they had felt pressure to relax the CAS guidelines to accommodate the language and cultural barriers experienced by the school's expat students. For example, CAS coordinators recently opted to extend community service categories from 'local' and 'global' projects, to an additional category: 'school' projects, and after speaking with students, this option turned out to be the most popular. In this way, students were not pressured to cross such boundaries if they were unwilling. The familiar environment for expats was the international community, or other expat communities nearby (e.g. the U.S. army bases).

> *sometimes it's difficult for students to break out into the German speaking community because their German isn't good enough. So we let them do things here on campus, or within the Japanese community or within the Swedish community, or wherever it is* (Kyle, June 2013).[178]

Kyle had also mentioned to me that there had been an exceptional expat student who had joined a 'local' basketball league as a means to improve his German. He told me that this student stood out as a 'risk taker'. The fact that Kyle, who had worked at the school for a number of years, considered this student exceptional shows that expat students regularly restricted themselves to non-locally conducted CAS projects.

Both coordinators explained that the alternative to school or locally-based projects was to participate in ISSG's organized service projects which included international travel and

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[175] See Chapter 5.
[176] A German organization involving environmental support.
[177] A German organization which supports childhood cancer treatment.
[178] Published in H. Meyer, 2015.

dialogue. Some students and staff perceived the physical barriers as a principal reason to bypass potential projects within the host country, as Kyle explained:

The hardest thing though, that we have to consider at our school is that it's based in the countryside. It is a bit of a demand on our students. Because we're saying, 'this is an independent part of your study, you have to do this', but the logistics of them getting to [the city] and then, you know it's all about the bussing. You know? School is not cancelled because of the weather. But school is cancelled if the buses don't run. So sometimes the logistics of where our school is makes it quite difficult for the students to get out into the community (June, 2013)[179].

The statement was interesting, as many students, in fact, lived in the city and commuted into the countryside to get to the school. Moreover, the region has an exceptionally strong public transportation network.

However ISSG operated its own, costly, private bus system that was generally perceived as the most convenient means to reach the school. The private bus system picked up students from their homes and dropped them off at school each day. With newly incoming families, the transportation network was re-routed, to ensure that the children were picked up *'as close to the doorstep as possible'* (Beate, Transportation Director, June 2013).

Thus blaming transportation issues for the lack of contact with the local community may have largely been a popular myth circulating the school. It is also worth noting that the school's private transportation system brought in a significant profit to the school, and therefore these sentiments may have also been institutionally encouraged.

Similar sentiments were found by Kulundu and Hayden (2002), in which international school students spoke of transportation issues as affecting service projects based off the school campus in Masaru, Lesotho. The scholars argue that a better provision of transportation to local venues for service activities would produce more willingness to seek contact with locals. Moreover, they also suggest that the lack of such provision symbolizes the school's half-hearted stance on locally-conducted service projects (Kulundu & Hayden, 2002:35). Their findings, coupled with the data collected from my site, suggests the presence of a more general discourse within the international school system in relation to CAS programming. Thus while students opted out of conducting local service projects for reasons of 'inaccessibility', they found themselves involved in a service project located on an entirely different continent. Remarkably,

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[179] Published in H. Meyer, 2015.

the provision of international travel opportunities for service projects were frequently seen as more manageable and more attractive, than those available locally.

Upon speaking with expat students in my focus groups, I was made aware that the general regard for the ISSG CAS program was relatively low.

Heather: *So I noticed there's a community service-*

        (All Students lean forward and sigh loudly)

Heather: *Talk to me about CAS – what's your experience with it? What are you doing?*

Student 1:   *All my Action is for football*

Heather: *So Action counts as-*

Student 2:   *Most students do sports to fulfil Action points*

Student 3:   *For Service, I help out with the Basketball scoring*[180]

Student 4:   *Yeah! He does like, ALL of our games.*

Student 3:   *I don't know what I'm gonna do for Creativity. Like, no idea!*

Heather: *So how many points do you have to collect in total?*

Student 3:   *One hundred and fifty.*

Student 1:   *Yeah that's ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY POINTS!*

Heather: *What are you doing?*

Student 2*:*   *I'm actually creating a fitness program for the school.*

Heather: *So does that go towards Service?*

Student 2:   *Actually, it goes towards Service and Creativity. So it's really great. It's like, double!*

Heather: *What about you?*

Student 5:   *Usually I do a project – like, in 9th grade with a bunch of other people – I did a service project with the Young Life Organization, like a Christian youth group, and we went to Greece and we built a playground. They*

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[180] This was organized through the Athletic Department for sporting competitions within the ISSG circuit of international schools. This is for 'home' games only.

> *kind of connect with other international schools, and so that's how I got*
> *involved with them.*

Student 1:   *I'm going to Tanzania* (June, 2014)[181].

None of the students from this particular group opted to participate in service projects involving the German public. Each of these students chose to work on the ISSG campus or to do a project abroad. In this way, they were able to participate in projects which demanded a form of 'intercultural exchange'. However, this took place within environments in which they could use already acquired linguistic and social skills, and exercise familiar cultural dispositions (habitus) – that is, within the structures governed by the international school system. The students were thus navigating a field expressing a familiar "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1994).

Projects which demanded international travel were regarded as particularly valuable and directly contributed to participants' global imaginary. ISSG offered various outreach programs in which students could participate to collect Service points. One example from the Outreach Program is the 'Tanzania Project', which was established in the late 1980s, and set up as an 'aid project'. The initiative included an impressive number of projects involving schools, aid clinics, eye clinics, farms and hospitals. These contacts had been built over the years by ISSG and other international schools. The Tanzania Project allowed a group of approximately 24 ISSG students each year to personally deliver donations and equipment. Trips included visits to orphanages, schools, clinics, a Maasai village and a safari. Students went through a serious application process with a final interview before selection took place. The program was clearly designed to instil the school, IB and CAS objectives[182] in participants.

As seen, fundraising played a large role in ISSG community life – from the PTO, to the curriculum (CAS) into extracurricular activities. For the Tanzania project, students were meant to each raise approximately 300 euros throughout the school year to meet the trip donation requirements. This Service project cost each student approximately 3500 euros for the 2.5 week trip, which included flights, room and board, insurance and a camping safari[183]. One student explained, prior to his departure:

Heather: *What is the Tanzania Project?*

Student 1:   *It's the coolest thing ever! We have to raise 300 euros in order to go. You*
> *go to different things, you go to orphanages, you go to a school, you*

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[181] Published in H. Meyer, 2015.
[182] The Tanzania Project Aims are provided in Appendix 8.
[183] This price estimation is taken from the July 2015 application form, provided to me by a teacher involved with the Tanzania Project.

> *have the hospital, you have the eye doctor and the Maasai doctor and*
> *Maasai farm, and it's like a bunch of service projects, you build new*
> *classrooms. You're there for two and a half weeks* (June 2014)[184].

The student's answer is largely centred on *going* places, and is, in this regard, similar to other responses I received from students – reflecting the importance placed on travel. Reflections written by students after participating in the Tanzania Project[185] often contained romantic expressions which associated international travel with their 'global' identity. In ISSG's 2014 summer edition of the school magazine, the following reflection was published online:

> "My last memory of being in Tanzania is looking back on Mount Kilimanjaro on our way
> to the airport for our flight back to [Germany]. For me, it was one of the more quiet and
> tired moments of the trip since, after all, it was almost over and 15 days of travelling and
> visiting a completely new country, a completely new continent had been a very unique
> yet tiring experience. And now you may ask why it was such a memorable moment, just
> looking at the mountain, since mountains aren't exactly a rare thing around [ISSG] and
> they shouldn't be anything special to me. Mount Kilimanjaro appears completely
> abstract in its context because whilst it was around 30 degrees Celsius where we stood,
> the snow covering the peak is visible from even such a great distance. For me, toward
> the end of the trip, I realized that travelling to Tanzania for nearly 3 weeks with a group
> of peers to engage with the people and culture there was probably one of the most
> rewarding, most special and craziest things I had done so far (ISSG magazine, 2014).

The school chose this particular post, among many others describing similar sentiments which reflected on these sights, tastes and smells students experienced, and the people students encountered during their journey, as contributing to their learning and growing as well-travelled individuals. The Service trip was about *delivering* the money they had raised during the ISSG Winterfest and Frühlingsfest, in which the students had set up booths requesting donations for their Tanzania projects. The perspective therefore, as exhibited in the reflections, appeared to be that the student experience of the Tanzania trip was largely about the travel. Below is an example of another published reflection about ISSG's donations:

> "The project I was assigned to was the "teen fun day". Local Tanzanian teenagers
> affected by HIV joined us at [an international school in Moshi] for an unforgettable day.
> We had the opportunity to interact with these courageous Tanzanian teenagers through

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[184] Published in H. Meyer, 2015.
[185] These were published in the ISSG school magazine, and also provided to me by a teacher.

a number of activities such as 'chicken chasing' or the stomach turning 'soda drinking'. We also had the opportunity to speak with [an American paediatrician based in Moshi] about AIDS and its effects both locally in Moshi and also nationally across Tanzania and how it affects the lives of the warm-hearted teenagers we were able to get to know that day. Their immense gratitude for [ISSG's] donations from past years was presented to us through a number of mind-blowing performances including skits, songs and dances" (ISSG magazine, 2013).

Such reflections published by the school provide insight into how such exchanges were perceived and documented. Qualifying descriptors such as '*courageous* Tanzanian teenagers', '*warm-hearted* teenagers' and '*mind-blowing* performances' coupled with the manner in which thankfulness is repeatedly emphasized and documented, underscores a perception that members may have considered themselves to be in a position to qualify others. In many ways, the Tanzania trip (among others) is characteristic of 'Voluntourism[186]', whereby discourses of 'othering' are strengthened and significantly, where travellers "inappropriately take on roles of 'expert' or 'teacher' regardless of their experience or qualifications [which] can be seen to represent the neo-colonial construction of the westerner as racially and culturally superior" (Raymond & Hall, 2008:531).

The exchange was mutually beneficial in different ways. Students were given an opportunity to tour a new region of the world and receive a certain degree of recognition and gratitude for the money they raised. They also, significantly, collected a form of cultural currency valued at ISSG through their involvement in charity and experience overseas. Those receiving the monetary donations benefitted from their involvement with the international school network – as a source of aid.

Both ISSG and other international schools around the world used an international school in Moshi as a site for Service trips. This school offered its dormitories for a fee throughout the year to international schools keen to provide their students with such 'intercultural exchanges' on the African continent. International schools across the globe promoted their Tanzania Service trip in a similar fashion (online and elsewhere), and described similar proceedings (Maasai village, orphanage, etc.). For example, Southbank International School[187] (UK), British International School of Boston[188] (USA), International School of Amsterdam[189] (Netherlands), and Abdul

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[186] Volunteer tourism. See for example, Raymond & Hall, 2008.
[187] See Southbank International School (2013).
[188] See Nordanglia Education (2014).
[189] See International School of Amsterdam (2013)

Rahman Kanoo International School[190] (Bahrain) are institutions which organized similar excursions and activities in Moshi to offer such CAS opportunities for their students. Such Tanzania Projects boosted the reputation of international schools which associated the humanitarian efforts with 'global' education and the IB Learner Profile.

Similarly, 'World Challenge' attracted a number of international schools across the region, including ISSG. It offers excursion projects for selected high school students to a foreign destination – an organization which CAS coordinator Kyle describe to me as *"a really cool company because it really epitomizes the IB Learner Profile and the type of students that we want because it's Service and Leadership…so last year they were in Northern India"* (June, 2013). Students participating in the World Challenge, like those of the Tanzania Project, also contributed their reflections for publication in the school magazine. Kyle described the 2013 World Challenge trip to me in an interview:

> *[in Mongolia] they went to a prison where there were murderers and rapists – but it was all safe, I mean, World Challenge, they're so complete – they don't do anything that would endanger anyone. But when the students came back they were just talking about how they felt, and how nervous they were, and they organized a little soccer tournament [against those who were] their age, and the contact that these inmates wanted from the outside world was something that could change your life forever. But it's something [the inmates] really needed. But what our students really took away from it was that they just felt so proud of their accomplishment"* (June 2013)[191].

Kyle's statement mirrors some of the statements that had been written in the student reflections – notions of thankfulness, and assumptions based on a perceived 'need' of those being visited. When at the school, I heard many statements and reflections like this being made about charity-based projects and service trips conducted outside of Europe. There was a consistent air of confidence in the notion that these trips were humanitarian acts – that the students were *needed* abroad and that others *needed* whatever it was that the students brought to them.

In fact, students gained a significant amount of cultural capital from these ventures. They earned CAS points, accolades from the school and the community for travelling great distances to conduct humanitarian projects, and an 'intercultural' experience that could be referenced to support college applications and job interviews in the future.

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[190] See Abdul Rahman Kanoo (2008).
[191] Published in H. Meyer, 2015.

World Challenge excursions were guided, group-oriented, conducted in English, and chaperoned by familiar faculty and a member of the World Challenge staff. According to Kyle, students paid approximately 3000 euros to participate.

While conducting a service project at a prison in Germany may also have been an option, 'World Challenge' projects taking place on other continents were, quite naturally, perceived in comparison with more appeal. There was something romantic about going long distances to do something for 'humanity' – this romanticism was also the tone of many published student reflections.

However, out of all the service projects, the Tanzania project was advertised most heavily, and most frequently. The school website included a page specifically dedicated to it – publishing the student reflections, information on how to donate financially, and a list of year-round community activities which raised funds for the upcoming trips. These activities involved the entire school: parents, teachers, staff, faculty and children. They included a 'Tanzania Bookshop[192]', 'Teachers versus Students Halloween Football match, 'Tanzania Sit-up and Plank-a-thon[193]', stalls at the Ski Swap[194], Winterfest and Frühlingsfest, 'snack and drink bar during shows and performances', 'Homeroom Challenges including Cattle/Farm Equipment fundraisers[195]', and '3-Pointers' during ISSG Basketball games[196]. These modes of fundraising spanned across all facets of community life: adult extracurricular activities, classrooms, community events, athletics and the arts. The Tanzania Project was key in constructing the school as 'global', and also in reinforcing its symbolic borders.

Additionally, ISSG organized an annual school-wide CAS assembly in which students participating in the Tanzania Project and World Challenge could present reflections, photos and videos of their Service contributions. As seen in Appendix 4, participants in such projects were required to produce written accounts (e.g. reflections), presentations at such assemblies, and

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[192] A book fair that ran regularly during the academic year in the school cafeteria and/or the lobby.
[193] Athletic competition involving sit-ups and planks.
[194] The annual Ski Swap was organized by the ISSG Sportverein as a means to raise funds for the organization. It was defined as an "annual school social event and the Sportverein's largest fundraiser" (ISSG website, 2013), and was described in the following way in 2013:
> "We will take your unwanted ski equipment, ski clothing, and winter sports items, such as ice skates or sleds, and offer them for sale on your behalf. We will also take bicycles. The Sportverein supports the entire [ISSG] community in the form of travel subsidies for athletic tournaments, providing refreshments, purchase of team uniforms and providing adult and family sports opportunities. How it works: You can either donate items to the Sportverein or ask us to sell them for you. The Sportverein charges a commission of 20% per sold item and 1 euro per consignment item. All commissions and profits from donated items go to the Sportverein" (ISSG website, 2013).

[195] A homeroom challenge is when different grade-level classes compete against each other.
[196] These usually take place during the 'half time' of a basketball game. It is a competition to see who can score the most shots from the 3-point line on the court.

sometimes even a movie documentary of their trip. These contributions were ultimately used to promote the fund to potential donors within the school community, and to advertise the trip as an attraction offered by the school to prospective student participants. The student reflections, project updates and reports were documented in each issue of the school magazine.

While locally-conducted projects were not the main focus of such CAS assemblies, they nonetheless existed. Students participated in a range of local charities to acquire Service points. Kyle stated that German students tended to be more active in locally-conducted service projects, for the reason that they had the language skills to access local charities and service-based organizations. However, he also stated that expatriate students were also active in conducting projects locally, though far less often.

> *We have students who work in old age homes, they work with the fire brigade, animal*
> *shelters, soup kitchens, or giving out supplies for the needy* (Kyle, June 2013).

Kyle's examples support what I had observed at the Winterfest in 2014. The PTO had arranged for an upstairs auditorium (see Appendix 6) to be dedicated to students whose Service projects involved raising money. At the bottom of the flight of stairs was a booth dedicated to the Tanzania Project. At this stand, Tanzanian-related artefacts (e.g. books on Tanzania, brightly-colored woven blankets, wood figures, and beaded necklaces) were being sold by a faculty member. After passing this booth, and climbing the stairs, I was greeted by another faculty member and approximately five students standing behind a long, elaborately-decorated table with a large blue backdrop displaying pictures, student reflections and a large sign saying, 'Tanzania Project'. It was the most elaborate and largest display in the room. Students were raising money for individual projects to ensure that they could meet their target of 300 euros which would enable them to go to Tanzania that summer. To the right of the Tanzania booth was another elaborate booth, run by students and another member of staff, promoting the 2014 World Challenge expedition to Nepal, and right next to it, a UNICEF stand run by PTO members and students.

The room was set up to encourage a looped pathway for adult community members to wander around and donate money. The desks had been decorated to sell items such as baked goods – M&M cookies, brownies, cupcakes – which would result in the proceeds being donated to a particular charity. The vast majority of these booths were run by both expat and German students and involved organizations like, 'Doctors without Borders', 'Global Issues Network[197]'

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[197] This organization was founded by the International School of Luxembourg in 2003 to create a world-wide service-oriented network amongst international schools. It is actively engaged with the 'Office of

and 'Amnesty International'. Others involved asking for donations for locally-based or German organizations. These charities included 'Deutsche Kinderhilfe[198]', 'Frauenhilfe[199]', and 'Kinderhaus[200]'.

However, the room had been constructed to feature the Tanzania Project and World Challenge projects to parents, as these booths were by the entrance, elaborately decorated, and chaperoned by faculty members – all of which contributed to their validity, and the 'internationality' of the school by highlighting elaborate, international outreach programs supported by school staff. Because these booths were well-staffed (i.e. included several students), some students had been assigned to wander around the room with large signs promoting the World Challenge and Tanzania Project. These causes therefore greatly overshadowed the student-run desks lining the perimeter of the auditorium – most of which were constructed and organized by a single individual.

The eclipsing of local projects also occurred on the school website, where the initiative for students to engage in community service projects was described in the following manner:

> "We expect students to make significant contributions to the community through our Service as Action and Community service programmes. Some of these go beyond the campus of [ISSG]. Our outreach programmes with UNICEF and Tanzania are two important examples of our commitment to global-mindedness" (ISSG website, 2016).

In this excerpt, locally-conducted projects are entirely omitted in the declaration – jumping from service projects conducted on the school campus, to those conducted outside of Germany. Here, 'global-mindedness' is attributed to community service commitments with a big U.N. organisation and in Africa. While deemed acceptable according to the IB, local projects were as much as excluded from both promotional literature and on-site fundraising activities. The bias towards prioritising experiences abroad was also visible in the focus placed on 'travel'. Travel was deemed a major personal asset and educational practice. It was promoted as a major practice of 'intercultural exchange' necessary to educate students into 'globally-minded', 'international' individuals. Thus, the benefits of international travel were seen to outstrip by far

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Overseas Schools US State Department', 'Association of American Schools in South America' (AASSA), 'Association of International Schools in Africa' (AISA), 'East Asia Regional Council of International Schools' (EARCOS), 'European Council of International Schools' (ECIS), 'The Association of American Schools of Central America Colombian-Caribbean and Mexico' (Tri-Association), and the 'Association for the Advancement of International Education' (AAIE) (Global Issues Network, 2015).

[198] A child protection organization in Germany.

[199] A German organization sponsoring the protection of women from domestic violence and abuse.

[200] A locally-based care provider offering aid to children and families in need.

any experiences school children could gain locally or within German society and culture – which remained, ironically, a foreign world to many of them.

6.3. SPATIAL BOUNDARIES AND THE AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS

In October 2013, a group of student athletes and their coaches travelled to Vienna to participate in a sports tournament hosted by another international school. This trip was one of approximately 4-5 seasonal international tournaments taking place for each ISSG soccer, tennis and volleyball team. These tournaments included competitions on international school campuses in Zurich, Athens and Vienna. ISSG student athletes and their coaches met early in the morning at the school parking lot to embark on an eight-hour bus trip to Vienna. I drove separately. The geographical distance (460km) did not act as a deterrent as students were prepared to travel great lengths to compete against another international school. Participating students had to pay separately for travel costs. In this case, students paid approximately 100 euros each. When speaking with individual members in the Athletic office, I was told that it was very rare that students and their families were unwilling to pay the travel fees. This also confirmed the value that was placed on travel, and that families were relatively content with the investment each weekend. The school in which this sports competition was taking place was one of several in Vienna – however this particular school was quite similar to ISSG. Located in a suburb, not signposted, the school was so isolated that I actually had to drive a few times up and down the street to find it. The campus was controlled by a security checkpoint with a large gate and fence surrounding the entire campus. When the student buses arrived, the gates opened, and quickly closed again. Students were greeted by the international school's Housing Coordinator, who helped allocate them to their housing families[201]. The coaches stayed in a nearby hotel which they had used for this purpose for the past twenty years.

The students and coaches arrived the next day for one single morning of competition (the entire event lasted 2-3 hours). Students were given either money to buy food from a stand which was organized by the international school's 'Booster Club' of PTO members, or provided with a packed lunch from their host families. The food on offer was, here too, 'American': hamburgers, hotdogs, hot chocolate with mini marshmallows and other American candies and baked goods. The school had an elaborate facility – a turf soccer field and track strip with bleachers and flood lights for evening matches and competitions, and an indoor 3-court tennis facility – all of which could not be viewed or accessed from the street. Very similar to ISSG, the

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[201] International school families who had volunteered to host student athletes from ISSG.

elaborate facilities were closed off to the public. The competition ended very quickly – students and staff did not stay to socialize with each other. In fact, it happened so quickly, that most students did not even change clothes after the game. Instead, they immediately boarded the bus for the 8 hour journey home. On the return journey the bus stopped a couple times at rest stops, including a McDonald's restaurant for short breaks. Upon arrival back home it dropped students off at the ISSG parking lot to their waiting parents. The students had travelled great distances for an overnight stay in Vienna for a single sports match. It became clear that international schools took great efforts to provide students with such 'international' travel opportunities within their After School Activities (ASA) programs. However, my experience suggested that the students engaged with a nearly identical form of 'internationality' from one school campus to the next.

While my Vienna trip illustrates overnight sports trips as being relatively routine and insular affairs, there was also evidence of larger trips, for instance, the French language students travelling to Paris for a week. However, the vast majority of travelling activities took place between international school campuses across Europe.

I discuss below some of the extracurricular activities which were particularly centred on organizing 'intercultural' exchanges[202] through international travel, similar to the curricular orientation discussed above. The orientation towards extracurricular activity in light of 'global-mindedness' is shared across the international school network, as the following quote suggests:

> "To be truly authentic [in global education], this includes collaborations with others around the world to learn from different perspectives and to build communication skills that transcend countries and cultures. Ideally, connections will also happen outside the classroom. Athletic and artistic events allow students in an ideal school to compete or collaborate within a regional network of like-sized schools, offering the experience of travel and forming bonds through interests with those who may not be an everyday part of their lives. Ideally, when moving from school to school, students feel connected to previous learning experiences via similar curricula and educational philosophies. Teachers also feel connected both within the community and beyond it, through face-to-face and electronic, and distance learning opportunities (Michetti, Madrid and Cofino, 2015:162).

The focus highlights clearly the emphasis on travel, and connecting students and teachers to other cultures within *similar* educational settings. While international schools, including ISSG,

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[202] Scholarly accounts of these exchanges are limited, however support my findings on this orientation. See for example (Aristidou, 2012; Maguth & Hilburn, 2015).

often portray exchanges through sport as being opportunities for intercultural engagement, during my observations at sporting events, I did not see many students engage with others from different schools. The atmosphere was very competitive and teams marked themselves clearly through symbols (flags, colors, music) of their own school's host nation and/or city, along with school mascots and colors. Teams tended to stay with their teammates during tournaments – whether it was forming a space in the bleachers waiting to participate, in the cafeterias, or watching other games and activities taking place around the school campus. While some students engaged with others through being 'housed', these engagements tended to stop once students stepped onto the school campus to compete. Coaching/teaching staff from the participating schools on the other hand did appear to know each other better, and social gatherings after competitions were always arranged by the host school's athletic department at a nearby restaurant.

6.3.1 The Role of the International School Network in ASA

The ISSG ASA program operated within an intricate, elaborate network of international school extracurricular organizations. ASA sports and arts programs were designed to create more 'intercultural' exchanges primarily with other international schools located in Europe. However, the school also arranged opportunities for such exchanges on other continents. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, some of the larger networks within which ISSG was involved included: International Schools Sports Tournaments (ISST), Sports Council of International Schools (SCIS), International School Theatre Association (ISTA), and Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS). Such networks allow international schools to operate within a self-contained system that is not regulated by their respective host country's educational and/or recreational framework[203]. It allows for the promotion of international travel opportunities for participating students including parent volunteers and chaperones, and contributes to community building among partner schools. That is, the facilitation of international travel opportunities contributes to the perception that the international school system and community is 'globally' oriented.

This form of 'globalism' encourages travel not simply as a form of 'intercultural' engagement, but also as access to exclusive places and people. Thus 'travel' also served to

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[203] ISSG, for example, could participate in organized sport against other international schools locally and across the world, for the reason that these institutions were (largely) privately operated within their host nations. Without being affiliated with a Sportverein, it was not allowed to participate in organized recreational activities against German teams.

reinforce the *exclusivity* of the school network and its related social imaginary. The ISSG Lego team, for example, travelled to Brazil in 2012, as documented in the school magazine. Prior to their departure, the article illustrates how students[204] had their project assessed by a former Head of Design at BMW. After receiving their approval, they flew to Sao Paulo to participate in a competition of 42 teams (only two of which were from Europe). The article[205] describes how the students not only competed there, but also met Brazilian President Dilma Rouseff who attended the event. Significantly, the article also mentions how others perceived them in Brazil:

> "As well as participating in the competition, we had an exhibition stand to decorate and man for the duration of the event. This kept us occupied with a constant stream of visitors who, of course, wanted to meet 'the Europeans'" (ISSG magazine, 2012).

Thus identities not typically valued on school campus came to life when they travelled abroad. It showed the situated character of identity politics: 'European', hardly used at the school in Germany, became not simply a group-forming symbol in Brazil but also an attractive brand.

Despite the fact that fifty international schools were located within Germany, ISSG actively engaged in organized activity with approximately three others – thus making the international travel aspect important in the formation of such partnerships[206]. The ISST (International Schools Sports Tournament) organization was comprised of approximately 25 member schools at the time of my research – 4 of which (including ISSG) were based in Germany. The additional, smaller conference within Europe, the Northwest European Council of International Schools (NECIS)[207], operated separately and included only 2 other international schools which were based in Germany.

These member groups are significant, as they considerably impacted the extracurricular experience and the local lives of community members, and shaped the practices within the ISSG community and the wider international school circuit. The international school network allows for physical, social and mental spaces to mobilize and converge – what Hernes (2004a) calls 'spatial dynamics'. Within the international school network, spatial interaction encourages

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[204] These students were in 5th and 6th grades (11-12 years old).
[205] Published in hardcopy and online.
[206] There were additional such networks operating within Europe, including the Northwest European Council of International Schools (NECIS). Like ISST, this network included three international schools located in Germany. Provided that both networks included international schools of similar size from both Germany and the Netherlands, membership based on geographical proximity may have only been one minor factor in their formation. Moreover, the ISST network included member schools from the UK – which, if based on geographical region, should have actually been a member of the NECIS network. This suggests that providing students opportunities for international travel to a large variety of European nations must play a role in the selection of membership schools within both conferences.
[207] Included 10 member schools.

spatial reproduction. This was particularly visible in extracurricular activities, in which cultural capitals depended upon spatial mobility and convergence across the international school network. Thus when students travelled abroad to compete against other international schools, the role of their 'host nation' changed. Where expat students regularly distanced themselves from 'representing' their host nation, when abroad, this affiliation became a form of useful and coveted cultural capital. The next section shall illustrate this.

6.3.2 The Role of Sports at ISSG

Provided that all students at ISSG had to participate in an 'Activity' at some point to eventually fulfil their IB 'CAS' requirement, the school and wider international school network placed a large emphasis on after school activities and athletics programs. Sports competitions were therefore taken seriously, professionally officiated, took place in elite facilities, and scores and statistics were updated and publicized on the school website regularly for the community to read. Moreover, sport and sports tournaments were key 'fields' (Bourdieu, 1986b) where the school practiced, performed, and reinforced 'community' through 'inter-nationality' and elitism.

In May 2014, ISSG hosted the ISST Track and Field tournament, in which eleven international schools (225 students) travelled to the ISSG campus to compete. Students arrived by coach or by plane and were immediately delivered to the school campus to be picked up by their 'housing families' – in an identical fashion to the process described above in Vienna. The housing family, or 'houser', as explained to me in an interview with a Housing Coordinator is responsible for providing a bed, breakfast, a packed lunch, and dinner for visiting students, and it was a requirement for all students participating in ISSG sports or the arts to 'house' a student from another school at some point during the academic year. Most students participating in ASA programs at ISSG were expat students, as substantiated to me by both German and expat ISSG employees[208]. I was told the German students had the tendency to participate in the Sportverein network available closer to their places of residence (see Ralph's testimony in Chapter 5) for a variety of reasons. As one German community member told me, she did not want to get *"too sucked in"* to the school. However, I received mixed views on this matter – some German parents also felt that their children could "no longer relate" to German children their age, and for this reason participated in ASA[209]. Another young German student told me he belonged to a Sportverein elsewhere because he felt the ISSG football team was "not as good" as the one

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[208] This was also observed by Schwindt, 2003.
[209] This will be discussed in more detail in section 6.5.

available to him closer to his home. Others mentioned it was because of the distance. Many community members lived very far away and would rather participate in the Sportverein network closer to their homes. Therefore, visiting students were typically housed with expatriate families. The 'intercultural' exchange that was promoted within this international school circuit (online, in school magazines, etc.), thus took place amongst families who experienced comparable expatriate lifestyles.

While observing the housing process, I scribbled the word 'habitus' in my field notes. The ease at which this housing process and such exchanges occurred demonstrates the 'habitus' as expressed through a 'fish in water' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:127) feeling students were exhibiting when placed with another family in another country. They understood customs, social conventions, and how to communicate within this field. While they may have been physically mobile across national borders, the social and mental spaces of exchange are strikingly similar across the international school network. This is, in fact, what allows international schools to conduct these tournaments, and place their students with families at such ease. Prior to a few years ago, liability waivers were not even signed before students travelled with their teams within the network. The 'housing' process was relaxed, casual, and relatively informal. Moreover, the trust that was placed by parents on other international schools to deliver their children to housing families within the community is evidenced by the informal and undisputed nature of the housing system[210].

Upon the students' arrival, they were sent to the Housing Coordinator, who had organized the allocation of each student visitor to their 'housers'. The students arriving were wearing either business casual attire (a suit or a dress), or their international school track suits. The identical travel attire and smooth organisational routines indicated a well-rehearsed and shared practice between member schools. Most students also toted athletics (duffle) bags on which the name of their school and city in which their school was located were boldly displayed. The track suit jackets, and ultimately the uniforms for example, often displayed the city name, instead of the school name. Therefore, on these occasions students represented their identity as members of a team affiliated with a specific school and its location. The hosting schools often played on this idea – the ISSG community members, for example frequently referred to students as (for example), 'the Egyptians', 'the Parisian students', or just simply, 'team Brussels', in addition to using the actual school names This was particularly noticeable within the housing

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[210] I also see this as a safety issue that needs further addressing within the international school system more generally. During the time of this research, minimal regulatory measures were taken on school-related international travel involving the entrustment of housing families on ensuring students were regularly supervised, safe and attended to.

pick-up event, as families were asking the Housing Coordinator to locate their student visitors for them.

One particularly curious element of such practices and discourses was the varying interpretations of the distanced local exhibited within ISSG and the international school system during different curricular and extracurricular functions. ISSG was located approximately 50km away from the nearest city, however often promoted itself as affiliated within the urban local. Other international schools operated similarly, including the Vienna school mentioned above. This is likely due to the fact that advertising takes place on an international scale, and individuals abroad are more likely to identify a city, than a village or town. In other instances, locality in such sports competitions is also seen in reference to the wider 'national' – whereby community members began referring to themselves and others as 'the Germans' or 'the Greeks', for example.

These competitions were rare occasions when international school students collectively used national symbols of the host nation to construct a new form of school membership. In these events, students proudly waved the flags of their respective countries of residence. Where students may have not entirely *felt* 'German' or 'Austrian' through flag waving, they nonetheless constructed the event as 'inter-national' through such performances. In this way, new boundaries were produced around 'teams', which became units distinguishable from one another for the sake of sportive competition. Thus the flag as a symbol for 'nationhood' became replaced in this field as a symbol of the school. These rituals were formed by, and reinforced the global imaginary of the international school system.

The ISST event ran over a course of 2 days, in which students competed in both running and fielding events officiated by a professional company. Uniforms indicated either the name of the school or the city in which their international school was located. The ISSG track was framed by a series of national flags, arranged so that spectators in the bleachers observed a track lined with national symbols[211]. Flags are commonly used within international schools as a means to decorate, and promote the inter-nationality of the school. The presence of the flags also constructed the ISST tournament as an elite 'international' event – similar to the style of the Olympic Games. The students representing distant places, coupled with the flags, and the fact that the meet was being officiated by a professional company, all added to the practice of simulating an exclusive, 'international' sports tournament. Interestingly, one of the officials

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[211] The national flags outlining the track and field complex did not necessarily represent the nationalities of the students, or the host nations of the school teams partaking in this event. They were mounted as a permanent feature of the ISST facilities.

mentioned to me that he had never worked at a school event before in which students had the opportunity to use a facility of such high calibre.

Throughout the tournament, students 'performed' their association with 'their' host cities and countries through dress (e.g. sporting attire with the name and/or school colors of the host city), and symbols (e.g. carrying national flags, giving 'housing gifts' made in the host nation). Students were regularly asked by each international school Athletic Department to bring a 'housing gift' as a token of gratitude for their housing families upon arrival when abroad. It was often suggested that they bring gifts which traditionally originated from the country from which they were arriving. For example, a student from an international school in Austria brought her housing family a box of 'Mozartkugeln' – speciality chocolate from Salzburg.

Sport therefore also contributed to the construction of the international school brand, where pictures, videos and reflections were published for both community and public access.

Throughout the duration of the ISST event, the performance of school allegiance through symbols of the host nation in fact substantially contradicted practices I observed throughout the school year on the school campus. For example, one week prior to the track and field meet, the ISSG Frühlingsfest exhibited a culture of trivializing the local through strategies of internationalization (see Chapter 5). The ISST event, soon after, did precisely the opposite – that is, ISSG students sported uniforms displaying a local city name, some painted parts of their faces and arms black, red and gold, and most hosted visiting students also representing a host nationality as a token of identity. Individual nationality flags and representations of national background, as encouraged one week prior, were no longer called for, or for that matter, present. This demonstrates that representations of national belonging are used according to contexts in which international school community members see them as most beneficial.

When attending these tournaments, I rarely saw students of different 'national' teams interact. They congregated in various sections across the ISSG bleachers – leaving rows of the stands empty between them, and did not show much interest in socializing. Therefore, even though students had travelled across national borders for this encounter, it is questionable to what extent they were making 'intercultural' connections with each other. Instead, they displayed more of a loyalty to the team, and their host nations. When called up onto the podium to receive a medal, some students even brought national flags of their host nations. For example, medallists from the 'Cairo team' would drape the Egyptian national flag around their shoulders when approaching the podium and posing for pictures, thus imitating conventions exhibited at the Olympic Games. While they did so, the rest of their teammates would play Egyptian tabla

drums. This team, like the others, was able to strategically bring forward a normally 'shelved' form of cultural capital. It is what Bourdieu calls knowing the 'rules of the game'. Such performances can be also viewed as a form of mimicry – the strategic use of national identities and paraphernalia that the tournament encouraged. Not only was the 'internationality' of the event, or 'meeting of nations', understood and constructed through such practices, it was also dependent on them.

ISSG students also became athletic representatives of 'Germany' in other sports tournaments during the course of this study. In one case, the tennis team was photographed at a tennis tournament in Switzerland, where they competed against other international schools from around Europe. The photo showed students proudly displaying ISST medals around their necks, while collectively holding up the national flag of Germany. However, it was also intriguing that ISSG students did not wave the German flag during the 'home' ISSG tournament in Germany. It was brought out in the competition set in another country – emphasizing the discourse circulating international school communities of performing an affinity to *distant* geographies.

When multiple international schools congregate in such competitions, symbols are 'manipulated' in order to maintain the integrity of the community. Cohen argues:

> "The consciousness of community has to be kept alive through manipulation of its symbols. The reality and efficacy of the community's boundary – and, therefore of the community itself – depends upon its symbolic construction and embellishment" (1985:15)

In sports competitions, each individual international school loses its 'uniqueness' as being 'international' once placed amongst other institutions which employ similar orientations. Thus only in the context of several schools meeting could ISSG's 'Germanness' be used as a unifying symbol for its members and articulate a form of exclusivity and group spirit. Significantly, all school teams deployed the 'patriotism' to their host nation in a similar manner. At these tournaments, patriotism worked as both a symbol of distinction and a template for 'internationality'. The considerable funds spent on these student Olympiads showed that the organizers took them seriously as both educational and self-promotional tools.

This next section (6.3.2) examines how such tournaments constructed notions of exclusivity and elitism amongst ISSG members and within and across the international school network.

6.3.3 ASA and Elitism

When entering the school's gym facility, the visitor was greeted by a range of plaques of student athletic accomplishments, pictures, trophies and accolades posted on the walls. These accolades displayed the progression of the school's athletics program over the years and also documented the school records and awards granted to the school's gifted student athletes. In the middle of the wall display was a large, (1m x 1m) framed and signed jersey of the track and field star Usain Bolt under which he wrote the school's name. Lying over the top of the jersey was a piece of paper in which the autograph of the star was once again written, with the message: "For the wonderful [ISSG]". This framed piece was the focal point of the wall mural and worked to not only emphasize the school's social connectivity to elite athletics, but also placed ISSG athletes' accolades amongst an Olympic gold-medallist. The wall display articulated the exclusivity of the school through Usain Bolt's personalized message to ISSG, and also portrayed ISSG sports as elite and high-calibre.

The school's Athletic Department described sports at ISSG in the following manner:

> "Being fully integrated into the regional…sports system allows [ISSG] to frequently compete on a local level against [regional] teams. As a member of the SCIS and ISST sports organisations, the [ISSG] athletic teams attend and host high-level international school competitions in Europe throughout the year" (ISSG website, 2016).

Local competitions are here juxtaposed against 'international' competitions in relation to calibre – describing the international school competitions as 'high-level'. The level can refer to the quality of the facilities, or the quality of play – this is unclear in this statement. However, when looking at the quality of play between 2012 and 2016, ISSG teams did not necessarily perform consistently well against local teams, with the exception of basketball.

The elite self-image was also repeated in local media. In 2013, the team was described by a regional sports magazine as 'Eine (Schul)klasse für sich', in which the article describes the 2013 season success of the men's basketball squad, but also discusses the national backgrounds and future plans of the team members. The article therefore focuses beyond the sphere of sport, and portrays the ISSG team as a 'league' or 'class' of its own, in reference to their basketball performance, but also significantly, to their education and international mobility. The article states that after they graduate these students will 'go out into the world' for university study[212].

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[212] Direct quote: "Nach Abschluß des Abiturs werden diese Schüler in die Welt hinaus ziehen, um weiter an Universitäten zu studieren. Manche von ihnen werden vielleicht auf dem College in den USA weiter Basketball spielen oder in einem anderen Team Spaß am Dribbeln und Werfen haben" (Local Sports Paper, 2013).

The image the article portrays indicates how ISSG's exclusivity is illustrated by the public outside of the institution. The range of nationalities and cultural backgrounds of the team members was written about in a positive manner, and the fact that they would leave Germany was described as a form of romanticized globe-trotting. Public acknowledgement of the school as providing elite education, and talented athletes, reinforces the notion that the school's exceptionalism is coupled with its 'internationality'. Significantly, this article was later posted on the school website to promote its athletics program.

The power of international sport competitions in the production of national differences has been well-documented in sport literature[213]. In particular, the 'global' rhetoric of international sport illustrates the sector as being void of socio-political and sociocultural implications based on national differences. Rowe (2003) argues: "even if [the rhetoric of globalization's] dynamic impulses were more benign, sport's constant evocation of the nation as its anchor and rallying cry makes for an uneasy relation to globalization advocacy" (2003:287). At international schools, 'inter-national' tournaments produce practices which focus on difference based on participants' host nation – where schools assume a national identity. It is therefore unsurprising that I rarely saw student athletes interacting with fellow competitors from other teams, as they were practicing boundaries formed around a school 'nationhood'. The collective effort of performing nationalities together in these competitions is a form of 'banal nationalism' – "enabling the established nations of the West to be reproduced" (Billig, 1995). Such cultural practices reinforced a discourse of marking nationality as a significant feature of community life and belonging. The ISST track and field meet in 2014 at ISSG can be seen as an 'identity-based competition', or "romanticizing the nation as an inherently virtuous bearer of positive human values" (Rowe, 2003).

Another example of how the school is illustrated in the local media comes from the school tennis team. This team travelled internationally to compete, like all the sports teams at ISSG. The ISSG tennis team was coached by a local, privately-owned tennis school in the area. This tennis school's website regularly posted small articles about the ISSG tennis team, likely as a means to promote the business. The image from Figure 6.4 was taken from this website – whereby the students, as they often did, posed with a German flag after a successful international school tournament. Other images showed students posing with medals in their mouths, mirroring Olympic Games medallists, and also practices I had witnessed at the track and field ISSG tournament. This tennis competition, which took place on another international school campus involving five international schools, was illustrated, documented, and promoted online

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[213] See, for example, Rowe (2003); Hunter (2003); Hargreaves (2003).

as a high-calibre, 'international' tournament. The documentation of the event involved rhetoric which mirrors that of articles about world championships and Olympians - aiding in the production of the school's reputation as elite, exclusive, and also significantly, high-performing. The report began as follows:

> "[ISSG] gewann ISST, den Wettbewerb der Internationalen Schulen in Europa. Es waren 5 Schulen aus 5 Ländern am Start – Zürich, London, The Hague, Paris und [ISSG[214]], nachdem Brüssel kurzfristig aufgrund [von] Flughafenproblemen nicht anreisen konnte…[Der] erste Vergleichskampf aufwärts gegen Wien wurde ganz klar gewonnen, gegen Zürich zu Hause war es bedeutend schwerer…"[215] (Tennis School website, 2016).

The article speaks of the schools by referring to the nearest city in which they were located – which suggests they represented the city for this particular sport. While this discourse is heavily present within international schools, the tennis school may have continued it for local exposure and its own market-driven image. The ISSG tennis team did not play local teams in their season; however it was nonetheless portrayed as representing the large nearby host city, and sometimes even the host country, in 'international' sporting competitions.

The exclusivity of such 'international' events is maintained through the international school network's boundary reinforcement. Both participants and observers at the ISSG track and field meet, for example, were exclusively community members (with the exception of the professional officials). In fact, these boundaries were tested on the final day of the event, where it was discovered by an ISSG 'housing' family that one of the teams had included athletes who were not all international school students). It was reported, and the team was disqualified. Most importantly, the response in the stadium, where I was sitting, was very negative – observers using words like, 'scandal' and 'violation', and saying, 'someone needs to be fired' to describe the situation. In this particular instance, I felt the closeness of the wider international school community as a whole.

Many parents attending these events had travelled separately (and internationally) to attend their child(ren)'s event. The exclusivity and isolation of the international school network was highlighted by my casual conversations with parents in the bleachers. I did not get the sense that these mothers were necessarily overly ambitious, or competitive. Rather, it seemed as though they travelled to the events in small groups (with their friends) as a social activity with

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[214] City name omitted here for purposes of anonymity.

[215] '[ISSG] won ISST, the competition for international schools in Europe. There were five schools left from five different countries – Zurich, London, The Hague, Paris and [ISSG], after Brussels was unable to attend in the last minute due to issues at the airport. The first match against Vienna was an outright win; however the match against the home team, Zurich, was significantly more difficult'.

other mothers who shared a mutual interest in travel and also to support their children. Many parents knew of students from other teams through their own relocation experiences between international schools. Moreover, in one day, I met three separate expatriate mothers (from different teams) in the bleachers, who had each separately and individually told me that they had moved to their respective host countries as expats, and then later became employed by the respective international school. This appears to be a trend within the larger international school circuit – mothers become involved either through volunteering or actual employment, as the international school scene is perceived as one of the most easily accessible communities for incoming expatriates. The involvement in international school activities (both curricular and extracurricular) for expatriates is therefore high, and impacts the construction and maintenance of 'community' as well.

This next section discusses the spatial dynamics experienced by expatriate parents of international school children. Of particular focus here are ISSG's expatriate mothers, for the reason that they were the largest adult demographic that was actively involved with school-related activities and events. As will be discussed below, sport was also a popular practice of social networking and community building for ISSG parents.

6.4 SPATIAL BOUNDARIES AND ISSG'S EXPATRIATE MOTHERS

After spending some time getting to know some of the PTO women in June, 2013, I was invited to a 'Women's Night Out'. This particular group comprised approximately 12 British and American mothers who had met during ISSG's 'Ski Saturdays' and had since become friends. 'Ski Saturdays' was established by a faculty member of the school, who organized the program as a 'side business' geared to connect the ISSG community and *"[get] families through the long [German] winters and [do] something that's fun"* (Interview. June, 2013). Each year, there were approximately 200 members, who carpooled together on buses ordered specifically for the weekly event. In Garmisch, they would break off into ski groups according to level, and would spend the day skiing, returning on the same buses later on. All ski instructors delivered their lessons in English.

The evening began at an Indian restaurant downtown, which was often frequented by ISSG community members. Over dinner, the women conducted a range of small discussions about their lives as expatriates in Germany. Conversations began after one of the women attempted to order her food in German. They began talking about their frustrations learning the language. Some said that they had originally attempted to learn it, but found it too difficult and

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consequently gave up; others felt they had no need to learn it, as it was likely they would be moving again soon. One mother said that she preferred to continue Russian lessons because she had put the effort in while living in Russia, and did not want her work to be in vain. During the dinner, the women provided empathy, and understanding for each other's stories and confessions – a demonstration of collective thought based on shared experiences. Eventually, all agreed that the 'unfriendliness' of 'Germans' turned them off language learning. After a series of funny, sad, uplifting and disheartening discussions about life in Germany, we left for an exclusive bar down the street. The cover charge was approximately 50 euros per person, there was a 'smart' dress code which prohibited streetwear (sneakers, jeans, etc.), and when we arrived, the queue wrapped around the building. However it turned out that these women had a connection to the bar management, as we were able to walk straight in, with a glass of champagne handed to each of us upon entry.

While it remained unclear to me whether one of the women had pre-paid – we were treated as exclusive clientele. Some of my companions were wearing cargo pants, tennis shoes – casual attire, thus 'violating' the dress code, but no one seemed to care. Staff addressed them in English. As the night went on, I got the opportunity to speak to each woman individually – learning more about the gendered experience as a 'trailing spouse'. Shared themes and sentiments came to the fore: resentment and frustration towards husbands for receiving little support or acknowledgement for their efforts to function in a foreign country, and often having to act as a 'single parent' while the spouse was absent or travelling for work. Each woman was very keen to open up to me – to tell me their story, to have a voice, or perhaps to receive reassurance. Many asked me if it would become easier, or if their children would feel resentment towards them later on in life for bringing them to a foreign country. These conversations and anxious queries made visible that behind the wealth and exclusivity these women often portrayed outwardly, they were individuals undergoing a difficult process as immigrants and 'trailing' wives.

The dynamic I witnessed during this night and ultimately elsewhere in the community, was that expatriate mothers generally exuded confidence, exclusivity and independence as a group. Local businesses tailored their services to the needs of the group: they spoke English and bent policies and/or rules to gain their patronage. However, as individuals, the women described experiences of vulnerability, feelings of incompetence, frustration, isolation, and dependency on their husbands and the school. They brought home to me that the school community was an important resource of support and sociability which allowed them to navigate spaces outside of the school with relative ease. This would provide an explanation for why expat mothers in

particular actively participated in ISSG-organized excursions and activities (e.g. Ski Saturdays, PTO, and 'adult recreation leagues').

The following section further explores the lives of ISSG expatriate mothers and the reproduction of borders and spaces of exchange within the host nation. It also aims to highlight the role of the school and the social imaginary of the community in the residential lives of expatriate families.

6.4.1. Expat Transitions into ISSG

The experience of ISSG often begins, in fact, long before the expat's relocation to Germany. Bi-annually, the ISSG PTO reached out to families which intended to relocate to Germany from abroad. By doing this, they established an informal point of contact for anyone with questions or concerns prior to arrival. They offered tips on how to find a home or how to register with authorities. Many of the PTO women I interviewed stated that they had been contacted by PTO members prior to arriving, and this had ultimately incentivized them to become involved with the organization themselves. The PTO therefore acted to an extent as a cultural broker of the host nation in the minds of the incoming families.

In 2013 I met with Mariel, the PTO president at the time, who gave me a tour of the school's 'stash' of materials for incoming families. She led me to a large storage room in the cellar of one of the schools, where there were large shelves with brochures, pamphlets, ISSG T-shirts, coffee mugs, key chains, and pens (among other paraphernalia) that were passed out to incoming families. We stood in the storage room discussing how these materials were used to help families make the transition into the region. One of the main, regularly distributed resources of information was a school magazine which offered advice to incoming families. It featured business adverts for English-speaking, and British/American/Australian credentialed healthcare professionals including: 'British-trained' paediatricians, 'Australian dentists', and 'British Personal Trainers'. Moreover, the PTO provided the relevant information about Germany, including particular resources, services, suggestions, and written accounts about the country and its people prior to and after arrival during a 'New Families Orientation'. Mariel explained that during this orientation, new parents were introduced to the organization's social groups, networks and activities, and received English-medium[216] pamphlets about the local region – including a 100-page handbook, 'Facts at your fingertips: a quick guide to your new environment'. This handbook was provided to all new expatriate families at ISSG. Described as

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[216] I did not see any pamphlets written in languages other than English and German.

an "orientation manual for the [area]" (ISSSG Handbook, 2007), it had been authored by a coalition of international school parent teacher organizations in the region, including ISSG. The Handbook covers a wide range of topics including, 'Housing', 'Schools', 'Health', 'Around the House' (appliances, waste and recycling, etc.), 'Driving and Public Transportation', 'Shopping', 'Reaching Out' (churches, clubs, sports, etc.), 'Leisure' (entertainment, language schools, festivals, etc.) and 'Literature'. The Handbook paints a general picture of the obstacles expatriates will face, and introduces them to the region with facts, statistics, images, and links to useful websites.

The edition available during my fieldwork made a series of statements about Germany and 'Germans', using an us/them lexis. Such representations labelled 'Germans' as a separate category to the reader, and as distinctly outside the boundaries of the school community. The following passage provides an illustrative example:

> "Germans do not take or give compliments easily. They are very outspoken about giving their opinions, sometimes in a rather blunt or seemingly rude way. The Bavarians are known for their peevishness *(granteln)* and may give you the impression that they are in a bad mood. Do not be affronted; make a retorting joke, as they do, in fact, have a lot of humor" (ISSG Handbook, 2007:44, original emphasis included).

This extract identifies a number of boundaries the international communities in this region have constructed. As a manual distributed by an educational institution, the reader is likely to assume that the unfavourable depictions are objective and true. The passage also speaks to a number of stereotypes that circulated among the expatriate community of the school. This included the perception that the Germans were unfriendly, and had no sense of humour. The handbook did not only reproduce these discourses and cast the Germans as distinctly different to the expatriates, it also assumed a shared cultural code among the readership about what is considered to be 'humorous', 'rude', and 'blunt'.

The content of the Handbook passage is remarkably similar to themes discussed in the Women's Night Out, described above. Moreover, similar sentiments were strikingly frequent in my interviews with expatriates, including:

> *"the culture here is not innately friendly, it's just not, and you're kind of blown away by that"* (Cathy, June 2013).

> *"it's the attitude, very cut and dry, black or white. There's no optimistic window or alternative. I know I'm just generalizing, but just something I struggle with is that I find that here you have to be perfect. If you're not perfect – if you're driving and you have to*

slow down because you simply can't find the bank – the tiny little bank – and you're not
familiar with the tiny little 'Ort', people are gesturing to you, signs that you're crazy, if
you do something that's not 100 per cent EFFICIENT there's no tolerance. I struggle with
that" (Chloe, March 2013)

Daily routines, such as driving and shopping in Germany were often described in a similar fashion by ISSG expatriates. ISSG mothers were often the ones in charge of navigating German society while their husbands worked. Mothers ran most of the household-related errands, which often involved a degree of engagement with 'Germans'. These exchanges were frequently shared and discussed when mothers socialized (particularly in the PTO) – reiterating moments during which they were made to feel vulnerable or embarrassed in German society. These negative sentiments towards 'Germans' did play a role in expat perceptions towards 'Germans' attending ISSG.

Expatriates often claimed that they had sought socialization opportunities through the school after integration attempts into the German world had 'failed'. This struggle was expressed to me by Mariel, who was a PTO member and a part of this group of women from 'Ski Saturdays':

"So first of all, I moved here in January. So that was already a big challenge because I had
moved in the middle of the school year. Then I attended the PTO coffee mornings and
that was very helpful, I got lots of good information, but my goal at the time was to
really concentrate and focus on my German lessons, which helped me a lot, to get by.
Not to just feel isolated. I wanted to engage with the [ISSG] community, but equally I
wanted to experience Bavaria and really, you know, be in touch with Germans and such.
So that was, you know, my initial goal. But then after the first month had gone by, I had
decided that I had to come to the school more often to meet more people, because I was
not getting to know many people outside the [ISSG] school. You know I would be trying to
speak very little German when I was going shopping, or out and about, however after the
first month had gone, I thought, 'okay, I really need to make an effort to go to the school'
and that's where I met most of my friends who were really [coming from a place where] I
came from. So I guess that was the challenge. You know the initial – (pause) *I had this*
anticipation that I would be okay just attending German lessons and venturing out there
and when the reality came after one month I thought, 'I'm feeling isolated, I need to go

maybe to the school to get to know other parents. They're going through the same situation as myself" (June, 2013)[217].

Mariel's testimony reveals, what appears to be, a very common experience for new-coming expatriate mothers. It mirrors what was expressed during the Women's Night Out, during which all of the mothers expressed that they had originally tried to learn German, and to become more socially active in their residential areas. However all agreed that it had been too difficult. Mariel described to me how she had attended PTO meetings upon arrival, but was determined to learn German and establish a social network outside of the school.

It seems as though the initial reaction to international relocation was to learn the language and meet host nationals. However, the school offered an enticing form of retreat for those who later found the host society inaccessible – mirroring a similar dynamic experienced by students involved in the CAS program described in 6.2.3. The PTO was also an attractive option, as it enabled an instantaneous social network based on shared linguistic or social experiences. More significantly, it enabled members to experience the host nation in a group setting.

Mariel explained that the PTO arranged outings for its expatriates, such as city tours, ski trips conducted in English, cross-cultural seminars about Germans and Germany in English and Oktoberfest outings:

"We also provide a dirndl shopping trip. So if you haven't had the opportunity to buy a dirndl it's a great opportunity to go and buy a dirndl or lederhosen and you know, new moms feel like, 'Okay! Now I belong to Bavaria!' (laughs)*"* (June, 2013).

The notion of 'belonging' plays a strong role in international school communities, which often is expressed through the performance of national representation based on cultural heritage (e.g. dressing up in traditional costumes, as seen in Chapter 5). For internationally-mobile families, a sense of belonging has been claimed to be one of the most problematic factors of the nomadic lifestyle[218]. As seen, a common initial response from mothers to relocation is a desire to establish a sense of belonging in the host nation. The dirndl shopping trip was, as Mariel pointed out, a symbolic gesture towards establishing an initial form of connectivity to the region. While the PTO undoubtedly acknowledged the need for mothers to feel a sense of 'belonging' to their new country of residence by organizing a series of excursions and activities, they eventually faded into becoming increasingly more isolated occurrences. Moreover, these activities seemed to be

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[217] Published in Meyer, 2015.
[218] See for example, Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Grimshaw & Sears, 2008; Pearce, 1998; 2011; and Sears, 2011.

regularly offered (e.g. the same city tour, the same dirndl outlet, etc.) during particular times of year to accommodate new members only – running mostly in late-August and September.

Such functions which are annually repeated serve as rituals which allow for the formation of in-groupings. These groups selectively consume symbols and icons of 'local culture' through ritualized practices, as a means to establish connectivity to their host nation and manage their lives as expats. Cohen (1985) provides a very relevant explanation for such rituals, arguing that they work to mask the unfamiliar as familiar:

> "In all these forms of symbolism – and, especially, ritual – is the mechanism which bridges the gap. The disruption caused by social change might be seen as a particular instance of the disjunction between the ideal and the actual: one in which the ideal takes the guise of the 'familiar', and actuality appears as the unfamiliar and, therefore, the feared and/or resented. Here, too, symbolic forms can massage away the tension" (1985:92).

The social change experienced by newly arriving expatriates to ISSG helps form rituals such as dirndl shopping as a means to produce group cohesion through the shared consumption of local exotica. Dressing up in regional costumes and attending cultural events, like the Oktoberfest together, work to potentially ease the tensions[219] experienced between social spaces. Moreover, those participating in symbolic practices like rituals construct their own individual meanings from the same event (Cohen, 1985) – therefore, where dirndl shopping for Mariel was based on establishing connectivity to the host country, for others, it may be about establishing bonds with the in-group through a shared practice.

Once social networks had been established through these initiation exercises, and the formation of nationality, area, and grade groups had occurred, ISSG expatriates tended to partake in community events which took place on campus, such as the Frühlingsfest and Winterfest. Participation in these groups led to other activities within the school community. Chloe, a former 'adult recreation league' organizer explained:

> *"That year there had been an influx of new parents that came to the school and these new parents joined this tennis group to meet other parents and so it happened that they got to know each other because their kids were all in the same classes and they also got involved with Ski Saturdays. Many of them actually met on the Ski Saturday bus and then learned that they were also playing tennis, so that's how these groups started"* (March, 2013).

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[219] For more on this see Gluckman, 1952.

The school plays a significant role in the construction of social groups and boundaries and reproduction of the social imaginary of the community. The 'adult recreation league' was a significant contributor to the 'threshold' (Hernes, 2004a) of the community's physical, social and mental boundaries. It brought groups of members to a number of recreational locales in the immediate area, facilitated social networks and allowed for them to bond through shared experiences. The adult recreation league was exclusively run for current and former fee-paying members.

During my fieldwork, I became very interested in the adult recreation leagues which were run through the school's Sportverein, after discovering the importance of sport in the community. I found it was one of the only arenas in which husbands played more of a visible role in the school community. Tennis and skiing were the most popular recreational activities for expatriate parents. The ISSG Sportverein facilitated these activities with a private racquet club in the neighbouring town (the ISSG campus did not have indoor tennis courts), and encouraged fee-paying members to join as a social activity. While many of the recreational activities for ISSG adults were conducted off-campus, the group of participants played strictly amongst themselves. Although German law requires all Sportvereine to be open to the public, ISSG had established a number of physical boundaries to circumvent this regulation. First, the Sportverein membership page on the ISSG website was solely available via an ISSG-issued password and username. It also technically allowed non-tuition paying individuals to participate, however did not grant them voting rights in the club, charged them, and did not allow non-fee-paying persons to participate for the reason that the ASA network of international schools was reserved only for fee-paying members. This regulation was brought up in the aforementioned ISST track and field incident, whereby it was discovered that one school team had comprised both fee-paying and non-fee-paying student athletes.

The Sportverein also hosted a number of former students and parents, who had continued to maintain their social networks through this medium long after tuition-paying membership ended. This is an example of how social ties are maintained, and the social imaginary is reproduced beyond the years of active membership. While the Sportverein at ISSG had former school community members, it did not have any 'outside' members of the general public. This reinforced the exclusivity of the community, and the longevity of international school community membership. It also evidences the role the school had for expats who had permanently settled in the region. Chloe, a former tuition-paying member explained this to me in an interview:

> *"When my children were attending the school, I was very involved in all of the programs of the school and doing volunteer work on campus and getting involved in these adult groups and German speaking class. I knew quite a few people from the school. I felt very engaged…I have some friends that are now alumni, friends that are teachers and administrative staff, but what really got me engaged with the today-and-now community was when my husband and I joined the Ski Saturdays and I was able to sit on the bus and able to take ski lessons every week with the parents"* (March, 2013).

She mentioned the role of the Sportverein and Ski Saturdays, which re-established a social network after her children graduated. Conversely, when I asked her if she had been able to establish any social networks over the past twenty years with the host society, she responded:

> *I have difficulty integrating. I have a familiarity, yes, I know where I am going. I have my driver's license that I got over ten years ago, I know the rules of the road that I wouldn't know otherwise, but as far as being able to communicate effectively – I have difficulty with language. I think I would be very interested in joining a local Sportverein if I could speak the language. I don't have anyone I can nudge and say, 'could you translate that for me?' I really suffer from not understanding. Language is the only reason why I don't do it* (March, 2013).

Chloe had established English speaking social networks through the school's Sportverein, and was visibly concerned with creating social ties outside of the school community. She mentioned that she was *"lonely and a little bored"* in our interview, arguing that she felt uncomfortable at times, participating in the school's Sportverein, where the majority of members were young parents – some even twenty years younger than she was. Still, the school provided a safe and familiar social outlet where she could participate in local events and functions (such as the Oktoberfest) in a group. It was common for my participants, like Chloe, to express the desire to become more involved in their residential area, but that it was largely inaccessible due to language barriers and school-related commitments. Chloe also mentioned loneliness – thus enhancing a sentiment that many of my adult female participants mentioned in interviews. Most of the women, particularly those in the Women's Night Out admitted that they had given up very successful careers (e.g. a law practice, a teaching career, a top position in a fortune-500 company, a medical practice) to enable their husbands to accept a position abroad[220] and to further their careers.

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[220] See similar observations in Kurotani, 2007; Fechter, 2007b; Yeoh & Willis, 2005.

The position for expatriate women seemed to be a difficult balance: On one hand, the school provided a quick avenue to meet people, however on the other hand, the isolation of the school community further reinforced boundaries and prolonged the process of 'integration' many members sought. Moreover, the school did not provide much help or aid in confronting such borders. I asked around, innumerable times, if the school provided language[221] and transition classes for adults. While administrators, teachers and staff all admitted that the school 'needed to do more', it did not necessarily seem to be a 'pressing' issue. This was surprising, considering the high frequency at which community members disclosed their discomfort and distress in not knowing German. The school's role in helping mothers integrate into the school's community impacted their integration into the host society.

One conversation that stood out to me was with an American mother of two children in the elementary school. She was telling me about how the school recommended her to a neighbourhood with 'lots of Americans' by the school, under the supposition that this was something that she had wanted. She told me that while it was a positive moving experience in the beginning – having neighbours from the same cultural and language background as her family – she was finding it increasingly frustrating to practice German and become involved in the German environment. The role of the school in the residential lives of expat families was therefore significant, even though in cases like this one, not entirely welcomed.

However for other expatriate mothers, social networking through the school was a significant factor of the internationally-mobile experience. Without these ties, school counsellor Cathy argued, children were likely to become distressed on seeing their mother unhappy:

> *If the spouse is not working, they usually have had to give up their job to come here, and it's in a foreign country and doesn't speak the language. There's no support system, and they've left all their friends behind. It's somewhat of an ignored group. And it still is. And it's often unfortunately the moms, who have left their professions behind, so it doesn't always happen like that, but that can be a real key factor in causing real issues for the kids. So it's moms and their children, and if the mom is unhappy, the kids are unhappy…we tend to think the child is angry about coming, doesn't want to be here, because they don't like Germany, they don't like taking German, things like that. So you can put all those pieces together and find out what's really happening at home* (June, 2013).

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[221] The school did not provide German or English language lessons for adult members.

Cathy was suggesting that the students would see their mother upset about life in Germany at home, which they then mirrored at school through behavioural issues, or exhibiting reluctance to attend German lessons. It seems, however, that expatriate mothers, who partook in socialization activities through the ISSG Sportverein or PTO, became increasingly integrated into school community life, as one student told me:

> My dad lived here two years before we moved here. So eventually we moved and my mom had to give up her job that she really loved and the first few months she hated it here, and just was not happy. But then she started to talk to a few moms in the school, and now she's the British Rep[222] at the school and really involved (June, 2014).

This statement from a high school student demonstrates that children were sensitive to their mother's well-being in the foreign country. This student believed that the PTO changed his mother's perspective on Germany by involving her in one of its support groups for British nationals.

Actively engaged mothers in the ISSG community however nonetheless perceived their difficulties navigating the host society, language and culture as an on-going 'problem', despite their social networks acquired at the school. It is important to note that while expats create social bonds with each other, they still remained foreign residents in German society. Therefore, the reliance on the institution for socialization was particularly problematic for parents whose children had already graduated from the school.

While spaces develop and reproduce over time (Hernes, 2004a), ISSG expatriates may still have found themselves constrained by physical, social and mental boundaries in their daily lives. The school operated as a gatekeeper – providing pathways for expatriate mothers to experience the host country through the school's social expatriate network, and in turn creating experiences and perspectives of the host society through an 'outsider' lens. An example of this is the weekly ski trips, whereby expatriates relied on the school to create the experience for them. The ski trips produced physical boundaries, in the sense that members were picked up in ISSG-marked buses, and organized ski lessons in English. This is significant, as it minimized potential vulnerabilities such as language barriers. The program also successfully constructed strong social boundaries between the school community and the 'outside', as the practices of physically isolating the community during such trips regulated the extent to which the expatriates were engaging with the German and Austrian public. Finally, these physical and social boundaries

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[222] British Nationality Representative. This position is a part of the socialization program of the PTO. Each month, the Nationality Representatives hold morning coffees designed for varying nationality groups.

constructed cognitive or mental boundaries, as the weekly trips reaffirmed the 'us' and 'them' discourses already present within the school. The habits, rituals and customs the weekly excursions established reinforced the boundaries of the community. An example is the naming of the buses, and the 'groupism' (Brubaker, 2002) involved with this – the 'Spanish-Speaking Bus' for example, each established strong physical, social and mental boundaries to reaffirm a sense of belonging and affinity not only to the school, but to the individual bus groups as well.

The school's involvement in the management of such excursions to the 'outside' plays a significant role in the reinforcement of community and the maintenance of the social imaginary produced within it. As Cohen (1985) points out:

> "The triumph of community is to so contain this variety that its inherent discordance does not subvert the apparent coherence which is expressed by its boundaries. If the members of a community come to feel that they have less in common with each other than they have with the members of some other community then, clearly, the boundaries have become anomalous and the integrity of the 'community' they enclose has been severely impugned" (Cohen, 1985:20).

The isolationism the school produced through the regulation of its expats' extracurricular life is crucial to the maintenance of its boundaries and, ultimately, its community. While ISSG often dedicated a significant amount of effort to create regulated extracurricular opportunities for expats, it did not provide adult German language lessons, or transition programs to help members 'integrate' into society. This strategy, I argue, strengthens a sense of community and mutual identification.

The boundaries of the ISSG community were experienced differently by German nationals, who, for example, did not partake in such events to the same extent as their expatriate counterparts. The presence of Germans at ISSG produced pressures on the community's global imaginary. The fact that 'local' German nationals were able to traverse boundaries with more ease, seemed to threaten the foundation of the 'global' institutional network and its community of expatriates.

6.5 SPATIAL BOUNDARIES AND GERMAN PARENTS

In June 2012, the town in which ISSG was located celebrated its 100 year anniversary by organizing a large parade involving "just about everyone and everything that belongs to the city" (Local City Newspaper in Southern Germany, 2012). It included sports clubs, schools, businesses,

the fire brigade, theatre groups, and music bands. Nearly 6000 people were involved on the day of the event, in which a series of concerts, performers, eateries, and dance floors graced the streets of the town. Poignant for 'Beate', a German administrator at ISSG, was that ISSG was not invited to the event. *"All local schools participated. Why did no one ask us?"* (June, 2013).

She explained that her son would have received his tuition paid for by the school, due to her position as an administrator[223]. However, she declined it, because she did not like how ISSG was regarded locally, and she did not want her son too far removed from life in the town. Rather, she was convinced that ISSG distanced its community members from the local town, using the example of the parade, which she perceived as a disservice to its members: *"It's not linked to the public community"* (June, 2013). She told me that she used to see the *"big [ISSG] buses"* enter the town, and that there was a local stigma against the school's exclusivity.

Beate raised an issue that was expressed to me by a number of German members at ISSG. They argued that while the school offered an international education, it steadily removed its members from the locality. This was expressed as problematic for some parents, particularly those who wanted their children to remain in Germany after graduating from ISSG. Another one of my participants, 'Veronika', expressed a similar sentiment regarding her two children attending primary school at ISSG. At the time, she was in the process of deliberating whether she should remove them from the school, because they had no 'local' friends. She found this particularly problematic, as an alumna of the school herself, because she claimed that after graduation, all of her friends left for universities and/or careers outside of Germany, and she had been left *"without any connectivity to [the town] and without any friends"* (March, 2013). One year later, I was told that Veronika had indeed removed her children from ISSG.

At the time of Veronika's graduation from ISSG (circa 1998), the International Baccalaureate had not been widely accepted by German universities. For this reason, her classmates were pushed to attend universities in the U.S. or the U.K., where the IB was accepted as a qualification. Currently however, the IB is accepted at most German universities. Still, many students expressed fear that their German language skills were not good enough for German universities, and opted for university careers outside of the country. In fact, ISSG's Annual Report (2014) documented 86% of its graduates were set to attend universities outside of Germany[224],

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[223] Beate explained that children of full-time employees at ISSG were granted tuition-free admission to the school.

[224] USA: 32%; UK: 24%; Canada: 8%; Switzerland: 2%; Poland: 2%; Denmark: 2%; Spain: 4%; Sweden: 6%; Netherlands: 6%; Germany: 14%.

while 14% had been admitted onto university programs in Germany. However, out of the four German universities listed[225], two were English-medium, private institutions.

In another conversation I had with a German mother, she mentioned that she had enrolled her children in the ISSG elementary school, but was planning on sending them to a German-medium school once they reached 5th grade. She felt that ISSG's elementary school program was more 'positive' and 'colorful' than German schools. However, like Veronika, she believed the isolation would later negatively impact her children's relationship to local society and culture.

Interestingly, during my fieldwork, I also met a number of adults who had attended international schools as host national children, but had been pulled out of the international school by their parents out of fear that they were too isolated and losing their L1 language abilities. These informal testimonies mirrored what I had been hearing from concerned German parents at ISSG.

It is important to note however, that I also received a number of contrasting perceptions from German mothers, including Heike, who mentioned that she was proud that her children were a part of the 'international' community, and did not feel particularly attached to their hometown. She mentioned that one of her daughters was studying in Italy and the other was headed to the U.S. to begin her studies the following year. She wanted her children to experience an 'international life', and, for this reason, had pulled her daughters out of the German public school system when they were young.

German students on their part seemed to be acutely aware of the cultural capital that was affiliated with international mobility in this school. The discourse of the inadequacy of the 'local' was felt by some, as articulated by my participant Antonia, a German high school student at ISSG:

> *"I get sick of being [in Germany]. I really want to leave. Especially going to an international school you hear so many people who have been to so many places. And I say, 'well, when I was a baby I lived in [one German city nearby] and then I moved here [to another German city nearby], so it's not that special. And everyone is always talking about the places all over the world and everyone has been everywhere. It's just so nice to hear where they've all been and so I really want to do that too"* (June, 2014)[226].

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[225] Technische Universität München, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Jacobs University Bremen, WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management.
[226] Published in H. Meyer, 2015.

Antonia could hardly wait to compile her own repertoire of international experiences – comparing her sedentary life with what she perceived as more glamorous, expat experiences. Her response illustrated well the prestige associated with international mobility and 'nomadic lifestyles' across campus.

Returning to Hernes' (2004a) conceptual framework on physical, social and mental spaces, host nationals exhibited a slightly different dynamic of spatial mobility than many of their expatriate counterparts. The physical boundaries were less defined by obstacles such as language barriers, where their 'threshold' was arguably weaker. Thus host nationals exhibited the facilities to mobilize between planes physically, socially and mentally. That being said, the spaces reproduced by the international school added to the dimensions host nationals had to traverse – the field was wider, and choices were made accordingly. Veronika, for example, chose to navigate the host society as a means to establish local networks for her children. Heike, conversely, chose to focus on establishing networks within the 'international' community – creating pathways for her children to experience an 'international' life.

Boundaries are essential to the reproduction of the social imaginary of any community, and those that 'test' the boundaries threaten the grounds of its construction. International school community membership employs a series of obstacles for host nationals as they navigate the range of spaces that are available to them. German nationals, in general, were able to test these boundaries through an ability to traverse between spaces. They were not reliant on the school community for the establishment of social networks or for negotiating physical mobility within the host nation, and possessed the cultural 'know-how' to access resources outside of the international school network.

6.6 CONCLUSION

ISSG community members operated within a network of interconnected spaces that influenced physical, social and mental mobility across and within their boundaries. These boundaries are areas of tension – particularly between spaces in which the 'global' and the 'local' collided and intersected. To answer the question of the extent to which community was practiced and institutionally regulated in other spaces, I examined arenas in which members engaged, or potentially could engage with their host society, language and/or culture. These marginal spaces, following Steger (2009), underscore the centrality of 'the local' in the construction of the community's global imaginary. In fact, the international school system is reliant, to an extent, on constructing boundaries between its communities and host societies, for

the reason that it must remain 'exclusive' and retain its global market. The isolation and insulation in relation to the host society was experienced by students, faculty, parents and staff of ISSG.

The 'marginal' spaces discussed in this chapter were instrumental in the construction of the exclusivity of the school. They were complex and contextually situated: Where for example connectivity to distant geographies (as specifically opposed to locality) was celebrated in the school curricula (e.g. CAS and learning through international travel), during sports competitions, the 'local', or 'home' became the primary marker of community membership. These contradictions of the national paradigm created, in both cases, the same spectacle of 'internationality', group cohesion and exclusivity.

Students experienced tensions within the ISSG curriculum, whereby the school's global orientation constructed boundaries which significantly impacted their acquisition of cultural and linguistic knowledge of their host society and culture. Physical, social and mental boundaries were produced which furthered mobility within the international school system, but less so across them. In this chapter, I discussed the de-emphasis on German language instruction and other German-related cultural fieldtrips in light of granting more 'international' or 'globally-oriented' ones. The value placed on community, and international mobility via the school network and its affiliates was particularly emphasized in the school's CAS program. Students regularly opted for projects which were conducted on the school campus, which prevented physical, social and cognitive movement across institutional borders. Moreover, due to the promotion of international travel and the cultural attractiveness of distant geographies as particularly important for accruing cultural capital within the school, students oftentimes exhibited preference for conducting a Service project on another continent over one conducted locally.

The emphasis on 'distant geographies' also informs the school's strategies of isolationism and its global imaginary. If cultural capital is continually placed on distant geographies within the global imaginary of the school, traversing across physical, social and mental boundaries involving the host nation is deemed unnecessary and even irrelevant. Rather, this isolationist strategy enhances the community's exclusivity.

International school sports tournaments were promoted as offering students an opportunity for intercultural engagement through sport and travel. As seen throughout this thesis, performances of national belonging are commonplace within the international school system, and impose a social 'logic' based on the cultural capital attributed to particular language

competences and specific forms of cultural knowledge. However notably, when students travel within the system for sporting competitions, this method of hierarchization is momentarily curbed. Students understand that their individual national and linguistic backgrounds have little cultural value in these spaces, and that they will need to draw on the nationality of their host nation as a symbol of commonality.

Such performances of 'inter-nationality', coupled with the extravagant facilities in which international school tournaments take place, also mark out these events as particularly exclusive, elite, and high-calibre. This exclusivity is a significant attribute of the global imaginary. Moreover, the exclusivity of these competitions further reinforced the boundaries and isolationism of the international school community in relation to its host nation. ISSG, for example, hosted the ISST tournament on its elaborate track and field facility, which was closed to the public for both participation and spectating. In fact, the top-end facilities were closed to the public throughout the academic year.

ISSG parents were also affected by their child(ren)'s mobility and connectivity to the host nation. Parents at ISSG typically car-pooled or travelled to competitions to see their child(ren) compete, and therefore became strongly integrated in the after-school activities program as well. I often saw groups of parents gathered together in the bleachers to watch their children perform. Spectating therefore also reinforced community friendships and provided socialization opportunities for parents. Like their children however, they did not seem to engage with other parents from other schools.

As seen, the school enabled parents – particularly mothers – to partake in a social network which was similarly constructed through boundaries based on the global imaginary of the community and school. While all my expatriate interviewees expressed an original desire to attain the cultural knowledge and skills to effectively navigate the host society, they each ended up seeking socialization opportunities through ISSG to curb feelings of loneliness and vulnerability. Expatriates experienced high-threshold boundaries (Hernes, 2004a; 2004b) once becoming a member of the international school community – largely partaking in events which were organized by the institution, such as ski trips, dirndl shopping and city tours. The school therefore created spaces for mothers to establish a social life in the host nation. However they also remained reliant on the school to create these opportunities.

While expatriates experienced a high amount of dependency on the international school system to create social networks, German nationals were largely able to traverse boundaries with relative ease. Germans were able to be, in this regard, far less regulated by the institution,

for the reason that they were not dependent on it. Tensions related to mobility between the school network and local networks available outside the school boundaries seemed largely due to choice. Low-threshold boundaries (Hernes, 2004a; 2004b) established a wider field in which host nationals were able to operate. It seemed as though when speaking with my German participants, many had made a clear and concise decision on whether they would be a member of the international school 'global' community, or whether they were trying to actively minimize social links with the school as a means to establish and maintain 'local' networks. Oftentimes the spaces were treated as polarized, and the choices were described as such. This could suggest that Germans may have felt pressured to choose which 'type' of 'German' they intended to be.

The community's global imaginary was constructed through its management of the 'local' through strategies of physical, social and mental isolationism. By remaining relatively isolated, and placing an emphasis on cultivating 'international' links, the institution and its community sought to remain 'exclusive' and 'globally-oriented'. German community members, however, were an interesting exception to this strategy. Their traversing community boundaries with relative ease threatens the notion that the host society and nation is inaccessible and irrelevant in the 'global' identity of the community. The regulation of German nationals and their influence on community, as seen in Chapter 5, can be seen as a reactionary measure to affirm physical, social and mental boundaries through strategies of isolationism aimed to protect the community brand and its wider circuit of international schools.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.1 SUMMARY

So what *does* it mean to be 'global'? While everyone today has a 'global imaginary' (Steger, 2009), it is defined according to the context to which it lends itself. The international school system is one such context, where a specific orientation and series of features define (and are defined by) its globally-oriented social imaginary. In this thesis, I have introduced the global imaginary as a new way of approaching and understanding how international school communities are characterized, unified, inspired, and sustained. The global imaginary of international schools helps us understand the *process* of community construction and identity formation in and through such contexts.

Guided by my research questions outlined in Chapter 1, I have argued that the global imaginary of the ISSG community was produced and maintained by three primary strategies: The application of a 'global' skill set as a community 'aspiration' (Chapter 4); performing 'inter-nationality' to instate and legitimize individual community membership and the international school brand (Chapter 5); and the drawing of physical, social and mental boundaries (Hernes, 2004b) which worked to establish the community within and across spatial fields (Chapter 6). This chapter summarizes the main arguments made in this thesis, their contribution to knowledge, and their implications on the development of future research.

In chapter 4 I examined how the global imaginary of international school communities discursively came to life. Strong communities require a recognizable 'aspiration' (Baumann, 1992), or set of values, goals, needs and desires to which all members can strive. Where community members may interpret these aspirations in varying ways[227], what is particularly important in community building processes is that all members can recognize the overarching objectives of the community. At ISSG, the 'global' framed the school's ideological objectives and, as one student put it, "engrained" the symbol in the minds of community members. As seen, I found members acutely aware of the aspiration of 'global-mindedness', even though they found it difficult to define. This was a significant observation, as it demonstrates the power and success of impressionably vague community symbols: they are recognizable, interpretable, inclusive, and

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[227] See Cohen, 1985.

perceived as attainable and worth striving for – qualities which motivate community understanding and unity.

As seen, however, communities are also fields of power (Bourdieu, 1986b). While members may have operated with an *inclusive* aspiration of 'global mindedness', it simultaneously generated and practiced a ranking system based on *exclusive*, tangible and performable qualities or traits.

ISSG members were *invested* in demonstrating 'internationality' (either through discussion or practice) through their national and cultural backgrounds which simultaneously signalled assumptions about English language abilities, experiences of international mobility and residency 'abroad'. Not only was demonstrating these forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986b) important, but individuals also assessed each other in these terms. Such notions of 'internationality' worked to legitimize an individual's membership in the community- and by extension, their role as 'expats' or 'international' Germans. The common use of the terms such as 'Third Culture Kid', 'international', 'global', 'international-German', 'German-German', 'local' and 'lifer' articulate how the institution and its members ranked each other and simultaneously reproduced the hallmarks of the global imaginary.

This led to the discussion of the role of nationality in the production of sub-groups at ISSG as seen in Chapter 5. Repeated performances of 'inter-nationality' – the joining of nations in community rituals – played a significant role in the reproduction of the school's global imaginary. Rituals and traditions, such as the annual ISSG Frühlingsfest, allowed members to reproduce and communicate their understanding of community to themselves and others (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).The value that was regularly placed on national identities had both individual and institutional ramifications.

First, on the individual level, members were frequently encouraged to utilize static and clichéd 'national' symbols such as flags, cuisine and sports teams to express their identities. As seen, these symbols were used in classroom activities and rituals, on the many poster-based wall murals, during 'Mosaic of Cultures Day' parades; and in the numerous PTO-organized activities and festivals. Such events also displayed a system of strong nationality-based hierarchies at the school– reinforcing the cultural capital associated with traits, tastes and characteristics stemming from Anglophone cultures and nationalities. Thus community membership was shaped and experienced differently according to national heritage. Following this ranking system, host nationals did not hold the same degree of cultural capital as their expatriate counterparts. They frequently contested this status through their social and economic capital. Germans

assumed status through connecting the school to the country's elite social circles and spaces, and donated generously to building works and charities run by the school, in ways expatriates could rarely match.

The significant and abundant *sensitivity* expatriates showed towards these actions demonstrated the tensions revolving around the school community's dominant ranking system. In my interviews and conversations, 'Germans' were frequently pin-pointed as the 'problematic' nationality group at the school, and received the most criticism from their expatriate counterparts.

As argued above, the reproduction of nationality-based hierarchies also had institutional ramifications. Such performances created a 'brand community' (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) – formed "around brands with a strong image" and "threatening competition" (2001:415). The strong 'brand' image was the 'inter-nationality' of the school – a community comprised of an array of 'nations'. This image was repeatedly documented through visual displays and performances of 'inter-nationality'. Members were thus continually encouraged to engage with each other, draw boundaries (using nationalities as a signifier) between what was perceived to be the 'inside' and the 'outside'. In so doing, they navigated a ranking system that was largely based on market-driven cultural capital. Rituals which articulated 'expat' national identities reinforced ISSG's position as an attractive 'inter-national' school in the host nation. In fact, these practices were crucial in reinforcing the impression that the exclusivity of the school lay in the fact that it was in a locality but not 'of' it.

The 'threatening competition' of this 'brand community' was its host society. The institutional regulation and management of 'local' influence across community life played a strong role in maintaining clientele and upholding its market value. The presence of 'too many' German nationals at ISSG was often described to me as 'diluting' the 'internationality' of the school. 'Inter-nationality' was ISSG's brand and primary marker of difference between itself, other IB schools in the region, and ultimately other German public and private schools. Such marketing strategies are not intrinsic to ISSG, but are also seen at other international schools, where the regulation of host nationals is generally highlighted as a positive school policy.

Anti-German sentiments were normalized dispositions which were embedded into the social framework of the ISSG community and underpinned a certain expat 'solidarity'. This is an example of the community's 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1986) and the role it plays in understanding practice. The habitus establishes a sense of belonging and social comfort. This comfort was disrupted when members traversed across international school community boundaries or

engaged with individuals they felt were 'different'. Many ISSG expatriate mothers reported alienation when navigating the host society on their own –drawing boundaries between themselves and what they perceived as 'local', and further retreating back to the international school, where they reported feeling more comfortable. The institution also actively presented itself as an expat comfort zone.

Polarization is therefore an important strategy in the construction and maintenance of the global imaginary. As discussed, 'locality' was not viewed institutionally, or by its members as a relevant factor in the 'global' orientation of the school. Ironically though, it played an important role in constructing it. The process of distancing the school and its members from the host society, culture and language isolated ISSG members and the school itself and worked to protect expatriate members from potential vulnerabilities associated with a 'migrant' status (e.g. language barriers, change of social status, and navigating foreign cultural norms).

As seen in Chapter 6, such regulatory measures produced a degree of community isolation. I drew on Hernes' (2004a; 2004b) framework of boundaries in the investigation of areas of tension between physical, social and mental fields. Members experienced different 'thresholds' (Hernes, 2004b) or boundary strengths, depending on their relationship to locality. Where expats tended to experience high threshold boundaries such as language barriers, 'Germans' generally experienced lower threshold boundaries through their ability to navigate local society with comparatively more ease. These differences brought out more tensions in the community: German nationals tended to hold more cultural skills than expatriates *outside* of the school. It was a form of power that posed pressure on the global imaginary of the community: host nationals regularly tested the boundaries through their ability to be mobile across community borders – they did not rely on the school as much as the 'expats' for socialization and residential life. Thus the polarization of 'globality' and 'locality' was regularly pressured by 'German' community members who were comparatively more mobile across physical, social and mental borders.

In conjunction with these polarization discourses and practices, the value that was placed on being 'unique' via particularly *distant* (non-local) geographies at international schools was a strong characteristic of community life. It encouraged the perception that belonging to *somewhere else* made individuals 'unique' and granted a special social status. Thus nationalities not only impacted individuals and their experiences within the system, but also played a role in the construction of the international school market.

Such categorization practices strongly contradicted the global orientations, missions and values of the international school system. Significantly, they perpetuated nationality-based differences on an individual level, but also at an institutional and macro level: Billig (1995) reminds us that

> "national identity also involves being situated physically, legally, socially, as well as emotionally: typically, it means being situated within a homeland, which itself is situated within the world of nations. And, only if people believe that they have national identities, will such homelands, and the world of national homelands, be reproduced" (1995:8).

Interestingly, similar practices come to life in higher education- where national identities are reproduced in the process of institutionalized 'internationalization' schemes. Thus regardless of context, global imaginaries are motivated, generated and maintained by specific defining characteristics.

7.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

During my fieldwork, I was frequently asked about my 'repatriation experience' by ISSG mothers. Many wondered if I had 'struggled' returning to the United States after living in Germany and attending ISSG. These questions and concerns raised by ISSG parents reflect the findings of research on repatriation experiences of former international school students. Fail, et. al (2004) for example, found that many former expat international school students found returning to their passport countries challenging – experiencing 'reverse culture shock' and feeling as though they "have no real sense of belonging in the communities in which they are living" (2004:332-333)[228].

With international schools placing a strong emphasis and value on the individual and collective representation of distant geographies and isolating community members from the host society, it is unsurprising that former international school students report difficulties connecting to the places in which they reside. Where studies like Fail et al (2004) equate such problems with an internationally-mobile migration experience, it is worth investigating whether the educational and social cultivation of the 'global imaginary' plays a role in these reported repatriation issues and struggles in establishing a localized sense of belonging. Considering host nationals (who were not internationally-mobile) also seemed to experience 'repatriation' shock

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[228] For similar findings, see also: Cottrell, 1993; Wertsch, 2006.

after graduating and entering German society, it is plausible that the international schools' regulation and management of 'nationalities' do play a role in the production of such sentiments.

Additionally, provided that some of my participants expressed that their rationale for community membership was largely brought on due to language barriers they were experiencing in the host society, it would be also interesting to explore international school communities which are situated in Anglophone cultures. I have been unable to find any ethnographic work which focuses on such contexts, however I hypothesize that one might find some interesting parallels, as they are closely interconnected within the network of international schools worldwide. For example, ISSG regularly engaged with international schools located in the UK, who demonstrated similar cultural practices when visiting ISSG. There are also currently not many comparative ethnographies about international schools in different national contexts.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to examine the international school sector by scrutinizing the theme of its branding even further as an area of focus. A quantitative or mixed-methods study might prove useful to examine the extent to which current international schools around the world use comparable marketing content to attract prospective clientele. It might also be worth considering how such branding has changed over the past several decades, and how their customers have responded to these changes. One might also be able to find correlations between recent international school branding methods and those used in higher education today.

Finally, another interesting dimension to the global imaginary would be to examine virtual networks comprised of alumni of international schools. While international school communities are transient and fluid and consistently changing, virtual networks allow former community members to maintain their identities which have been constructed through shared international school experiences. The global imaginary of international school communities therefore may be visible across an array of virtual forums – strengthening, legitimizing and perpetuating community life far beyond physical spaces.

7.3 FINAL THOUGHTS

With this thesis, I aim to contribute to a field which has been primarily constructed by individuals who are, or have been professionally involved in the international school system – either as former teachers, administrators or consultants. While the market of international schools has been investigated, there has not been a connection to its impact on their communities of host nationals and expatriates. Moreover, international school communities

have not been ethnographically investigated in much depth outside of the physical boundaries of the institution -particularly in the European context. Tanu's (2013; 2014) research on international schools located in Jakarta and postcolonial analytical approach serve as an interesting comparison to the 'Western' context and theoretical approach which shaped this study. This thesis demonstrates that similar dynamics occur within 'the West'- further supporting the insulated connectivity of the international school network and the presence of a 'global' social imaginary that spans across it. With this thesis I hope to indicate that while international schools may offer the cultural, social and institutional capital geared to ensure their students attend 'top' universities and participate in the global market, it is worth further considering the extent to which 'globally-oriented' social imaginaries impact their community members both in the short term and in the long term.

Being 'global' today holds a range of meanings – from being environmentally friendly, exhibiting humanitarianism and activism, to frequently travelling, living abroad and receiving a well-rounded education. In today's globalizing world, the institutional capitalization on notions of 'globality' is a lucrative marketing strategy to attract clientele who consider themselves to be, or want to be 'global'. A recent example of this was the 'Global Citizen Festival', where donating money to the charity[229] granted one access to a 'global citizen' concert featuring Beyoncé.

While nearly everyone can consider themselves to be 'global' out of the sheer vagueness of the symbol, as seen in this thesis, oftentimes the term carries very specific meanings to very specific people and communities. These defining factors of what it means to be 'global' by particular groups construct social imaginaries – they shape how people communicate, construct boundaries and orientate themselves according to the meanings generated by their social environments. Social imaginaries build identities – they form social practices which, in turn, legitimize them. Being 'global' therefore begins with a process of *socialization* that is contextually defined, cultivated and maintained: "One cannot be a self on one's own" (Taylor, 1989:36).

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[229] This charity was set up to raise money against poverty. The website features the tagline: 'Global Citizen is a community for people like you" (Global Citizen Festival, 2015)

APPENDIX 1:

IB LEARNER PROFILE

"Our values are encapsulated in the IB learner profile. All members of the [ISSG] community strive to be:

Inquirers:

They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct constructive inquiry and research, and show independence of learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable:

They explore concepts, ideas and issues which have global relevance and importance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines

Thinkers:

They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems and make reasoned decisions.

Communicators:

They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled:

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded:

They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, they are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring:

They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers:

They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced:

They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective:

They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development."

(IBO, 2008 in ISSG website, 2014)

APPENDIX 2

HERNES' FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZATIONAL BOUNDARIES[230]

	Mental boundaries (relate to bounding of core ideas and concepts that are central and particular to the group or organization)	**Social boundaries** (relate to identity and social bonding tying the group or organization together)	**Physical boundaries** (relate to formal rules and physical structures regulating human action and interaction in the group or organization)
Ordering The extent to which boundaries regulate internal interaction.	To what extent are main ideas and concepts decisive for what members do?	To what extent do members feel that they are socially bonded together by such as loyalty?	To what extent do formal rules or physical structure regulate the work of members?
Distinction The extent to which boundaries constitute a clear demarcation between the external and the internal spheres.	To what extent are core ideas and concepts distinctly different from those of other groups?	To what extent are we socially distinct from other groups?	To what extent does our formal structure set us apart from other groups or organizations?
Threshold The extent to which boundaries regulate flow or movement between the external and internal spheres.	To what extent can outsiders assimilate core ideas and concepts?	To what extent is it possible for outsiders to be considered full members of the group?	To what extent do formal structures hinder the recruitment of outsiders?

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[230] A framework for interpreting boundaries. Hernes (2004a; 2004b:81).

APPENDIX 3

GLOBAL-MINDEDNESS AT ISSG

"Global-mindedness is about <u>peace</u> – it's about seeking harmonious interaction with others and developing one's understanding and appreciation of other's values, cultures, identities and needs.

Global-mindedness is about <u>principles</u> – it's about socio-economic and political awareness, acting purposefully and living conscientiously within our own local, regional and global communities for the long-term benefit of others and our planet.

Global-mindedness is about <u>competence</u> – it's about successful interaction with diverse communities through different languages and recognition of multiple perspectives.

Global-mindedness is about <u>participation</u> – it's about taking full advantage of and contributing to the resources and experiences offered within a diverse and multi-cultural environment"

 (ISSG website, 2014, emphases in original format).

APPENDIX 4

STUDENT AND FACULTY COMPOSITION ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY[231]

Australian – 17	German - 308	Peruvian – 3
Austrian – 12	Greek – 7	Polish – 8
Azeri – 2	Guatemalan – 2	Portuguese – 2
Belarusian – 1	Hungarian – 5	Romanian – 8
Belgian – 5	Icelandic – 1	Russian – 38
Brazilian – 4	Indian – 51	Saudi Arabian – 6
British – 134	Iranian – 2	Singaporean – 4
Bulgarian – 1	Irish – 13	Slovenian – 3
Canadian – 25	Israeli – 2	South African – 8
Chilean – 2	Italian – 32	South Korean – 12
Chinese – 6	Japanese – 17	Spanish – 32
Croatian – 2	Kazakhstani – 2	Swedish – 29
Czech – 2	Latvian – 1	Swiss – 11
Danish – 25	Liechtensteiner – 1	Syrian – 1
Dutch – 42	Lithuanian – 1	Taiwanese – 5
Egyptian – 2	Malaysian – 2	Turkish – 4
Finnish – 4	Mexican – 1	Ukrainian – 2
French – 18	New Zealander – 3	US American – 251
Georgian – 2	Nigerian – 1	Vietnamese -1
	Norwegian – 8	

Student Nationalities[232]

Faculty Nationalities[233]

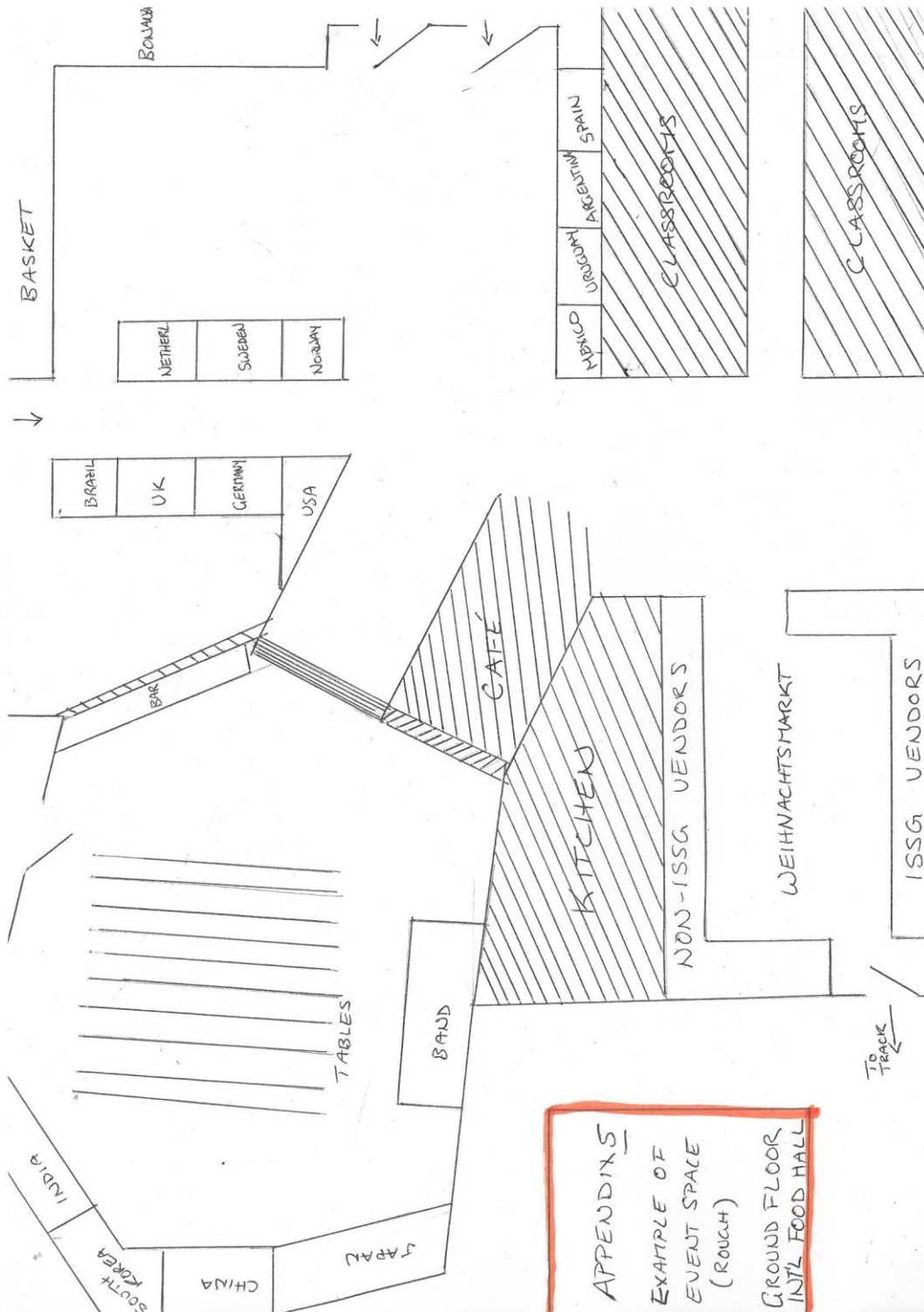|		
Australian – 11	French – 5	New Zealander – 4
Austrian – 2	German – 59	Russian – 1
Belgian – 2	Hungarian – 1	South African – 3
British – 60	Indonesian – 1	Sri Lankan – 1
Canadian – 17	Irish – 4	Spanish – 6
Croatian – 1	Italian – 2	Swedish – 1
Dutch – 5	Luxembourgish – 1	Swiss – 1
Danish – 1	Maltese – 2	US American - 35
Finnish – 1	Myanmarian – 1	

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[231] Information comes directly from ISSG's 2014 annual report, which was published in the school magazine (2014).

[232] These nationalities are tabled as they are in the report. Moreover, the report does not indicate how these nationalities were determined (e.g. passport, self-identification).

[233] These nationalities are tabled here as they are in the report. Similarly, the report does not indicate how these nationalities were determined, nor does it identify the roles at the school.

APPENDIX 5

RENDERING OF EVENT SPACE[234]

The following labels appear within the rough drawing:

BOLIVIA, BASKET, NETHERL, SWEDEN, NORWAY, BRAZIL, UK, GERMANY, USA, MEXICO, URUGUAY, ARGENTINA, SPAIN, CLASSROOMS, CLASSROOMS, BAR, CAFÉ, KITCHEN, NON-ISSG VENDORS, WEIHNACHTSMARKT, ISSG VENDORS, TO TRACK, TABLES, BAND, INDIA, SOUTH KOREA, CHINA, JAPAN

APPENDIX 5
EXAMPLE OF EVENT SPACE (ROUGH)
GROUND FLOOR INTL FOOD HALL

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[234] Rough drawing by H. Meyer (2014).

APPENDIX 6

RENDERING OF CHARITY ZONE, ALUMNI ROOM,

SANTA'S WORKSHOP & GROTTO[235]

[235] Rough drawing by H. Meyer (2014).

APPENDIX 7

PROGRAM OF EVENTS: ISSG FRÜHLINGSFEST 2014[236]

11:00	Gates open
11-11:30	Student Choirs and Jazz Bands
11:00-14:00	Games and Activities
	'Flash' speed test against Usain Bolt
	RI Fitness: Boxing Demo
	International Food Court
	Alumni Meet & Greet
11:30	Talent Show
12:00	Parents & Kids Football Tournament
	Alumni & Friends Football Tournament
12:00-13:30	Fit Team Workout Sessions
14:00	Parade of Nations and official Opening of Athletics Track & Field
14:30	10 km Relay-Race; attempt to beat world record
15:30	Alumni and Friends Demonstration Football Games
15:30	Capoeira Show: Brazilian music and dancers
15:45	Basket Raffle Draw
16:00	[ISSG] World Cup Party
	Cocktail bar in Frühlingsfest tent
17:00	Salsa Roja (salsa band)
20:00	Close

(ISSG website, 2014)

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[236] Provided as original, which was promoted on the ISSG website (2014) and advertised in hard-copy across campus.

APPENDIX 8

AIMS OF THE ISSG TANZANIA TRIP[237]

a. To visit existing [ISSG] Tanzania Projects, evaluate them and meet local representatives.

b. To evaluate the funds donated by [ISSG] have been spent, to present new funds, and to see for ourselves how the projects have developed. [In 2014] approx. 2500-3000.00 Euros per project were donated.

c. To take part in a work project(s) for 4-5 days (last year [ISSG] students worked at an Muungano Primary School in Moshi)

d. To provide an opportunity for all trip participants to get a glimpse of ordinary Tanzanian people's lives, their society and environment; to also become more aware of who they are through an understanding of inter-cultural awareness.

e. To develop and use ideas of how the [ISSG] community can best help others who are less fortunate.

Student responsibilities:

- Attend Trip information meetings.
- Aim to raise a minimum of 300.00 / 400.00 Euros for the Tanzania Projects Fund.
- Take part in an overnight stay at [a nearby town] youth hostel…
- Help with preparing the Tanzania assemblies, movies, articles for [the school magazine] and make presentations.
- Be open and willing to be challenged by, and experience a very different culture that is different from his/her own.
- Be responsible and sensitive to the needs, spirit and well-being of the whole group.

(ISSG Tanzania Aims, 2014)

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[237] ISSG Tanzania Trip June-July 2015 application form, copied here as original, with town names and school name anonymized. This was provided to me by a faculty member.

REFERENCE LIST

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