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Content

Foreword	3
Anthropology in Motion: Scope and Practice	3
Grasping the World – A biographical Footnote	5
1. Introduction	7
1.1 Anthropology and the EXPO	7
1.2 “Legacy”, “Legitimacy” and “Legitimization”	9
1.3 Introduction of the following Chapters	15
2. History & Legacy of World’s Fairs	19
2.1 The London Fair of 1851	19
2.2 The Paris Fairs	24
2.3 From Vienna to the World, a Conclusion of the 19 th Century Fairs	26
2.4 The 20 th century World’s Fairs	31
3. An Anthropological Legacy of World’s Fairs	40
3.1 Early Ethnographic Exhibits	40
3.2 Cultural Identities and Exercises in Nationalism	43
4. Approaching the World by Anthropological Means	48
4.1 EXPOgraphy from Past to Present	48
4.2 Research Focus & Approach	54
4.2.1 Theoretical Digression	59
4.2.2 Methodological Digression	67
4.2.3 Applied Methods and Data Sampling	75
5. Case Study on the Legacy of EXPO’10 (Shanghai)	85
5.1 From China to the World – Communicating the PRC	85
5.2 “better city, better life” – An Initial Assessment	89
5.2.1 The Medium and the Message	89
5.2.2 The Mission and the Legacies in Perspective	91

5.3 A Harmonious World, a Harmonious Future – the Expo in Hindsight.....	97
5.3.1 “...and they lived happily ever after” - The Theme Park Analogy	99
5.3.2 Hegemony and Harmony	105
5.3.3 The Shanghainese Dream – Looking back to the Future	109
5.4 Following the Metaphor to the Story – a Discourse Ethnography.....	112
5.4.1 Placemaking in Context of the EXPO legacy	114
5.4.2 Placed Stories, Storied Places	122
5.5 Shanghai and the legacy of its first World’s Fair.....	133
6. Case study on EXPO’15 (Milan)	137
6.1 The World coming to Town – Preliminary Observations.....	137
6.1.1 The Researchers Role and the Role of Research	139
6.1.2 Public Protest and the #NOEXPO movement	143
6.2 Storytelling at EXPO 2015.....	148
6.2.1 Peripheries within – the Case of the EXPO Clusters.....	154
6.2.2 Nation Branding and the Problem of Feeding the Planet	159
6.3 Stories from the in- and outside.....	167
6.3.1 Communicational means of (De)legitimizing the Mega-Event	170
6.4 Revisiting Milan – an Approach towards the Legacy of EXPO 2015	176
7. Conclusion.....	181
8. Bibliography	189
9. List of Interviews	206
10. List of Figures	207
11. List of Abbreviations	208
13. Abstract	209
13.1 English.....	209
13.2 German	210

Foreword

Anthropology in Motion: Scope and Practice

Mankind has come a long way. Throughout the centuries of its existence, there have always been struggles but also developments. Human interaction that at first just has taken place on the local level is - in the meantime - happening on a global scale, as the different ethnicities, and people of our shared world are becoming more and more aware of the existence of “the other”, their struggles and needs, while being increasingly dependent upon each other as well. This might also be attributable to the ever more complex mediatory capabilities we are relying on as a world community, in a time that is often advertised as “the era of information”, with social networks being amongst its most distinctive features.

The same thing can be said about the discipline of anthropology, a discipline eager to understand humans of different origin and social/cultural backgrounds, reading the hidden script underneath our daily interactions, the ways we communicate, while trying to mediate its finding to a larger public audience, which isn’t often as easy, as one might think. In fact anthropology as a discipline within the social sciences, nowadays seems to be struggling to make a case for its own research-agenda, since the conduct of classical anthropological fieldwork, the study of “the other”, of different indigenous cultures is decreasing, as arguably are cultures, languages and traditions throughout the process of globalization (cf. Eriksen 2004: 5/12). Also anthropologists themselves are to an increasing number questioning the very foundations of anthropology, as a discipline of people talking on behalf of (cf. Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 2f), or about (Geertz 1987) other people, which makes it a complex endeavor nowadays to position oneself and one’s study amongst one’s peers and the pool of already existing literature, while also making a case for his/her own respective research interests.

The struggles that the anthropological discipline endured throughout the centuries are showcased for example by the many names that served as a label for this school until the present day, be it cultural and/or social, linguistic, archeological or biological anthropology, ethnology or ethnography. More than arguably most other branches of the contemporary social sciences, it thereby had to relinquish its old concepts and criticize its own findings, theories and methods, time and time again, as

those would have otherwise hindered its further development to a credible discipline to be appreciated by the public as well as the scientific community.

Having done so, it eventually managed to move on from racial¹ (see also Lévi-Strauss 1989), colonial (cf. Said 1979 / also see Osterhammel 2010), class (cf. Eriksen 2004: 5/33) and gender conceptions² in the process. Even though this is and will always be an ongoing task, anthropology today without a doubt has become a worldly discipline accessible and practicable by all different kinds of people around the globe. Hence, this evolution undoubtedly has not only served scientific but also political ends, and still does so for example within the Gender-Studies or Engaged Anthropology, e.g. locals competing against Big or Multinational corporations (cf. Kirsch 2018: 29ff; also see Chapter 6). But it also has been exploited throughout its history for the same reasons, be it in Nazi-Germany for reasons of physiological classification and subsequent genocide of its Jewish minority population, or to maintain civilizational supremacy during the times of British overseas colonialism, by the help of ethnic classifications and subsequent oppression, and still is being ethically capitalized on today by a huge variety of governmental or commercial actors to legitimize their policy and/or make profits (ibid.: 33; also see Chapter 5/6).

Anthropology therefore has always been a very vibrant discipline to start with, which makes it as exciting, as it makes it difficult for scholars to contribute to and work with it in an adequate manner. Especially the second half of the last century marked a trend of anthropology rethinking its own research logic (cf. Gingrich 2010: 555) that still hasn't come to a hold. In the wake of this development the quest for scientific reliability stands at the forefront of our research. Today's scholars and their works must not only account for an arguably ever growing pool of preceding scientific knowledge that has already been written on their matters of interest, but also comply with the rules of scientific conduct that have come a long way, since Bronislaw Malinowski wrote his famed "Argonauts of the Western Pacific". Of course this was a core problem that the thesis at hand, respectively I as its author, also had to face at the beginning of a doctoral journey that would eventually and literally take me around the world.

¹ For an elaborated description on the nature of anthropology's stance on racial conceptions within the scientific community, as well as outside in socio-political realms to date, please refer to the current statement of the American Anthropological Association on matters of "race" (AAA 1998).

² Given a broad public as well as scientific interest and thus huge influx of gender related works since the second half of the 20th century, especially western academia has many newly founded institutes for Gender Studies. Also consider reading Margaret Mead (1954), for an undisputed classic within this sub-field of anthropology.

Grasping the World – A biographical Footnote

As it is often the case with research on a given topic, there is a biographical footnote playing a key-role in my choice of studying World's Fairs (or "EXPOs") which inextricably ties me to them. It was in 2010 when I visited one for the first time. A friend of mine, who was back then working at the Shanghai EXPO, had invited me to pay him a visit and I, who had never sat foot outside of continental Europe before, would take this invitation as a once in a lifetime opportunity to travel, learn, grow and most of all leave my domestic comfort-zone. Coming to China and visiting the EXPO, was a first-time experience in many regards. I was for the first time traveling longer than a month and all by myself, out of Europe, meaning seeing Asia for the first time, eventually getting to know China and South Korea, but first and foremost Shanghai, a vibrant Metropolis with a globalized attitude and people downtown, amidst a very traditional Chinese outer city rim. And then there was of course the EXPO, which ironically happened to be the first one on Chinese soil as well.

I was amazed by what I saw. The sheer amount of people and life that was taking place within Shanghai on the one hand and the magnitude of the event that it hosted, also fueled by the masses of international, but especially domestic visitors, it had attracted, was incomparable with what little I had known and how literally small my whole conception of "the world" had been up to that point. Hence, I chose to eventually write my bachelor thesis about this EXPO and its effect on Shanghai and traveled to and within China another eight times in the years that followed, eventually receiving a one-year scholarship from the Chinese Government 2016 to study in Shanghai and engage in research on the legacy of World's Fairs as part of this doctoral adventure.

This in short was, what sparked the idea to conduct research on EXPOs in the first place. The reason, why I lay it out to you, as my readers, within the foreword to this monography is another. Anthropology to me is very much tied to the biography of the researcher him/herself. To an openly self-reflexive discipline that is interested in not only learning about others, but learning about its own biases and preconditions as well as, to lay out the who is who of authorship to a degree of conveying an image of the person that is writing about but also for someone, is certainly a necessity. That is, because one hands the reader the keys to not only analyze the polished product but rather the anthropological conduct as a whole; e.g. a story that doesn't begin amidst an indigenous community somewhere in the Brazilian Amazonas, but rather starts with a bearded guy from someplace afar, who is asking odd questions all day as he's taking

notes in a small book and wearing a weirdly looking fisher-hat while he's recovering from a severe sun stroke he had the week before.

To perceive the whole work instead of only a product is like watching a play in theatre, but also seeing the actors being prepped by make-up artists and costume designers behind the curtain and the hours of rehearsing they have put into their art, before entering the stage. It is like visiting an exhibition and not only grasping, what you are presented with, but the preparation, the outturn it has on a place and its people, the memories it shapes, the "legacy" it has. For me, conducting research on World's Fairs was all about looking behind this curtain, to decipher the very nature of what interested me so much about these phenomena in the first place and eventually be able to understand as well as question the image of the world and global community that this EXPO left in my head. The monography at hand represents the attempt to do so, symbolizing the greatest journey that I personally have ever started, while contrasting it with a range of stories from a very diverse group of people all around the world, who have been affected or inspired by an EXPO one way or another.

1. Introduction

1.1 Anthropology and the EXPO

When talking about World's Fairs, they are often also referred to as EXPOs, international exhibitions or universal expositions. These terms are hardly conflicting as also this dissertation treats them synonymously, rather the word "EXPO", which has in the meantime become the main term to refer to these mega events, hints at the commercial characteristics they would eventually entail (cf. Benedict 1991: 9; Smits and Jansen 2012: 174). Having said that, those fairs also share significant ties with the discipline of Cultural and Social Anthropology; for better or for worse that is. Hence, I'd like to contemplate briefly on the development of both here, before eventually elucidating the terminology used within this monograph and introducing the Chapters that follow.

As the whole concept of a World's Fair is and always has been linked to the claim to exhibit the world, it inevitably has done so along the lines of cultural representations. Prior to the 20th century those representations, could be divided into two main categories, being either self-determined or extrinsic. Predominantly European nations were showcasing their imperial might, while their colonial appendages would often be confined to ethnographical exhibitions, so as to not only convey a sense of universality at those fairs but also demonstrate evolutionary superiority to go along with it (cf. Benedict 1991; also see Chapter 3). Amongst the most prominent examples for such extrinsic cultural representations were the Paris fair, 1889, or the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1893 (Treagus 2013: 45; Mückler 2012: 80). The latter of which might, however, also be considered a turning point in the ways these fairs, as well as the emerging school of anthropology, would henceforth treat "the other" (Said 1979). In fact, Franz Boas, one of the father figures of the discipline, who had been present at the occasion and involved in the deployment of ethnographical exhibitions on-site, would subsequently oppose the evolutionist and diffusionist ideas, it had publicly showcased (cf. Boas 1965).

In the ensuing 20th century the World's Fairs would progressively grow bigger in terms of their participants, as former colonies – now turned nations – and corporations, would join these spectacles, to be considered global players in their own right. These mega events, though deprived of their former ethnographic displays, yet still deploying the national symbolism of old (cf. Chapter 2.4), would later eventually turn to an object

of ethnographies themselves (cf. Houdart 2013; Färber 2006; Harvey 1996; also see Chapter 4.1), emblemizing the discipline's own epistemological transition.

How to propel anthropological notions from small scale studies to a larger scope of impact and comparative value to other disciplines within the social sciences, had – on the other hand – already been an area of debate throughout the 20th century and would still figure to be an object of discourse in the ensuing one (cf. Gupta and Ferguson 1997). From the 80s onwards the junctures of nationalism and ethnicity had been getting traction (cf. Barth 1994) within the discipline, with an eventual move beyond the borders of nation-states being an inevitable step it would take next. Globalization not only called for, but also directly affected this shift towards “the transnational”, as well as redefinitions of the concept of “the local” (cf. Hannerz 2002; Appadurai 1996).

Ever since, the discipline had been rethinking its own research logic (cf. Gingrich 2010), to answer questions of people's ever more dynamic identification- with its own anthropological representation-techniques (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Geertz 1987; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Gingrich 2010). Arguably the most pressing issue herein seems, how to methodologically account for these contemporary research trends. Participant observation, fieldnotes, interviews, and familiar qualitative methods, even in transnational research settings, would still to a considerable degree constitute the *modus operandi* of the ethnographer. On the other hand, the concept of “the field” for research, would turn out to be ever more indefinite, being shifted in spatial (cf. Marcus 1995), as well as temporal terms (cf. Gluckman 1977; Burawoy 1998).

The World's Fair, though not necessarily representing an anthropological field site in its classical understanding, might the more so be considered an epitome of this transition. Given that it features cultural and national symbolism, alongside transnational organizations and corporations, as well as a sophisticatedly archived history (cf. BIE 2019) and lastly but most importantly a site with clear cut boundaries, makes it an interesting venture to apply traditional fieldwork methods, while taking contemporary research trends into account.

Having said that, EXPOs also represent fleeting phenomena, being held for a duration of six months approximately every five years³, before eventually becoming an

³ At least this applies to the “World EXPOs”, the biggest ones, which are the object of discussion within this thesis. For the list of different EXPOs refer to the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE 2019c).

object of historiography. Hence, the question arises, how to grasp their ephemeral nature, while also illustrate what they ultimately leave behind. It is this intersection that the thesis at hand figures to contribute to, by asking: *“How is the ‘legacy’ of a World’s Fair constituted within the local context of its hosting city?”* To go along with this lead-question, I’d like propose three others, to allow for a more detailed analysis: *“What’s the cultural heritage of an EXPO within the given context? or rather: How does an EXPO ‘manifest’ itself?”*, *“How is a World’s Fair constituted as an object of discourse within the local context?”* and *“How does ethnographic data, derived from research in and around a World’s Fair, as well as during and after the event, relate to each other?”*

I seek to answer these questions by comparison of two case studies, one onsite of EXPO 2015, as well as its hosting city Milan (cf. Chapter 6), the other one within post-EXPO Shanghai, six years after it had hosted its first World’s Fair in 2010 (cf. Chapter 5). Furthermore I chose to apply the concept of a discourse ethnography to both case studies, while elaborating on this research program first and foremost alongside the theoretical notions of Michel Foucault (1988) on discourse and the methodological guidelines of George E. Marcus (1995) on the multisited ethnography. Both authors as well as the ways they’ve been used within subsequent research and analysis, are to be elucidated in more detail within Chapter 4 and following. Chapters 5 and 6, constituting the empirical parts of this thesis, will then address the above questions, by recounting the different stories and narratives retrieved in and around, but also during and after the last two World’s Fairs.

Having been interested in the discourse evolving prior, during and after an EXPO, meant that “signs, symbols, and metaphors” (Marcus 1995: 108) were bound to guide this enterprise and become an object of study. Therefore, the ensuing sub-Chapters within this Introduction see to preliminary explain the terminology this thesis builds upon, especially with regards to the “legacy” term, while subsequently offering an outlook on the Chapters still to come.

1.2 “Legacy”, “Legitimacy” and “Legitimization”

While being at the EXPO 2015 and consuming a fair degree of social media to go along with the experience, one would often come across the term “legacy”. The more so if one would engage in conversations with people, who worked at the event. “Legacy”,

for them, would often entail the ideals that EXPO stood for, for whose purpose talks and sessions would be held during the course of the event taking place, to conserve its very essence by textual means for future generations to profit from (also see Veca 2015). These takes on “legacy” were drawing an undoubtedly positive or rather idealistic picture of what the exposition would ultimately represent and how it should be remembered. Therein the latter notion seemed to be far more important, as it would ultimately define the place the event would have in historiography. Having said that, there certainly were critical voices contesting the public image aspired by organizers.

“Legacy”, as a term, has many meanings that might be subsumable to “the passing on of something to someone”, e.g. from one generation to the next. In German “Legacy” literally translates into “Vermächtnis”, which in turn could also be translated into “heritage”. Throughout the process of conducting and talking about my project, I’d often refer to “legacy” as “the cultural heritage” of the EXPO, while in the wake of Milan 2015 the Italian equivalent “eredità” (Gatti et al. 2018: 86f) would often be used. Another prominent use of the term is to describe an economic transmission. Which is an interesting feature, and unlike the plainly idealistic use of the term, also implements one of the great weaknesses a mega event like the EXPO offers its critics, as it is often financed publicly but accounting for a financial loss. In fact, the last EXPOs since Seville 1992, with Shanghai 2010 supposedly being an exception, all have accounted for millions in debt (cf. Piemontese 2019; Danna 2017; Li 2011; Peng 2010). In the Shanghai case though, the conduct of its first World’s Fair saw 18.000 households being relocated from the event site during the planning and construction process (cf. Zhang 2015). Thus one might argue that a “legacy” might also be a loss transaction depending on how you look at it. In any case, the very concept of “Legacy” seems to be, scientifically speaking, highly problematic. Its vague character and its ubiquitous use by organizers and observers alike make it difficult to narrow down and come up with a convenient description, or – even more so – a definite answer to what “the legacy of an EXPO” actually is.

Having said that, this project didn’t intend to gather data on what “the legacy” of an EXPO is, but rather how it is constituted in its local context. Even though the epistemological interest ultimately at play here, isn’t necessarily explained any easier, I considered it to be, by far, the more compelling question. As the following chapters will show, to every EXPO there is a quest for historical remembrance, which in turn is also contested to a certain degree within the local context of its hosting city, as well as

– more recently – online. Thus to ask about an EXPO's "legitimacy", rather than about its "legacy", has served me as an approach to analyze how the latter is actual made up in the first place. However its necessary to define the term more closely, to unfold its many meanings and its eventual use within this disquisition.

In the context of my work I'd like to think of "Legitimacy" as a placeholder for the German word "Daseinsberechtigung", which again literally translates to the "right to exist", which one might use as an equivalent to the former. However dissecting these terms, clearly shows a judicial emphasis on behalf of the English terminology, whilst the German term "Dasein" illustrates a philosophical emphasis (cf. Heidegger 1927). In fact "Legitimacy" (z.Dt. "Legitimität"), in a social scientific sense, raises questions of rightful rule or leadership (z.Dt. "Herrschaft") first and foremost on the state-level. For example, Max Weber wrote in "Soziologische Grundbegriffe" on the "Legitimität einer Ordnung" (engl. Legitimacy of Order), with "Ordnung" being either a convention or law⁴, meaning "Legitimität" in a Weberian sense points to a form of established order of things by the virtue of "Vorbildlichkeit" (engl.: "exemplariness") or "Verbindlichkeit" (engl.: "obligation") (Weber 1966: 26f).

He is also referring to the necessity and inevitability to work with the terminology jurisprudence equips society with, even though it treats institutions equivalent to individuals, whilst sociology sees the former as a mere product of "Handlungszusammenhänge" (engl.: "correlation of action") constituted by the latter (ibid.: 12f). Common conceptions of "state" would serve as a good example in this regard. However its fairly difficult to fit a World's fair within this Weberian address on "Legitimität" as it doesn't necessarily fit the description of either law or convention, or does it? Might it even be possible to ascribe an – itself rather abstract – term such as "convention" to all these supposedly well informed, philanthropist as well as globalist gatherings of scientists, economists and politicians regularly taking place at every EXPO, which subsequently are also serving the overall credibility and supposed legitimacy of an EXPO? Or would one then be misinterpreting things?

To define legitimacy further, we need to shift the terminological focus to the preceding process of legitimation, the act of reaching legitimacy. Luc Boltanski, another Sociologist, together with Laurent Thevenot, an economist, also took on the

⁴ More closely examined these terms mean an order that is either commonly agreed upon, be it socially, morally or culturally or a legal guideline and subsequent practice that is put in place to establish a certain order (Weber 1966: 27).

problem in the book “De la Justification” (engl.: “On Justification”). Therein they, as Weber did, deciphered a problem of categorization, inherent between the social sciences, statistics and juristic disciplines (Boltanski and Thevenot 2007: 14), further proposing their own model of justification-order to be used to find a compromise between conflicting interests and parties (ibid. 32), which represents a conceptual framework that according to the authors, allows for the analogy of observations stemming from a variety of different organizations within the sectors of industry, services, as well as local authorities, public administrations, educational and cultural institutions (ibid. 36).

The authors argument is further based on, what they describe as an “imperative to justify”, an inherent human urge to correlate differing interests amongst conflicting parties and to reach a compromise (Boltanski and Thevenot 2006: 23f). Their theory stands in contrast to a Weberian concept that treats a sincere interest correlation towards conflict resolution and deception as part of the same medal, under the premise of moral relativism. Weber sees the legitimation of an order evolve from tradition, emotion, value-rational, legality, compromise between parties of interest and lastly the imposition of will, due to afore legitimation of persisting rule (Weber 1966: 29f; also see Boltanski and Thevenot 2007: 61). In opposition to his program Boltanski and Thevenot write the following:

“Justifiable acts are our focus: we shall draw out all the possible consequences from the fact that people need to justify their actions. In other words, people do not ordinarily seek to invent false pretexts after the fact so as to cover up some secret motive, the way one comes up with an alibi; rather, they seek to carry out their actions in such a way that these can withstand the test of justification“ (Boltanski and Thevenot 2006: 37).

As the authors are very much trending towards an ideal, since deliberating society that deals with problems in coordination to an afore mentioned “*imperative to justify*”, they understandably choose to exclude tyranny, violence and deception from the contention, as these would certainly contradict their argumentation on the emphasis of deliberation and compromise, which leaves room to further explore within this dissertation. Their reference to the conduct of legitimation not to be mistaken for a “false alibi”, eventually sets the stage to discuss a third author and main contributor to this thesis, in terms of her theoretical notions.

Aleida Assmann offers yet another take on legitimation, describing it in context of her larger work on *cultural memory* (Assmann 1999). She sees a distinct correlation between “Herrschaft” and “Gedächtnis” (engl.: memory) insofar, as the former is building on the latter in terms of creating a historical genealogy that helps making a case for its rightful rule in a given society (ibid. 138)⁵. The two main oppositions she illustrates, are those of “Speichergedächtnis” (ibid. 140f) and “Funktionsgedächtnis” (ibid. 137f), both pointing to a collective memory in form of either an overarching archive (“Speicher”)⁶ of unaltered data and information, or an intentionally censored official or political memory for the purpose (“Funktion”)⁷ of legitimating common rule.

Further examining the concept of “Funktionsgedächtnis” we’ll recognize that the act of legitimation or justification is both, proactive in its enterprise to alter and censor the collective memory to arrive at applicable forms of official history it then seeks to institutionalize, yet also retrospective in its focus on past events and narrative trails (ibid. 138). The practice of “Funktionsgedächtnis” go as far as the institutionalization of a certain interpretation of history by the intermediary means of education, journalism, art, law and so forth (ibid.), eventually building up a strong foundation for persisting rule. Hence, Assmann’s theory is very much contrasting Boltanski’s and Thevenot’s stance on legitimation, as they are reluctant to engage in a retrospective theory like hers that is arguably implementing the possibility of deceit and with that rather bears analogy to Weber’s model of legitimation (cf. Boltanski and Thevenot 2006: 37f; Weber 1966: 29f). This differentiation is certainly to be tested within my following accounts on the justification practices regarding the EXPO PR-strategies pre- and post-Shanghai 2010 and Milan 2015.

“Speichergedächtnis” on the other hand is to be understood as the sum of historical data, which, not being ordered for that purpose, possesses the capacities to counteract official memory; Furthermore Assmann describes the general accessibility of that information by the public as an indicator for the degree of authoritarianism regarding state-rule in any given case (Assmann 1999: 140f). Of course, the “Funktionsgedächtnis” might very well retrieve information that serves its purpose as

⁵ Having said that she also introduces a second term namely “*communicative memory*”, a preliminary condition for cultural memory it refers to the process of negotiation of history by contemporary witnesses (Assmann: 12ff). For a detailed explanation and use of this theoretical remark, refer to Chapter 4.2.2.

⁶ The overall accessibility of information by the public is also an indicator for the level of authoritarian rule in a given case (Assmann 1999: 140f).

⁷ Assmann also points to “reference to collective entities, selectivity, commitment, binding values and moral obligations, focus on the future” as the most important features of the “Funktionsgedächtnis” (ibid. 134).

well. The mere existence of an overarching archive and its amorph nature of the “Speichergerdächtnis” and its premise to retrieve all sorts of cultural memory and knowledge bears the chance to also retrieve subversive vigor from it (ibid.). Meaning, it also possesses the means of *delegitimizing* state-rule, and thus maneuvers both ways not only from top to bottom, but the other way around (ibid. 138f).

Arguably every government establishes some sort of “Funktionsgedächtnis”. The dichotomy of *Legitimation* and *Delegitimation* might even be illustrated the best, in democracies, where different parties engage in these practices on a daily basis in parliamentary discussions. To go along with them, Assmann introduces a third term “Distinktion” (engl. distinction), which she describes as identity giving mechanism inherent within “Funktionsgedächtnis”, being either of sacred or secular nature, but in any case cultivating a sense for community feeding on a national memory/history (ibid: 139). Again this “Distinktion” does not necessarily evolve only from institutions of power and persisting rule but also in opposition to them, as the author adds:

„The national memory is not only an invention of the 19th century, reorganizing alongside nation-states; it's the starting point of a new memorial policy born in Europe. The national memory is not limited to "culture"; It can become as political as the official memory at any time, especially if it is enacted as a counter-memory against the latter, as it calls into question its legitimacy based on monuments, censorship and propaganda“⁸ (ibid. [transl.]).

Modern nation-states might be subsumable under this theoretical premise as well as the great hegemonies of old. Hence, Assmann's notions on *Delegitimation* would apply e.g. to the post WWII Austrian Third Republic, trying to actively remember the atrocities and genocide their preceding society has committed. As circumstance has it, contemporary Austrian identity now carries a distinct historical burden that according to the authors statements on *Distinction*, might explain some of the unfavorable characteristics of the prototypical Austrian cynic. Since the initiation of the first World's Fair in London 1853, *Legitimation* practices have reached an international level, as identity politics are arguably progressing away from solely national categories,

⁸ „Das nationale Gedächtnis ist nicht erst eine Erfindung des sich nationalstaatlich reorganisierenden 19. Jahrhunderts; mit ihm entstand in Europa eine neuartige Memorialpolitik. Das nationale Gedächtnis ist nicht auf „Kultur“ beschränkt; es kann jederzeit ebenso politisch werden wie das offizielle, zumal wenn es als Gegenerinnerung gegen dieses antritt und dessen auf Monumente, Zensur und Propaganda gestützte Legitimation in Frage stellt“ (Assmann 1999: 139).

Assmann's "Funktionsgedächtnis" does as well. It subsequently has become more about a World's history that needs to be told the right way than that of just one nation-state.

The range of different theoretical approaches towards the terminology of legacy, legitimacy and legitimation that I've introduced within this chapter makes the contrasting juxtaposition of two World's Fairs in Shanghai and Milan even more compelling and worthwhile. The more so, since it also signifies a comparison of a totalitarian system with a democratic one in terms of the EXPO hosting entities being Shanghai, China, and Milan, Italy. Having said that, this project argues that in both cases local authorities have been facing problems of public dissent throughout the initial planning phase and processing of these mega events, while trying to seize an opportunity to build on their legitimacy and thus solidify their leadership.

1.3 Introduction of the following Chapters

The subsequent Chapters of this thesis seek to not only answer the research questions this project initially posed (cf. Chapter 1.1), but to continuously convey an idea of the nature and purpose of World's Fairs, to better the readers understanding of not only the communicational means and objectives, these mega events entail but also why and how certain narratives about them prevail as opposed to others and ultimately transition into historiography.

To go about that, the *second Chapter* will introduce a shortened contemplation on prior World's Fairs, beginning with the first Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, which also sparked a trend of subsequent World's Fairs to be held in the second half of the 19th century predominantly in Paris, whose fairs are subject of the second subchapter. The contention then moves on to the Vienna fair of 1873 and the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1893, the latter of which will be further addressed in Chapter 3, since its famed ethnographical exhibitions are not only of major interest to this thesis but also concern the foundations of the school of cultural anthropology. The last subchapter will then address the legacies of EXPOs within the 20th century, most notably their transition from imperial and competitive exhibitions of nation-states with hegemonial pretension – e.g. the architectural standoffs in between the USSR and the Third Reich in Paris 1937 (cf. Kargon, Molella et al. 2015: 7ff), or the "space race" (cf. Iber and Knoll 2010) initiated by the former in opposition to the USA in Brussels 1958

– to rather commercial fairs and the subsequent introduction of an international player in its own right: the multinational cooperation (MNC). The illustration and contemplation of past World's Fairs might be considered an epistemological building block in this regard to help reflecting on the empirical parts that follow (cf. Chapter 5/6). Given that this thesis is ultimately interested in the formation as well as formulation of an EXPO's legacy, the assessment of prior ones seems to be a preliminary requirement in this regard. Furthermore, to follow in Assmanns (1999: 12ff) tracks and her theories on communicative and cultural memory (cf. Chapters 1.2./4.2.2), offers the possibility to read and interpret the history of World's Fairs as an intersubjective narration of witnesses and stakeholders to these events.

The *third Chapter* is concerned with a more detailed contemplation on the shared history of World's Fairs with the anthropological discipline. Hence, its first sub-Chapter sees to take a look at the popular ethnographical exhibits, predominantly featured at World's Fairs prior to the 20th century, their application, usage and subsequent withdrawal from the scene at the beginning of the ensuing century. Thereby it also illustrates a discourse within the emerging American Anthropology on the nature of the discipline, in the wake of the Columbian exhibition 1893 that would ultimately result in a change of paradigms from precedent evolutionist and diffusionist notions to the principle of cultural relativism (cf. Boas 1965). The second sub-Chapter will then draw on these remarks and further elaborate in terms of the construction of a national identity of former colonial appendages of the West. Having been exhibited within ethnographical displays at World's Fairs accompanied by notions of cultural coherence, would arguably prompt and also help their subsequent claims for national autonomy (cf. San Pablo Burns 2013: 16). Having said that, the Chapter also foresees to elaborate in general on the national imagery, its characteristics and underlying reasoning applied at these fairs, by its different participants (cf. Benedict 1991: 5).

The *fourth Chapter* will take the discussions of Chapter 3 as a vantage point to illustrate prior ethnographies on World's Fairs and, by doing so, explain, how those relate and differ to the discourse-ethnographies on EXPO 2015 and post-EXPO Shanghai 2016/17 introduced within this dissertation (cf. Chapter 5/6), before going into more detail with regards to methods and theory in the latter part of this Chapter. The three main ethnographies introduced in this section are Penelope Harvey (1996) on Seville 1992, Alexa Färber (2006) on Hanover 2000 and Sophie Houdart (2012; 2013) on Shanghai 2010, eventually digressing into her work on EXPO 2005 in Aichi.

The second sub-Chapter will then explain the research focus and approach of the thesis at hand, starting with theoretically considerations, further moving on to methodological ones, eventually facing questions of the practical application of methods and theory as well as subsequent data analysis. The two main contributions to be discussed herein are Michel Foucault's (1988) discourse theory and George Marcus' (1995) multisited ethnography, emphasizing the concepts of "*following a metaphor*" (ibid.: 108) and "*a narrative*" (ibid.: 109), as well as subsequent methodological interpretations predominantly on the former and the use of his work within discourse analysis (Keller 2011; 2013). Thenceforth the discussion will move to current debates on the linkage of discourse analysis and ethnography (Elliker 2019; Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017), subsequently assessing ways and means of applying the concept of a so called "Discourse Ethnography" (Knoblauch 2001) to the given case studies on EXPO 2010 and 2015.

The *fifth Chapter* will then address the legacy of EXPO 2010, Shanghai. To do so, it begins with a discussion of the event in correlation with the Beijing Olympics 2008, to illustrate the communicational means applied to promote both of these mega events as well as the Chinese one-party rule (cf. Chapter 5.1). From there, it will further engage itself in a review on EXPO 2010 in particular, at first by initially addressing the scope of interpretation and discussion (cf. Chapter 5.2.1), while eventually digressing into the scientific and media discourse regarding this phenomenon (cf. Chapter 5.2.2). Chapter 5.3 and following are particularly interested in the EXPO experience, which will be assess in comparison with theme parks such as Disneyland Shanghai. From there the inherent imagery, narratives and discourse strands of EXPO, in particular the concept of "Harmony" ("和谐"), shall be discussed and deliberated in the context of contemporary PRC ideologies (cf. Aarase 2016; Nordin 2012b). The last section then illustrates the discourse ethnography conducted in Shanghai from 2016 to 2017, to assess what is left of the mega event, both in terms of its material as well as immaterial legacy, with respect to the event's theme having been "better city, better life". It starts with an initial address of the former EXPO site, how it has changed since the events' closure, being repurposed by the municipal government, and how local Shanghainese respond to these changes. From there it will take the discussion further to the institutions that henceforth re-narrate the event to future generations, while contemplating on the characteristics and plotlines of exhibits they entail. It does so not

in the wake of preliminary introduced party politics and ideals as well as new concepts, like that of “Red Tourism” (Denton 2014).

The *sixth Chapter* signifies the second main empirical contention of this thesis, focused on and built upon a discourse ethnography onsite of EXPO 2015, Milan, as well as subsequent assessments and interviews within the city itself. It preliminarily discusses the ambivalent role of the researcher within such a study, who often is treated like a journalist, resulting in easy access but also interviews that predominantly serve promotional ends. To reflect on this inevitable circumstance, the contention moves further to the protests that occurred prior and throughout the event and their objectives and ways of opposing the mega event, in addition to stakeholder interviews. The second sub-Chapter is interested in the stories that are told onsite of the EXPO, by the various participants via their displays and employees. Herein the discussion evolves around the interdependence of corporate and national participants, emphasizing notions of “nation branding” (Harvey 1996) as well as the limited means and thus possibilities of self-representation that impecunious national participants have to account for and cope with. The third part starts with an assessment of the EXPO in the wake of contemporaneous European crises, regarding the ways the mega event, being arguably a mimicry of the outside world (cf. Nordin 2012a: 8; Baudrillard 1994), depicts but also responds to the world outside of the fair. The dichotomy of “in- and outside” is then further elucidated alongside a contrasting juxtaposition of the communicational means, deployed by the EXPO organization and its appendages as opposed to the NOEXPO movement, their main opposition. As varying discourse strands, respectively trying to (de)legitimate the event, occur within the material as well as immaterial realms, they are followed and re-narrated by the author, whose discourse ethnography travels throughout the Milanese urbanity as well as the (social) media. The concluding sub-Chapter is ultimately interested in questioning this EXPO’s legacy. It develops from an additional return to Milan in 2018, to assess which narrations and discourse strands of the past have survived the mega event or might have even been institutionalized, henceforth serving as dispositives to the EXPO discourse and its eventual legacy.

2. History & Legacy of World's Fairs

2.1 The London Fair of 1851

When London opened its very first Great Exhibition in 1851, hosted in the – especially for that reason newly built – Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, the British were in awe about the world coming to town. It was the first and only time however such an event would fit in a glass hall of about 600metre length (Osterhammel 2010: 41), as the World's fairs that were still to come called for ever more space, hosting an continuously growing crowd. This first great exhibition was comparably small in size, with up to one million visitors (ibid.), it would've impaled in the face of later fairs, like that of Paris in 1900 and its crowd of 50 Million (ibid.: 42, Marsh 2002: 359) or this century's Shanghai EXPO, which boosted a historical maximum of 73 Million (cf. Winter 2015: 39).

London however represented a fraction of those numbers, hosting “only” about 6 Million visitors (Kalb 1994: 15). As it was taking place amidst the high times of British overseas imperialism, showcasing the colonial, economic and technological might of the commonwealth, it undoubtedly carried some implicate political value at its core, preaching the ideal of a unified world while on the other hand furthering national pride and competition (cf. Haltern 1971: 217f). Also Great Britain, which had obviously won this first civilizational race of many still to come within the international community, not least did so by prior industrial developments, especially the evolution of the locomotive and construction of extensive railways, that had played a huge role in bringing people and exhibits⁹ to its capitol in the first place (Osterhammel 2010: 41).

The fair had been initiated by Prince Albert, the spouse of Queen Victoria, who presided the Royal Commission that was put in charge with organizing the event and thus also must be credited for its eventual success in bringing together the whole world at one place (Kalb 1994: 15). In the uprun to the event the Prince, having been born in the German dukedom of Sachsen-Coburg-Saalfeld, had used his personal aristocratic connections to lure international participants to London especially from Europe, which in mid-nineteen century had still been to great parts under the rule of absolute monarchs (Davis 2002: 342f). It was this eventual and unprecedented internationality of the Great Exhibition that would then also pave the way for it being supported by the British Parliament, as the latter didn't intend to lose its face in the wake of international attention (ibid.). The reasoning behind and ultimate purpose for the initiation of this first

⁹ Supposedly 13,936 exhibitors with more than 100,000 exhibits were hosted in London that year (cf. Schriefers 2014: 10).

exhibition was however interpreted differently by its many observers, supporters and participants. Albert himself advertised the Great Exhibition, within a speech in the Mansion House in 1849, as follows:

"Nobody, however, who has paid any attention to the peculiar features of our present era, will doubt for a moment that we are living at a period of most wonderful transition, which tends rapidly to accomplish that great end, to which, indeed, all history points — the realisation of the unity of mankind. [...] Gentlemen - the Exhibition of 1851 is to give us a true test and a living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived in this great task, and a new starting point from which all nations will be able to direct their further exertions" (Prince Albert 1849: 201ff).

Another famous, even though rather antagonistic commentator of the first World's Fair has been none other than the Karl Marx, who just so happened to have moved to London a couple of years prior to the Great Exhibition. In the wake of a series of national revolutions that had taken place in continental Europa in 1848¹⁰ (Wheen 2001: 125), Marx suspected that Great Britain, or rather the global Bourgeoise, who he saw as the driving forces behind the event, were soon to face a similar fate, falling victim to their own hubris. Exemplified by a pamphlet of his dating back to 1850, wherein he proclaims:

„The bourgeoisie of the world establishes its pantheon via this exhibition in this modern Rome, where it exposes its gods, who it has made itself, with proud complacency. [...] The bourgeoisie is celebrating its greatest festival at a moment when the collapse of all its glory awaits, a collapse that will prove to it more potent than ever how its powers have outgrown its breed. At a future exhibition, the bourgeois may no longer be the owners of these productive forces, but only serve as their Ciceroni“¹¹ (Marx [transl.] 1850: 431).

¹⁰ The most prominent being the overthrow of the French Monarchy and initiation of the Second Republic (Wheen 2001: 125).

¹¹ „Die Bourgeoisie der Welt errichtet durch diese Ausstellung im modernen Rom ihr Pantheon, worin sie ihre Götter, die sie sich selbst gemacht hat, mit stolzer Selbstzufriedenheit ausstellt. [...] Die Bourgeoisie feiert dies ihr größtes Fest in einem Augenblick, wo der Zusammenbruch ihrer ganzen Herrlichkeit bevorsteht, ein Zusammenbruch, der ihr schlagender als je nachweisen wird, wie die von ihr erschaffenen Mächte ihrer Zucht entwachsen sind. Bei einer zukünftigen Ausstellung werden die Bourgeois vielleicht nicht mehr als Inhaber dieser Produktivkräfte, sondern nur noch als ihre Ciceroni figurieren“ (Marx 1850: 431).

However and even though some observers have shared his opinion, or rather were in fear that such an event in the wake of persisting European crises might indeed be used by foreign and domestic agitators alike to fuel class struggles to a point of further dividing an already unequal British society, history tells us that quite the contrary would turn out to be the case (Kaiser 2002: 171). The Great Exhibition of London was actually appreciated and visited by a very heterogeneous audience that span throughout the classes and featured working class families side by side with the bourgeoisie of Britain (ibid.)¹². Thus it was eventually regarded a victory for the government and organizers, but also liberals and advocates of free trade, who would go on to use the success of this first World's Fair to openly propagate deregulating policies as e.g. tariff cuts not only in Britain (ibid.: 172f) but also other countries, like France (ibid.: 174f) and thus further "encourage international importation and exportation" (Davis 2002: 339).

For many this signified and concluded the main purpose of this venture, but it wouldn't have worked out so flawlessly, if not for the internationality of the attending exhibitors and visitors, who gave this venture a sense of universality and thus the means to subsequently claim objectivity for the whole fair (cf. ibid.: 340). For the first time in the history of mankind the people of the world were coming together officially celebrating their (latest) collective achievements. This also underpinned the secular and utilitarian character of the fair (Lehmkuhl 2005: 33), within which human inventiveness and overall technological and scientific evolution certainly outranked a higher being leading humanity's way, as new useful inventions were introduced to an international audience for the first time¹³, not least the Crystal Palace, which "was itself the most impressive display of the advanced state of British industry" (Yanni 2002: 120). As *man was* - literally and demonstratively - *forging his own destiny*, this first "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations" proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy right from the start.

Even though it supposedly took Prince Albert some time to convince the government to invest in the idea, put forth by the Society of Arts, which he superseded as president (Bennett 2002: 99), and it faced a series of plan-changes and struggles

¹² To cater for the different classes of visitors and their capabilities "different economic categories" were installed being commonly known as either "shilling days (Monday to Thursday inclusive), two shillings and sixpence days (Friday), five shilling days (Saturdays), and Season Tickets (3 guineas for men and 2 guineas for women)" (Taylor 2002: 38).

¹³ E.g. the telegraph (Davis and Bosbach 2002: 360) and steam powered machineries (ibid. 322).

throughout its preparational phase¹⁴, it would become a fast selling item as soon as it opened its doors, of which seemingly everybody wanted a part of.

Visitors were e.g. jumping on the news that the USA were occupying a vast space at the exhibition¹⁵, nations and companies were sending representatives to the fair to get in contact with potential investors and supporters (cf. Lehmkuhl 2005: 31) or to propagate their own products (cf. Benedict 2002: 82) in front of an arguably monied audience and to eventually position them on the British market (cf. Davis 2002: 343). On the other hand the Great Exhibition was widely considered a cradle of knowledge, culture and education at the time (cf. Kalb 1994: 16), thus also covered by journalists from all around the world. The domestic and international press followed the event closely, due to the ongoing competition of nations, and would further drive visitors to the event, with every published article (cf. Findling 2002: 201; Davis 2002: 343; Kalb 1994: 16). In some regards the British helped further the international appeal of the fair by boasting own exhibits as cultural placeholders representing their overseas dominions, or, e.g. in the case of the Chinese exhibits which were orchestrated by British consulates, whole countries (cf. Haltern 1971: 210/262). Hence, John R. Davis, co-editor of “The Great Exhibition and its legacy” quite decently concludes the following about the first World’s Fair:

“At the domestic political level, involvement in the Great Exhibition was an important development in many states in bringing together government and commerce. It helped raise the profiles of modernisers and reformers in parts of the world where the forces of the old and the new were more uncertainly balanced than in Britain. The political, cultural and social messages of the Exhibition which were broadcast round the world in the press, in literature, and in people’s minds, bred a desire to emulate the modern world encapsulated in Britain, as well as a desire to distinguish oneself from it “ (Davis 2002: 346).

Undoubtedly this first *Great Exhibition of London in 1851* symbolized an unique point in the history of human civilization, as would all the World’s Fairs that were to follow, carrying an ideological message at its core while serving as the biggest *Medium* of its

¹⁴ Actually Joseph Paxtons Crystal Palace had been only the second choice after the committee’s “ugly brick railway shed of a design [...] risked delay, and thus disgrace before all the nations of the world” (Fisher 2002: 243).

¹⁵ Which would eventually turn out to be untrue since they weren’t able ship all the exhibits to London in time and exhibit as much as they initially proposed (Findling 2002: 198).

time (Osterhammel 2010: 41). As such it was however very elusive, as Geppert (2002: 10) would argue that by just indirectly imposing traditions while leaving behind a rather insignificant material legacy, the World's Fair as a Medium, with its peculiar mixture of "*unauflösbarer Flüchtigkeit*" and "*vermächtnisschaffender Beharrungskraft*", represents a complex terrain that is usually difficult to grasp within historiography.

Indeed, the biggest remainder of this first Great Exhibition, would eventually be destroyed a mere hundred years later. The Crystal Palace had been relocated from Hyde Park to Sydenham Hill, South London, just three years after the event, as Hyde Park proved rather inconvenient to be accessed by public transport (Halter 1971: 344) and a huge structure like this wasn't welcomed by all of London's people at that place and time (Halter 1971: 78/81ff). A newly founded holding company, which also involved architect Joseph Paxton and members of the LB&SCR (London, Brighton and South Coast Railway), eventually took on the job to rebuilt the hall even bigger than the original one at Sydenham Hill, to be better accessible by train and serve as a venture to host events at (cf. Kay 2008: 24 / Kalb 1994: 14).

Throughout the decades it would turn into a place that sometimes is referred to as "the world's first theme park", which was "offering education, entertainment, a rollercoaster, cricket matches, and even 20 F.A. Cup Finals between 1895 -1914" (Holland 2014). However it would eventually be gone on Nov. 30, 1936. Shortly after it had been renovated and reinstated by Sir Henry Buckland a British manager and late aficionado of the first World's Fair (Schoenefeldt 2011: 263). It ironically burnt down to its ground under his watchful eyes, as he was allegedly talking a walk that day together with his daughter Crystal, who he had named after the hall, when a fire broke loose that supposedly was seen throughout six counties, due to its magnitude and that of the hall (cf. LIFE 1936: 34f). Nevertheless the eventual legacy of the Palace, which had been hosting exhibitions and events for nearly a century, would outlast even its own existence. As e.g. the *Crystal Palace* Dinosaurs Sculpture Park, having been the world's first in 1854 (Yanni 2002: 123f), or the *Crystal Palace* Football Club, having been founded within its facilities in 1905, playing in the English Premier League to date, are still paying tribute to its memory in present times, which is also upheld by the Crystal Palace Foundation (2018).

As the Crystal Palace was inextricably tied to the idea and image of the first Great Exhibition, it always had sought to educate people by the means of entertaining them, with vast and attentive displays, exhibits and events, ranging from art, to sports,

to science and technology, showcasing the Victorian Grandeur of the time and with that paving the way for a range of other museums that followed in its imperial footsteps (cf. Yanni 2002: 126). Today it can be said that “the Crystal Palace of 1851 left a complex legacy that affiliated nature and commerce, science and showmanship, and education and entertainment” (ibid.: 122), while its legitimation had been occasionally questioned (cf. Marx 1850: 431) it sure reserved its place in the history, as later World’s Fairs, which were soon to come, would base their architectural concepts in parts on that of the Crystal Palace¹⁶ and shape their own image parallel to that of this first Great Exhibition.

2.2 The Paris Fairs

The better part of the World’s Fairs still to come within the 19th century would find their home in Paris. As EXPOs 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, 1900, all were hosted in France’s capital¹⁷, it would come as no surprise that the official EXPO Bureau, the BIE, Bureau International des Expositions, would eventually also be established there (cf. BIE 2019). Clearly France had missed out on the opportunity to be the hosting site of the first World’s Fair¹⁸, as it had long been considered a cradle of culture and artisan production within Europe (Cleve 2002: 191, Davis 2002: 26) and had a history of successfully hosting industrial exhibitions itself (Rudoe 2002: 68/Kalb 1994: 8f)¹⁹. In 1855 it thus tried to reclaim its title from Great Britain hosting the first World’s Fair on French soil and would go on to outbid not only other national fairs, but also its own in the decades to come. Marsh recounts the legacy of the Paris Fairs within the closing 19th century as follows:

“Six million people visited the Crystal Palace. But nearly twice that number, eleven million attended the Paris exhibition of 1867; thirty-two million in 1889; and a staggering fifty million in 1900. The surface space of the exhibition in 1851 was nearly doubled in 1867 and multiplied nearly six-fold by 1900” (Marsh 2002: 359).

¹⁶ E.g. the Palais de L’Industrie in Paris 1855 or the oval gallery in Champs de Mars 1867, the Rotunde in Vienna in 1873, or cupola and columns within the exhibition area of Chicago 1893 (Roschitz 1989: 14).

¹⁷ The list of World’s fairs within the 19th century is furthermore concluded by the Expos “Antwerpen (1885, 1894), Barcelona (1888), Brussel (1888, 1897), Chicago (1893), London (1862), Melbourne (1880), Philadelphia (1876), Wien (1873)” (Osterhammel 2010: 41).

¹⁸ Probably also due to the revolution taking place in 1848 (Price 2001: 11).

¹⁹ Which they weren’t willing however to open up for foreign competition (Rudoe 2002: 68).

The reasons behind hosting this seemingly unproportionate amount World's Fairs in a comparably short period of time, also aiming higher with every fair, are certainly to be questioned by attentive observers of history. Here the political aspects of these first World's Fairs play an important role. While the first exhibition in London back in 1851 had, due to it running smoothly from beginning to end, arose to a symbol for a resilient British state in the face of European revolutions, quite the contrary can be said about the fairs in France within the remaining 19th century (Marsh 2002: 366).

In 1848 Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, known as Napoleon the III., the nephew and eventual heir of the infamous French conqueror and general, had become the first – and until Emmanuel Macron took office in 2017 would also remain the youngest ever – elected president of France (Price 2001: 9f). However as his reign of the Second French Republic culminated in 1852, he once again turned the nation into an Empire, thus his rule of the state persevered as that of an authoritarian emperor (ibid.: 41).

The subsequent push for hosting the first World EXPOs on French soil in 1855 and 1867, were certainly meant to solidify his power by demonstrating, what the country had accomplished in economic, industrial and artisan terms thanks to his leadership, but wouldn't save him from his military defeats against the Prussian army, which eventually forced him into exile and would lead to the restoration of the French Republic (Marsh 2002: 366). Once reinstated the latter would, however, once again seek to use the representative capabilities of these great expositions to serve its own ends and with that make the French population forget about the prior fairs as well. Ultimately the representatives of the reinstated French republic succeeded in their quest as the following exhibitions turned out to be the most exuberant the world had ever seen.

Contrasting the example of the Crystal Palace with that of the Eiffel Tower one has to admit that the "French achievement" (ibid.: 359) as opposed to the British one was made to last (also see Geppert 2002: 10). Both structures had respectively been the iconic center-parts of EXPO 1851 and 1889, but whilst the former had eventually been relocated to a different spot in the London periphery and thus in British history, the latter is today standing in the Champ de Mars, where all of Paris expositions after 1855 were held, still occupying a place in the hearth of France until the present time (Marsh 2002: 359). Comparing these nations and their World's Fairs, Marsh eventually comes away with the following conclusion:

“Conversely, while the Crystal Palace disappeared and the exhibition of 1862 was soon forgotten, the regime that was served by the men who organized these British world’s fairs proved enduring. [...] Britain did not need to stage more world’s fairs. The first one alone had more than served its purpose. France captured the form of world’s fairs through brilliant repetitive development. But the repetition could not disguise the constitutional instability of the country” (ibid.: 367).

The race for ever bigger World’s Fairs had begun, officially started by Great Britain, it was France, which subsequently solidified the role and importance of such ventures within modern history. These new forms of exhibitions would also signify a type of “economic liberalism” that was at play, both in London and in Paris at that time, being “global in its vision yet basically nationalistic in ambition” (ibid.: 360). Other World’s Fairs within the 19th century were no exception.

2.3 From Vienna to the World, a Conclusion of the 19th Century Fairs

The Vienna World’s Fair, held in the year 1873, also, as its predecessors did, played a partially political role, as it was meant to emphasize the place and role of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a connector in between Western and Eastern Europe, as well as the Orient, domestically solidifying the imperial status quo, while furthering its cultural and economic standing internationally (cf. Roschitz 1989: 42f). In 1867 the Austrian unitarian rule had been disestablished and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy followed, granting further autonomy to the Hungarian part of the empire, which the more called for Vienna to show and position itself as a “deutsche Metropole mit deutscher Gesinnung” (eng.: “German metropolis with a German attitude”) (ibid: 43) within the multiethnic state itself as well as to the world.

Also in a few other regards the Viennese Fair shared some particular features with the afore mentioned EXPOs of Britain and France. The fair’s eventual imperial legacy is surely tied to Vienna’s present day image, both as a city of culture and one of architectural grandeur²⁰. When visitors came to Vienna in 1873, they certainly couldn’t help themselves, but recognize a wide range of building- and infrastructural projects, extensive and of imperial might, that wouldn’t shy away from a comparison

²⁰ Within a couple of years prior and past the EXPO a range of Vienna’s most important architectural sights were either initiated (the cityhall 1872, the university 1873, the parliament 1874), being built (the Votiv church) or concluded (the state opera 1869) (Roschitz 1989: 57).

with what Paris had to offer at that point in history (cf. *ibid.*: 57). The more so since Kaiser Franz Joseph, who – while visiting EXPO 1867 – was more than content with the Austrian exhibition, had already famously coined the term “Ich bin stolz auf Österreich!” (engl.: “I am proud of Austria!”) (*ibid.*: 46) being there. On the other hand – and quite ironically – the Rotunde, the imperial landmark of EXPO 1873 and supposedly “eighth wonder of the world” (*ibid.*: 72) at that time, would meet the same fate as its London predecessor did, burning down to its ground in 1937, just one year after the Crystal Palace had burst into flames (cf. *ibid.*).

The concept of the World’s Fair would then eventually also move beyond the European border, subsequently being hosted in Australia (Melbourne 1880) and the USA (Philadelphia 1876, Chicago 1893) before the turn of the century, indirectly serving as a reminder of the British overseas imperialism of a then not too distant past. Having said that, these circumstances were in certain regards also celebrating its demise, as e.g. the torch of the – then yet to be finished – statue of liberty was first shown to public at the Philadelphia fair in 1876 (Sutherland 2003: 26), while her head was exhibited two years later within the Paris fair of 1878 (*ibid.*: 29ff), until it was finally finished and ceremoniously given by the people of France to the people of the USA in 1886 (*ibid.*: 81ff; Roche 1998: 12f).

However, it would be the yet to come Chicago Fair in particular, also known as World’s Columbian Exposition, that would arguably have the most durable effect on contemporary American culture. As it celebrated the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by the famous voyager that lend it his name, it was, of course, aiming to again outperform its predecessor²¹ and – even though it opened its doors a year too late for the quadricentennial jubilee, as construction didn’t meet the schedule (cf. Burg 1976: 109) – excelled in doing so. Given its theme and overall narrative, it was sure to be as internationalist yet patriotic of an EXPO as the world had ever seen. First and foremost because the host country, which a mere 30 years after the American Civil War, called for a nation-wide participation of all its states; thirty state- and territorial governments actually followed the call²² (*ibid.*: 150f), who then would show the people

²¹ In this case the Paris EXPO of 1889 that also boasted the Eiffel Tower, unquestionably the most famous World’s Fair exhibit of all time.

²² With California and Illinois supposedly being the most magnificent (Burg 1976: 150).

of the world, what made them and thus respectively the USA, as a concept and nation, in particular, second to none in its evolution²³ (cf. Smith and Vendl 2011: 59).

Yet also the European continent had – in the meantime – evolved to rather peaceful conditions, with mature revolutions having turned it into a state of calmness and democracy for the time being and wouldn't have one suspected that it was yet to become the battleground of two fierce World Wars. In the peaceful race of nations that those early EXPOs had always furthered, the European nations also tried to place themselves amidst this global narrative that the Columbian Fair provided. Spain for one was basing its pavilion on the memory of its famed historical figure Christopher Columbus himself, building a replica of the convent of La Rabida²⁴ that featured the life-history of the explorer (cf. Burg 1976: 210), with also the duke of Veragua, a lineal descendant of Columbus attending the exposition (ibid.: 109). Norway on the other hand e.g. was taking one step further back in history, sending a 1880 excavated Viking Ship to Michigan, demonstratively sailing it from Scandinavia to Michigan, thus indirectly claiming the title of having been the first to discover the new continent (cf. Smith and Vendl 2011: 27). Yet also the Japanese were setting up a pavilion that was complimented by journalists and visitors alike for its sophisticated handiwork and overall elegance as well as for its cultural exhibits (cf. ibid.: 214). After the event was over, the Japanese would eventually leave the structure as a gift to the Americans, which then ironically would be destroyed by an arsonist during World War II (cf. Ford 2011: 127).

Seemingly all of the civilized world was coming to town and a fair deal of what might have been considered uncivilized by some at that time (cf. Smith and Vendl 2011: 64) was putting up shows and cultural displays at the soon to be well-known "Midway" of the Columbian Fair²⁵. It was here where all exotic and unheard of was displayed, where fairytales figures and peregrine wonders like belly dancers, snake charmers and camel drivers came to life and were to be found besides various other sorts of worldly entertainment and pleasures, like alcohol or tobacco (cf. ibid.: 64ff). For many it was the most fun place they'd ever seen, whilst others would see it as a means of demoralizing the masses and even described it as "the gateway to hell" (ibid.: 65).

²³ Also e.g. in terms of Woman rights, which also found their way into the exhibition by example of the Woman's Building and other displays that showed "women's achievements" and served "the women's causes" (Smith and Vendl 2011: 60).

²⁴ "where Columbus had taken refuge before finally securing from Queen Isabella" (Burg 1976: 210).

²⁵ Again it is a local sports team that upholds the memory of this fair, as the NFL's Chicago Bears would eventually be and still often are referred to as the "Monsters of the Midway".

Those early fairs always sought ways of exhibiting and stylizing *the other* as strange and enigmatic (cf. Osterhammel 2010: 42), but – even though they would occasionally draw the vice squad to the scene – this instance also furthered new levels of positive curiosity and appreciation e.g. within a Columbian fair that took a step back from the we/them dichotomies of old, at least in ways unprecedented at that times (cf. Chapter 3). This Fair seemed to be as much about the unity as it was about the progress of humankind as a whole.

As “visitors swarmed to sample [the] sights, sounds, food, and entertainment” (ibid.: 64) at the famed Midway of this World’s Fair, they could basically sample the world for all its cultural, culinary but also technological merits and prowess. For example Thomas Edison, then in his prime, was one of the Fairs most lauded exhibitors, as he had built a “tower of light” that featured thousand differently colored light bulbs (Burg 1976: 202) and occasional shows, at a time, when most people still lit there houses with gas lamps. Furthermore, “what eventually became the motion picture arrived with [his] Kinetoscope” (Smith and Vendl 2011: 68). The fair itself must have struck the 27 million mostly rural visitors as the brightest thing they’d ever seen, as it was lit by 90,000 luminous lamps consumed thrice the amount of energy that the city of Chicago would need that time (Treagus 2013: 46), already forecasting an age of electricity and technological prowess that was about to come. The White City, as the fair site was named, would feature a range of things and commodities that were unseen at the time, but that future generations would eventually grow up with; amongst such things were elevators, ironers, calculators, dishwashers and much more (ibid.: 47).

Then again this World’s Fair wouldn’t spare the superlative, as it hosted the largest roofed structure on earth that year, also providing the fairs main exhibition hall, *the Manufacturers and Liberal Arts Building* “the unrivaled star of the show. It was the exposition's challenge to the Eiffel Tower” (Burg 1976: 132). Fittingly it advertised itself as a venture to gather all the nations, religions and culture of the world “under one roof” (Hollweg 2001: 59). People, who visited the fair at the verge of the century probably wondered, what mankind as a whole would still be able to achieve in the century to come, as it already had accomplished so many things. It were first and foremost the Americans, who excelled with the opportunity of hosting their second World’s Fair after Philadelphia 1876.

The Columbian Fair in many regards could be regarded the first huge exclamation mark of an American exceptionalism since the civil war, which from thereon out would take the country by storm and further emerge as a national ideology within the upcoming 20th century. Furthermore it helped Chicago achieve its modern metropolitan reputation, as the city that had long been domestically regarded as backward, overnight became an international sensation (Hollweg 2001: 23). Carter Henry Harrison, the Mayor of Chicago during the times of the fair, also commented on the Columbian fair upon its closing appropriately:

“This World’s Fair has been the greatest educator of the nineteenth century, the greatest this century has seen. [...] The past has nothing for its model; the future will be utterly incapable of competing with it, aye, for hundreds of years to come [...] It was the audacity of genius that imagined this thing. It was the pluck of the people congregated from all the cities of this Union, from all the nationalities of the world, speaking all languages“ (Harrison 1893; cited by Truman 1893: 605f).

However, as so often in history, tragedy would tarnish the memory of yet another World’s Fair. Two days before its official closing and just hours after Carter Harrison issued the above speech, the mayor would be shot to death at his home by the hands of a former associate of his, turning the closing ceremony into a funeral (cf. Burg 1976: 286). Just a few months later a great deal of fair buildings would meet a similar fate, as fire once again succeeded over human grandeur (cf. *ibid.*: 286f; Smith and Vendl 2011: 87). Quite cynical but nevertheless truthful Burg concludes the Columbian Fair as follows:

“The grand White City, the glorious creation of men who ‘must have been very near to God,’ became the scene of a great Gotterdammerung. There was no choice but to sacrifice the buildings to the wreckers. Their work, like that of the builders before, was prodigious” (Burg 1976: 288).

Facing the end of a 19th century that the World’s Fair as a concept and as a means of international contest, had without a doubt coined, mankind was aiming ever higher in its prolonging quest to best all the rest, while time and time again falling victim to its own presumptuousness. The 20th century of World’s Fair would proof to be no different, in this regard.

2.4 The 20th century World's Fairs

While the World was still celebrating its progress, stability, prosperity and peace at the end of the 19th century, in Chicago and Paris – first and foremost with regards to the industrialized nations. It would soon tumble into the most brutal times it had ever experienced, subsequently changing the way it was viewing and exhibiting itself, meaning the nations of the world. Since their initiation in 1851 World's Fairs always served as a symbol of the era they were held in, which – if you look at them in their entirety – makes them somewhat the narrator of a very globalized history of mankind. As the early EXPOs were often meant to demonstrate the representational capacities of nations, with host-states seeking affirmation from the in- and outside, the nations of the world were soon to be joined by a different player: the multinational cooperation.

The Columbian Fair had already showcased a race for predominance within the electric-industry, in between alternating and direct current (also see Bertuca 1996: 81f), fought out by George Westinghouse's²⁶ Electric Cooperation and Thomas Edison's General Electric. The next World's Fair that was held in Chicago in 1933 would then set a trend towards those exhibitions being as much about human endeavor and national representation, as they were about trade and corporate-public-relations (cf. Benedict 1991: 9; Smits and Jansen 2012: 174).

At the New York fair six years later a corporate exhibit, namely that of General Motors, would already become the most lauded of the whole exhibition (Kretschmer 1999), another famous company that participated for the first time in 1893 exhibited a Soda Fountain in 1933, and raised an actual bottling-plant at Brussels in 1958 (cf. Broch 2015). What I'm referring to here is, of course, the Coca Cola Company, which had been a regular at World's Fairs ever since (cf. *ibid*), as the same goes for a range of other MNCs as well (cf. Chapter 6.2.2). The aforementioned Westinghouse Electric Cooperation also found its way into the New York fair, donating a time-capsule that contained 75 items²⁷ significant for the time (cf. Pendray 1939) and now, a mere 80 years later, still has 4020 year to go before

²⁶ Who achieved to be the official electricity contractor of the Columbian Fair, providing it with alternating current in the process (Bertuca 1996: 81).

²⁷ The items featured "Small articles of common use", "Textiles and Materials", "Miscellaneous Items", "An Essay in Microfilm", and a "Newsreel" (Pendray 1939: 18ff).

being re-opened. In fact, nowadays World Expos wouldn't be conceivable without their various corporate patrons, as they "have become the principal sponsors" of World's Fairs already within the second half of the twentieth century (Benedict: 1991).

Even though these EXPOs hadn't yet challenged those of the 19th century in terms of numbers of visitors, within the first half of the 20th century, it was certainly apparent that World's Fairs had become a regular thing that needed a standardized set of rules and guidelines for their organization, as well as to be monitored by an own institution, to ensure their ongoing objective allocation in between the nations of the World. Thus in 1928 the BIE ("bureau international des expositions") was founded in Paris by then 31 nation-states (Kalb 1994: 54ff), too see to these tasks in the future. In fact, if not for the subsequent control and awarding of EXPOs by the BIE, the fairs would probably still have been outbidding each other to the end of boasting ever bigger architectural structures and/or visitor counts than their predecessors (cf. *ibid.*), as they already had done so during the second half of the 19th century. Throughout its existence the BIE would eventually also change the agenda of the fair from being first and foremost about the achieved industrial and civilizational prowess and therein the comparison of nations, to the future development of the world community²⁸. However, during some EXPOs to come, the global stage they offered, would still be used as a means of competing for World Leadership in a peaceful environment.

The royal imperial might of old that was still a narrative constituent to the early fairs, e.g. the Victorian Grandeur of London 1851 or the Napoleonic delusions of grandeur of the first Paris Expos (cf. Chapter 2.2), within the 20th century was to be substituted by new concepts of global hegemony, symbolized by the USA, the USSR or the Third Reich, that reveled for international recognition and predominance in their respective times and on the propagandistic battlegrounds that the subsequent EXPOs would present them with.

The first and probably most prominent of examples herein was the Paris EXPO of 1937 that featured an architectural stand-off between Soviet Russia and

²⁸ This is in part also manifested in a range of resolutions issued by the BIE, e.g. by setting certain themes like ecology as the objectives of EXPOs to come (1972) (Kalb 1994: 286ff). For an oversight of the BIEs core principles and functions one might refer to Kalb's (1994: 54f) accounts.

Nazi Germany (cf. Kargon, Molella et al. 2015: 7ff). Residing opposite and facing each other the two exponents, must have seemed to be in a metaphorical dialogue on the nature of the imminent future of continental Europe. While the German Economy-Minister Hjalmar Schacht concealed the Nazis supposed intentions, officially promoting “lively trading” and “political understanding” (Schacht 1937: 5 / cf. Schriefers 2014: 166) in between France and Germany, “the Russian contribution in 1937 [...] was making massive claims with respect to foreign policy” (Schriefers 2014: 168).

Just two years later the '39 New York World's Fair, then already marking the beginning of World War II, would be held without Germany. The Hitler Regime had actively withdrawn its participation, calling the EXPO a Jewish led event (probably referring to some of the events initiators, like New York mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, City-Planner Robert Moses, Minister of Finance Henry Morgenthau or PR-Guru and nephew of Sigmund Freud, Edward Bernays) that the national socialists would have to boycott (Weinke 2017: 242), before eventually invading Poland²⁹ later that year. Italy however filled in the gap, building a propaganda structure that allegedly sought to draw comparisons with the Roman Empire, to represent the Mussolini led fascist state (cf. Schriefers 2014: 230). The following era was then symbolized by the Brussel EXPO of 1958 and conveyed already a very different picture than the EXPOs before had, as:

“The former Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) all were represented [but] each assumed a very low profile. In striking contrast to their prewar pavilions, their exhibitions were modest in size, low in silhouette, and sent the message that all three were ready and willing to participate in the family of nations and its desire for a peaceful world” (Kargon, Molella et al. 2015: 141).

One could certainly feel a positive wind of change at Brussels, as also e.g. Austria was assorted its own pavilion, the first one since Paris 1937. Just three years after the allied powers had left the country and Austria had signed its state-treaty, the reemerging Republic had the chance to again position itself as “a nation looking towards the future” (Schriefers 2014: 262), as its place within “the heart of Europe [...] destined it to function as a link between western civilizations” (BRUSSELS 1958: 235; as cited in Schriefers 2014: 262). Nevertheless, it had been the USA, who, having inarguably been

²⁹ Because of the beginning of the war some national pavilions would be closed, others covered in black cloth, while others again, as e.g. Poland and France, would fly their flags at half-mast (Cotter 2009: 121).

the greatest winner of the second World War period, would seek to demonstrate themselves in all glory.

They wouldn't, however, rest undisputed in their claim for global supremacy at the '58 EXPO, as they would find themselves amidst a technological/propagandist competition with the USSR, which would eventually become known as the "Space Race" (Iber and Knoll 2010) and would last for years to come. USSR preparations for the Brussel EXPO of 1958 were marked by a sudden change of plans, as they originally had planned to put their emphasis on industry, science and culture (cf. Kargon, Molella et al. 2015: 142). After the Soviets had launched the "world's first artificial satellites, Sputnik I and Sputnik II" (ibid.) in 1957, their "achievements in space began to assume an increasingly larger role. [...] Models of the two Sputniks were prominently displayed alongside a model of a future Soviet 'cosmic space platform' powered by the light of a lamp" (ibid.) and people were lured into their pavilion by a constant Beep-Sound (cf. Schriefers 2014: 272). The international public and the press alike were astound of the technological progress the Socialists were making and exhibiting, as also the New York Times had to admit that

"The Russians, in short, behave as if they have a clear and definite idea of what they wish to achieve with their pavilion. They have arrived at Brussels confident and optimistic, fresh from such scientific triumphs as the launching of their sputniks" (Taubman 1958: 11f).

While a German journalist concluded that the Sputnik models shown, were the actual true landmark buildings (Schulze 1958: 11) of an EXPO that had also showcased the Atomium, still being one of Brussels main sights today. For sure the USA were also much acclaimed at the fair, showing the American way of life and landscapes in a masterfully crafted state-pavilion that sought a calm approach to the EXPO theme "A World View: A New Humanism" and thus avoided any distinct political characteristics, after coming out on top after a fierce first half of the 20th century (cf. Schriefers 2014: 270). However they themselves would be fueled by the Russian exhibits to engage in *the race for space* not only in technological but subsequently propagandistic terms within the decades and World's Fairs to come.

Within the same year the Brussels EXPO was held, the American Science Advisory Committee under regency of Dwight D. Eisenhower issued a statement entitled "Introduction to Outer Space", which detailed "four main reasons to undertake

a national space mission” (Kargon, Molella et al. 2015: 148). It was later eventually put into effect at the Osaka EXPO 1970, where the USA were then showcasing an Apollo 11 model after they’d successfully landed on the moon (cf. *ibid*). However prestigious these international encounters and competitions for the Public Opinion at EXPOs had become throughout the century, they had always been exercised in an utmost peaceful manner in between the participants and quite often featured a fair amount of competitive curiosity amongst each other as well. In fact just two years prior to Neil Armstrong becoming the first man on the moon, the February issue of the ’67s LIFE magazine would feature an article/advertise on the Soviet Pavilion at the Melbourne EXPO that year, entitled “Look what the Russians are building, just 40 miles from the U.S.A. As an American you should look into it” (LIFE 1967: 15).

The Americans however also used the Montreal EXPO as a means of propagating their own cause this time around, as they exhibited a series of space-travel related machinery (cf. *Der Spiegel* 1967: 162f). Their as “Biosphère” entitled pavilion, soon would also turn into a must-see at the ’67 fair, not least so because it was enroute of the mini-monorail that traveled through the EXPO site (Schriefers 2014: 300). Initially the EXPO was meant to be hosted by the USSR, celebrating the 50th jubilee of the Russian Revolution, and thus were awarded the event in 1960 by the BIE. But they would withdrew their candidacy, officially due to financial concerns (cf. Fulford 1968: 10). Nevertheless they would still partake in the ongoing PR-war with the USA, related to their respective technological supremacy in outer space, hosting a model of space shuttle Vostok 1 and some satellite exhibits (Schriefers 2014: 302). In the end the Russians once again superseded the Americans in EXPO-categories, as their pavilion was the most visited of all (D’Alimonte 2016).

Again symbolically facing each other, quite similar to the pavilions of Germany and Russia at the ’37 Paris fair, the Russian Pavilion, would eventually be moved back to Russia to be rebuilt there³⁰ (cf. *Der Spiegel* 1967: 162f), while the Biosphère was donated to Canada, now serving as an Environment Museum. Aside from Melbourne’67, the afore mentioned Osaka EXPO 1970 certainly stuck out amongst the World’s Fairs following an impressive Brussels ’58 exhibition, not least so because those EXPOs were able to set the first new visitor-records since Paris 1900, which had

³⁰ The pavilion that looked like a ski-jump from afar was built by an Italian firm (cf. *Der Spiegel* 1967: 162f) would ironically feature a range of visual similarities with its successor at the 2015 fair in Milan (cf. Bondarenko 2015).

hosted 48 Million at the verge of the last century (Guedes 1979: 117)³¹. In fact Melbourne hosted a staggering 50,3 Million visitors (Fulford 1968: 8) only to be outranked three years later by Osaka's 64,2 million³² (Gold and Gold 2005). A title it would hold until the Shanghai EXPO of 2010 (cf. Yu et al 2012: 48-49; Schriefers 2014: 316). The Osaka EXPO was not only the first one in Japan, but the first on the Asian continent as well. Prior attempts to host such an event on behalf of Japan had been unsuccessful, as

“there was no compelling reason to hold such an event within Japan. There were attempts to stage an international exhibition in Tokyo in 1890, 1912 and again in 1940, but these repeatedly foundered, as more pressing concerns, most often military, demanded that the necessary funds be directed elsewhere” (Lockyer 2007: 575).

In 1970 however the country had the chance to reposition itself as the third economic power after only the USA and Soviet Russia (cf. Schriefers 2014: 316). To make the world community forget about the atrocities of old and spark their interest for a remerging industrial nation, the official theme of this EXPO was chosen to be “Progress and Harmony for mankind” and was also symbolized by a statue at the entrance of the exhibition site, called the “Tower of the sun”, which featured three faces/suns, a golden face on the top, representing the future, a blackened face at the back, representing the past, and one in between its arms on the front to represent the present (cf. Taiyō no tō 2017). Ironically the face would be occupied by a protestor during the event, who became a domestic media sensation as the “guy in the eye” (Lockyer 2007: 577). Today the statue is part of a commemoration Park at the former EXPO site (cf. Tatsukawa 2017). Aside from its emphasis on a peaceful and prosperous future, EXPO'70 would serve as yet another indicator of the afore mentioned rise of the multinational cooperation as not only a driving force behind the EXPOs themselves³³, but another narrative constituent to the supposed nature of the world of tomorrow.

Throughout the 19th and 20th century World's Fairs had been signified by nation-states, their rise, rivalry and – in some cases – demise. One such case were the USSR. Eventually losing out to the USA in their race to space, as the Americans were the first

³¹ Even though some voices state it had more visitors than Montreal (Fulford 1968: 8).

³² 62 million of which had been domestic visitors (cf. Gold and Gold 2005).

³³ The Osaka EXPO would already be featuring 32 Japanese companies (cf. Schriefers 2014: 316).

to land a manned shuttle on the moon and proudly showcasing it to the World in Osaka (Kargon, Molella et al. 2015: 148), the Soviets were losing ground in the Cold War as well and by 1991 the Socialist empire would itself be history (cf. Gaddis 2005: 256f).

Not least for that reason the then following EXPO 1992 in Sevilla has to be considered a telling one. As the fair itself was organized to a huge part within the last years of the Cold War, but would eventually open its doors shortly afterwards, some last minute changes had to be made. The Soviet pavilion would be rebranded as “Russian Pavilion”, whilst former appendages of the Socialist Multinational-State would subsequently become EXPO participants in their own right, e.g. Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia (who just one year later would divide itself again into two autarch nation-states) (cf. Schriefers 2014: 332) and the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. The latter at the time was itself also amidst a process of dissolution into several new republics, thus only “representing a reduced part of Yugoslavia: ex-republics of Serbia and Monte Negro” (Slivnik 2014: 38). On the other hand an exhibit for the German Democratic Republic, featuring the infamous Hammer and Sickle, though envisioned would never be realized, as the Berlin Wall would fall, so would the plans of the GDR to have its own self-built pavilion ever at an EXPO after becoming an official BIE member in 1974 (cf. Schriefers 2014: 334). Instead the once divided nation was symbolically coming together under the roof of the Federal Republic of Germany, whose pavilion would also feature some remains of the infamous Wall that had divided the country for decades (cf. *ibid.*).

As much as the first half of the 20th century had been signified by war and the rise of new global powers, the second half would be trendsetting a time of technological prowess, as well as international change and (economical) Globalization. The EXPOs accordingly also carried those narratives, yet always tried to set their own tone of international cooperation and a peaceful future development of all nations of the world, which they would prolong into the 21st century. Thus the EXPO 2000, set in Hanover, Germany was also themed an exposition of the future, heavily concerned with issues of the upcoming 21st century (cf. EXPO 2000) that would evolve around a range of *Global Dialogues* to determine the nature of this future, emphasizing a peaceful and sustainable development of the world community (cf. Diéz-Hochleitner and Harbig 2002: 36/40/59f).

It was the first time that an EXPO was held at existing trade fair grounds (Schriefers 2014: 352), in a way Hanover was thereby also already trendsetting a future

for World Expositions that was as much about multinational corporations as about international cooperation (cf. Benedict 1991: 9). The ever increasing role of transnational actors, as e.g. NGOs, IGOs and multinational corporations aside from nation-states, not only in EXPO terms but on a global political scale thus was also addressed within the afore mentioned dialogues (cf. Diéz-Hochleitner and Harbig 2002: 20/22/28/153). The organizers sought to examine “the state of a world that had moved closer together in a virtual sense, but was still characterized in reality by distance, ignorance and a lack of interest” (Schriefers 2014: 352).

To link the world at one place, to face and assess the future problems of mankind surely was an ambitious effort. However, with that ambition this EXPO had to face an obvious and understandable reproach - voiced on several occasions by the media, the public and the social sciences alike - being that it actually was much more about superficial orchestration of participants than about actual themes (cf. Beier 2001: 125; also see Färber 2006). As e.g. Beier concluded the following intrinsic problem of EXPO 2000 stating that:

„To showcase the visions for the 21st century the message of 'We will eventually manage it by the help of technology and community' is hardly enough. With the presentation of a 'consensus-culture' of the 'center ground' one devalues the present knowledge as well as the present visions for the 21st century. There are also other analyzes, threat scenarios, to which no useful answers have yet been found that would entail the desired potential for solutions. In this respect, the EXPO did not manage to make people think“³⁴ (Beier [transl.] 2001: 123).

Her comment was symptomatic for what subsequent World's Fairs would also have to face as a common prejudice of being rather incapable of living up to their promises and objectives to better the world and in many cases just help the host countries and cities in their quest for self-representation (cf. Chapters 5/6). The last Chapters have illustrated a complex legacy to past World's Fairs (cf. Geppert 2002: 10) that is continuously transitioning from a communicative to a cultural memory and thus history (cf. Assmann 1999: 12ff). Hence, to question the very concept of an EXPO, its means

³⁴ „Zu den Visionen des 21. Jahrhunderts gehört nicht nur die Botschaft des ‚Wir werden es mit Hilfe von Technik und Gemeinschaftlichkeit schon richten‘. Mit der Präsentation einer ‚Konsenskultur‘ der ‚Mitte‘ unterbietet man das präsente Wissen, die präsenten Visionen vom 21. Jahrhundert. Es gibt auch andere Analysen, Bedrohungsszenarien, auf die bisher keine brauchbaren Antworten gefunden sind, die noch nicht das zu wünschende Lösungspotenzial in sich bergen. In dieser Hinsicht nachdenklich machte die EXPO nicht“ (Beier 2001: 123).

of communication as well as applied narratives, from an discourse-ethnographical standpoint, is yet the next step this thesis foresees to take, to eventually arrive at an understanding of its inherent meaning and ways of constituting a legacy for itself.

3. An Anthropological Legacy of World's Fairs

3.1 Early Ethnographic Exhibits

For more than 150 years, World's Fairs have been exhibiting human endeavor, civilizational prowess, artistry as well as cultural and technological achievements of people from different nations, all around the globe. Thus it has to come as no surprise that they also share some familiarity, history and in some regards intrinsic ties with the discipline of social and cultural anthropology that I'd like to further address within this Chapter.

The early World's Fairs of the 19th century e.g. would still be featuring ethnographic exhibits, within which drawings, photographs, souvenirs and protocols of social dropouts, travelers or other adventurers and artists of the Western hemisphere, but also "authentic wilds" would be presented to a curious European public (Mückler 2012: 80f). A problem that to a great part affected the inhabitants of the Pacific islands, as Hermann Mückler, who observed and described it, would further make remarks to "populär ethnologischen Präsentationen" (engl.: "popular ethnological representations"), within which

*"indigenous groups from various parts of the world were often – under dubious recruitment and accommodation conditions – obliged to stage their own dances, rituals and ceremonies during major international events. These events culminated in the 3rd Paris World's Fair in 1889, when entire villages with their exotic inhabitants were shown."*³⁵ (ibid. [transl.]).

In a certain way those first World's Fairs, starting as early as with the first Great Exhibition in London 1851, were to a certain degree colonial demonstrations that would also feature ethnographic exhibits³⁶, thereby serving first and foremost the interest of the host-countries to show off their respective global supremacy, as well as their civilizational progress, not seldom to achieve domestic political stability and international reputation in the process (cf. Chapter 2.2). Thus, what better way to succeed in this regard, than to also demonstratively feature the exotic and

³⁵ „Präsentationen wurden Eingeborenengruppen aus den verschiedensten Weltgegenden bei internationalen Großereignissen oftmals unter zweifelhaften Anwerbungs- und Unterbringungsbedingungen verpflichtet, sich selbst sowie Tänze Rituale und Zeremonien zur Schau zu stellen. Ihren ersten Höhepunkt fanden diese Ereignisse bei der 3. Pariser Weltausstellung im Jahr 1889, bei der ganze Dörfer mit ihren exotischen Einwohnern gezeigt wurden“ (Mückler 2012: 80f).

³⁶ London 1851 e.g. featured an indigenous hut from Trinidad, various fetish depictions from western Africa, or an ivory throne from India (Haltern 1971: 211).

underdeveloped “primitive” people next to the achievements of an already industrializing world. To feature and often stage such exotic exhibits for the purpose of entertainment and education at World’s Fairs, helped fitting such indigenous people in “the global order of knowledge”, as those early fairs tended to claim universality within their respective representation of the world (Osterhammel 2010: 42).

The approach towards a representation of the world alongside we/them- as well as civilized/primitive- dichotomies would still be “a thing” near the end of the nineteenth as well as the start of the 20th century. Even though World’s Fairs therein only accounted for a fraction of the actual number of ethnographic displays within that time frame (cf. Fulton & Hoffenberg: 1ff; Mückler 2012: 81ff), they certainly need to be considered the most focal ones, because of their aspiration to picture the world as a whole³⁷. Certainly the introduction of Darwinian evolutionary theory to the broad public also played into the process of showcasing indigenous people at those fairs (Hollweg 2001: 36), as Bennett writes that the “chief legacy of Darwinism was to map human and natural times onto each other in a new global and secularised time that was also spatialised in its anachronistic construction of colonial peripheries as the past in the present” (Bennett 2004: 25). The history of mankind could now be traced back centuries, the less advanced and tribal folk, retrieved from their natural habitats afar and subsequently fitted into makeshift “villages”, “performances” and “mock battles” (Treagus 2013: 45), as e.g. at the Paris Exposition in 1889, would help to show the “civilized” western audience, how far they themselves had progressed or rather “evolved” in the meantime (cf. *ibid.*).

The Columbian exhibition of 1893 wouldn’t be any different, just a lot more keen on entertaining the masses, by the means of ethnographic displays. The aforementioned Midway of the White City, serves as the best example, as it had certainly been the most exotic, entertaining and thus infamous place ever featured at a World’s Fair (cf. Chapter 2.3). Aside from the purpose of entertainment, it also followed track with the already mentioned evolutionary narrative. As Treagus writes:

“The presence of ‘native’ peoples on display inexplicably connected the notion of progress with that of race and racial hierarchy. The peak of civilization was to be seen in the halls of industry and technology, while civilization’s savage past could be seen living on in the present among the native displays. [...] As well as

³⁷ Human Exhibits were e.g. already featured in Paris 1878 and would thereafter be featured in Paris again in 1900, Chicago 1893, as well as St. Louis 1904 (Hinsley and Wilcox 2016: xvi).

serving the new disciplines of ethnography and anthropology, the human displays played a role in negotiating the imperial aims of the United States and of the other colonial powers” (Treagus 2013: 47).

These racial implications were to be further severed by the fact that African-Americans were to a large part excluded from actively participating in the event and thus contributing to the showcasing of the nations’ endeavors, in fact they’d even be mocked in the *Harper’s Weekly* as generally foolish and intellectually inferior (cf. Cooks 2007: 436f/444). Which attributed to the “White” City’s late reputé of having been a racist label right from the get-go (Treagus 2013: 46).

On the other hand, some voices within academia also argue that the World Columbian Fair has actually been the initial impact to launch the discipline of Social and cultural anthropology, within the American social sciences, in the first place (cf. Hinsley and Wilcox 2016: xv). In a certain way, as the above citation already indicates, the field of anthropology/ethnology had been prescribed a fixed role at the fair and prominent position, by arguably possessing the capability to credibly tell the story of human progress. American Anthropologist and head of Harvard’s Peabody Museum Frederick W. Putnam³⁸, had been in charge of curating the Midway as well as the Native American Human exhibits, fueled by a “primitivist drive” to showcase an “authentic” yet “static” culture (Treagus 2013: 49f). One of the guidelines to the fair put forth by Rand-McNally then foresaw the visitors examining the industrial achievements of modern men first, before diving into the various exotic entertainment, that the Midway and other ethnographic exhibits had to offer, as a valuable lesson was to be retrieved by the contrast, they’d eventually experience (ibid.: 51). The ethnological objective of illustrating a static culture and people didn’t always deliver on that promise as planned, as e.g. the Samoan people that were brought to Chicago to be exhibited at the fair, would adapt to their new surroundings and soon start to cut their hair and wear western clothing, because of the temperature in Illinois (ibid.: 52/57).

However orchestrated these ethnographic exhibits at World’s Fairs tended to be at the end of the 19th century, they still possessed the means to impress their audience, as even the acclaimed curator of ethnology at the American National Museum Ottis T. Mason, who had visited the Paris Fair of 1889, concluded it to have been “a personal

³⁸ Franz Boas allegedly once ranked Putnam amongst the three most influential people to the emergence of an American Anthropology, besides John Wesley Powell and Daniel Garrison Brinton (Hinsley and Wilcox 2016: xix).

revelation“, as anthropologically thorough as he had ever seen, by “teaching the history of human cultural development through models of domestic and working life” (Hinsley and Wilcox 2016: xvii). Thus he would go on to try conveying the idea to his domestic colleagues that the Columbian fair would have to be able to mirror this experience (cf. *ibid.*). Mason also had drafted the constitution for the Anthropological Society of Washington within the year 1879, an organization that would go on to publish the original *American Anthropologist* in 1888 (cf. *ibid.*: xxi/xxii). On the other hand Franz Boas, one of the father figures of modern anthropology, had been the main assistant of Frederick Putnam at the Chicago fair (cf. *ibid.*: xxxvi). It was him, who would later go on to challenge the evolutionist and diffusionist ideas that had been the prevailing dogma within an emerging field of American Anthropology prior to the 1893 fair (Treagus 2013: 45ff), to replace them with a new paradigm of cultural relativism (cf. Boas 1965). No wonder then that Hinsley and Wilcox conclude in their work “Coming of Age in Chicago” that:

“The Chicago World’s Fair was a catalytic event in the professionalization of American anthropology. After 1893 the landscapes of the embryonic fields of American anthropology—ethnology, archaeology, physical anthropology, linguistics, and folklore—displayed new patterns of organization, discourse, standards of training, and levels of private support and public awareness” (Hinsley and Wilcox 2016: xix).

Having said that, human ethnographic exhibits would still be common at various fairs in the upcoming 20th century. Especially within the pre-war era, e.g. at the 1904 St. Louis Fair featuring “mock wedding ceremonies and tribal dances” (Benedict 1991: 8), but also at the Crystal Palace in London (Mückler 2012: 83) or within the popular “Völkerschauen” regularly held at Munich’s “Wiesn” until the year 1930 (*ibid.*: 82). The post-war era and the process of decolonization that changed the imperial landscape of the world, would then also change the way Ethnic Groups and Nations viewed and ultimately exhibited themselves at the upcoming World’s Fairs.

3.2 Cultural Identities and Exercises in Nationalism

World’s Fairs since their initiation in 1851 have always furthered the peaceful competition of nations, and thereby often helped them to make a case for their nationhood, as a culturally coherent folk in the first place (cf. Chapter 2.1). This

circumstance is probably best illustrated by the encounters of French and British exhibitors at the first World's Fairs in London and Paris. In 1851 the British had constructed a narrative around their first Great Exhibition that served their own interest in focusing on the achievements of industry and free-trade of mankind and their preeminence therein (Halter 1971: 226f). France on the other hand – having just superseded a lifecycle of domestic feud and revolution – sought to place its national identity much more on the memory of “war”, “combat” and “honor” (ibid.: 230), which culminated in its own narrative at the first Paris fair in 1855, being much more focused on this terminology, as Marsh writes:

“There was one sphere in which the French were quick to capitalize on the limitations of the Great Exhibition of 1851. [...] In commissioning the first French exposition, Napoleon III rejected subordination of the fine arts to industry and insisted instead on parity. [...] The contrast between the grand depiction of historic battles by French artists and the homely scenes common in the English painting evoked a disdainful reaction from French critics and gratified their sense of national superiority (Marsh 2002: 363) .

Inarguably, the 19th century had been the century of Grand Nations such as France, Great Britain and the USA that simultaneously shaped the geopolitical map as they partook in the competition of nations that World's Fairs eventually became, to be only accompanied by their own colonial exhibits, in order to convey a sense of universality of the world, besides a narrative of the global imperial order to its domestic audiences. However, by the end of the second world war new nation-states that arose out of those former colonies would start using those narratives for their own advantage.

The cultural and ethnographic exhibits that were often constructed around a certain folk that was being exhibited at those world's fairs of the concluding 19th century, rather than autonomously participating at these exhibitions, were to some part transient, or would turn “semi-permanent in natural history and ethnographic museums” (Benedict 1991: 5). Even though these means of extrinsic-representation are certainly to be questioned, not least for their doubtful entitlement and accuracy (Hollweg 2001: 79f), they eventually – as Benedict goes on to explain – also:

“fed back into the colonies (which sometimes had local exhibitions) to help create the images they had of themselves [...] These exhibits were rarely exact copies of colonial displays, but they retained many of their elements. The

leaders of the new nations wanted to symbolize cohesion in communities which often lacked it and to establish the authority of their governments. Such exhibits were exercises in the imagery of nationalism” (Benedict 1991: 5).

The imposed “tradition-inventing” (ibid.: 8) that was taking place at these fairs was on the one hand promoting unity of colonial-dependencies with their mother-countries (most prominently at that point in time the afore mentioned Great Britain, France and USA³⁹), on the other hand it would also invent “separate traditions for each colony or dependent group which promoted their own national and ethnic identities” (ibid.: 9). One famous example would be that of Filipinos at the St. Louis Fair of 1904⁴⁰, which accounted for one of the mature exhibits at the fair and whose depiction as a coherent folk, lastly served both parties. As the Americans instigated theatrical Filipino productions both at the fair, as well as beyond (San Pablo Burns 2013: 16) thereby propagating their own rise as an imperialist global power (cf. ibid.: 25) expanding the fairgoers imagination well out into the pacific (cf. ibid.: 30), they would also indirectly serve the Filipinos in their subsequent “call for self-rule” (ibid.: 32).

Other examples of former colonies turned into nations, would be those of Nigeria and Senegal, who’d go on to use their foreign appellation as homogeneous entities to claim national autonomy, or Indonesia who based their right on West Irian on the colonial borders drawn by their former Dutch occupiers (Benedict 1991: 8). Especially a variety of French colonies that as such were shown at the 1889 Paris Fair, would later on turn into self-governing nations as well, e.g. Algeria, Gabon-Congo, or Cambodia to only name a few (ibid.: 7). The last of which was arguably still drawing on its colonial narrative within EXPO 2010 (Winter 2012: 82).

Aside from colonies, however World’s Fairs were also – even though self-determined – used by already existing Nations-States to practice and exercise their nationhood. Aside from the afore mentioned hosting countries, examples such as Nazi-Germany at the ’37 Fair, or the USSR at ’58, ’67 come to mind (cf. Chapter 2.4). Then again the 1933 Chicago Fair would help the stateless Jewish immigrant community, in the wake of their escape from Germany, in finding imminent answers for the question

³⁹ All of which, applied their own sense of *mission* to their dependencies, be it economic (Britain), cultural (France) or in the wake of an emerging ideology of American Exceptionalism, the implementation of an *American Way of Life* (Benedict 1991: 8).

⁴⁰ Benedict is writing that “75,000 catalogued exhibits, and 1,100 people from the archipelago took part” (ibid.: 7).

of their self-perception, being an ethnic group, religion or nation, as they were granted a Jewish Day event, which eventually became a huge success and certainly sparked a sense of unity amongst them (Ganz 2008: 128). Which might have also preset their quest for an own nation-state. The same fair, being themed “Century of Progress”, quite ironically also encouraged the nations of the world to build “entertainment-focused villages”, much like the afore mentioned former colonial exhibits, to fit them in a “historical timeline that culminated in the modern USA” an idea that rather unsurprisingly drew much aversion amongst European participants (Smits and Jansen 2012: 180; also see Schrenk 1999: 289).

No matter if participant or host, already existing nations have always been and are still using the platform that those fairs and expositions provide for their respective “exercises in the imagery of nationalism” (Benedict 1991: 5) in the face of an international community, often showcased by theatrical ethnic performances on their national days. However as Smits and Jansen go on to explain (also see Katz 2003: 129):

“As well as referencing traditional cultural symbols and performances, nations also present themselves in exhibitions more subtly through the conception, organization and structuring of their displays. In this they combine the display mode of national museums with state-sponsored advertising and marketing to promote tourism and trade. Expos not only reflect the nation, they actively shape history, culture and identity” (Smits and Jansen 2012: 177).

Have it been first and foremost autonomous industrialized nations that have partaken in such exercises by the thirties (cf. Ganz 2008: 128), by the 70s the number of national days celebrated at the EXPO had already risen to 73, amongst which former colonies such as e.g. India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Togo and Mauritius were to be found (Benedict 1991: 8f). Those “new nations”, which wouldn’t be able to finance their own pavilions, would thereby be provided with their own exhibition-space by the hosts (cf. *ibid.*: 9), which has not least been the case for the most recent EXPOs (cf. Chapters 5/6). Throughout the years this has caused yet another problem of many of those new nations being very much constricted to literal representations of their nationhood, while first and foremost the Western nations, but also corporate partners of the World’s Fairs might engage in technologically and visually more advanced – thus subsequently more appealing – self-representations

also showcasing the unequal, yet continuing distribution of wealth, of former colonial powers, multinational corporations and rather young nations in the process (Winter 2012: 78; Benedict 1991: 9; Harvey 1996: 127; also see Chapter 6.2.1).

What has served all of the participators well in their nation-building/branding agenda, has been the aspiration of arguably all World's Fairs, to reserve their own place in history. A circumstance that is arguably entangled with Assmann's notions on legitimation (1999: 137f), that I've already alluded to in Chapter 1.2 and will further elaborate on throughout the following epistemological digression (cf. Chapter 4). San Pablo Burns might put it best, within his accounts on the St. Louis Fair of 1904, by stating: "The very design of the World's Fair had a built-in structure for recording its place in history [...] through its meticulous self-archiving process" (San Pablo Burns 2013: 31), which has started as early as with the first Great Exhibition in London (Roche 1998: 12) and in the meantime has not only found its way into digital archives (cf. Chappell 1998) but eventually also culminated in an own EXPO themed Museum that has been opened in Shanghai in May 2017 (cf. Chapter 5.4.2).

Since their initiation World's Fairs have arguably become much more keen on addressing and engaging with their visitors on a personal level, seeing nationhood as a commodity with which an EXPOs audience shall be able to identify, thereby participants are also casting their narratives alongside the idea to provide their visitors an emotional experience (cf. Smits and Jansen 2012: 174). A more recent example might be the USA pavilion at the Shanghai EXPO 2010, that relied on a film reel portraying individuals and their stories rather than cultural or national images within their self-representation, but also intrusive and much criticized product placement, as American exhibits since 1994 have to rely solely on private sponsoring (ibid.: 176). The term "Edutainment" (ibid.: 181) then comes to mind, as a means to convey a message through entertainment, which not least the Corporate Partners of World's Fairs have proven to make successful use of throughout contemporary history as "Their logos have become better known than many national symbols" (Benedict 1991: 10).

As "World's Fairs" have turned into "EXPOs", they have likewise and progressively turned into PR grounds for a range of global actors that seek to position themselves amidst this universalist/cosmopolitan conception of the world, which is ultimately portrayed by and at these events, and thus the discourse on its future (cf. Harvey 1996: 119; Beier 2001; Greenhalgh 2011; also see Chapters 5/6); a conception and a discourse that have to constantly be questioned, not least by our discipline.

4. Approaching the World by Anthropological Means

4.1 EXPOgraphy from Past to Present

“World's fairs stimulate trade and introduce new products. They are political. They affect architectural styles and city planning. They provide education and amusement for many millions of people. They also are rituals of the kind often studied by anthropologists. [...] A world's fair can be seen as one of a series of mammoth rituals in which all sorts of power relations, both existing and wished for, are being expressed” (Benedict 1983: 6).

What to make of an EXPO is certainly object of personal interpretation. To me, as to Benedict, the overall narrative of World's Fair, indeed, works very much alongside anthropology's traditional concept, being “the idea that a world of human differences is to be conceptualized as a diversity of separate societies, each with its own culture” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 1), on the other hand it symbolizes the change of paradigms the discipline is progressively transitioning through, towards notions of global connectedness and the subsequent denial of those separated and isolated “cultures” (cf. *ibid.*: 2f). Sitting at the very intersection of this ongoing debate on the scope of role and practice of contemporary anthropology, World EXPOs have already been object to a range of ethnographic case-studies themselves, as the matters that might be assessed through applied fieldwork practice are manifold. One of which certainly would be the *interaction of visitors with(in) the fairs*. As Lockyer within his contemplation on the Osaka EXPO writes:

*“Like a potlatch, the Expo promised a place where the surplus that had been produced through postwar economic growth could be consumed, where old ideas could be discarded and new worlds emerge. The Olympics had reduced the masses to spectators, the Expo promised participation”*⁴¹ (Lockyer 2007: 579).

Prior to him, Bennett had alluded to the independently evolving “fair zone” at these events as a “kind of buffer region between the official and the popular culture with the former seeking to reach into the latter and moderate it” (Bennett 1988: 87), that

⁴¹ Olympia as yet another global “mega-event genre” (Roche 1998: 26) will be discussed further in context with the Shanghai EXPO within Chapter 5. Certainly also worth mentioning here though are the accounts of Susan Brownell (2013) on the similarities of display within Olympic events and World's Fairs.

“constituted an order of things an people”⁴² (ibid.: 94), covertly already alluding to a field site, its modulation by participating forces and thus the basis for further anthropological engagement therein. Alongside the notion of “the medium being the message” (Roche 1998: 14), to consider the *World’s fairs as a cohesive whole* and carrier of a (premade) message, however, is also an interesting obstacle to explore through participant observation and the viewpoint of one-self being the visitor on an interpretative quest (cf. Chapters 5/6).

The anthropological contention with World’s Fairs as such might go back as far as to the Columbian Fair in 1893, where a range of anthropologists that would eventually turn out to be prominent figures of the Discipline, amongst them most notably Frederic W. Putnam and Franz Boas, had gathered together for the construction of ethnographic exhibits (cf. Chapter 2.3/3.1). As Putnam, who was the guiding curator of the anthropological exhibits, has “struggled to satisfy his aims for both scientific integrity and popular education” (Hinsley and Wilcox 2016: xxxvi), Boas must have been disappointed, to say the least, by the superficial engagement of the fairgoers with the exhibits (cf. Chapter 3.1). By that time he already had voiced “diffusionist and historicist objections to the precepts and practices of the cultural evolutionists” (ibid.: xxxiii) that remained strong in the White City. He would eventually leave Chicago just months after the event and a short stint as the curator of the newly founded Field Museum, which was built to preserve the anthropological exhibits of the fair (cf. ibid.: 406/419). His initial reflections on the latter itself though are one of the first accounts of an interpretation of a World’s Fair by modern anthropology and had still been rather optimistic about the extent of the ethnological displays and educational value that they might provide to the public, as he wrote:

“The ethnological exhibit at the World’s Fair shows that its strong side lies wholly in a full representation of American anthropology. Its great merit is the large amount of material, new to science, that has been accumulated and which has considerably advanced our knowledge of the history and characteristics of man in America” (Boas 1893: 83).

⁴² Not a favorable one in his assessment – I might add – as he points to a rather white/male and thus suppressive makeup of especially the 19th century expositions (Bennett 1988: 94). He also sees modern fairs, as similar entities as the institutions of power that Foucault (1974;1978) is alluding to within his work, as the act of exhibiting something or someone would “embody and communicate specific cultural meanings and values” (Bennett 1995: 6) on a normative-agenda (Smits and Jansen 2012: 178).

The conduct of an *EXPOgraphy* is a rather new, meaning late modern endeavor, that in the wake of the cultural turn demands a more (self-)reflexive agenda than that of the merely observing fairgoer, meaning an anthropological approach that is as much interested in the researcher him/herself as with his studied object/s (cf. Ingold 1992: 695). McDonald and Basu state that “Reflexivity [...] might have become a new orthodoxy, yet crucial here is the purpose to which it is deployed and how unsettling it is allowed to be” (Macdonald and Basu 2007: 20). In fact, such a venture fits the contemporary self-image of the discipline well, which, though having been – until the late 20th century – empirically still set on the study of the small indigenous locale (cf. Malinowski 1922), has in the meantime become progressively interested in questions of globalization and transnationalism (cf. Gingrich 2010; Hannerz 2002; 1998; Appadurai 1996; also see Chapter 4.2) and with that, its own ways of describing and interpreting the world and its people (Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Geertz 1987; Clifford and Marcus 1986) .

One of the earliest and still most prominent Ethnographies on an EXPO itself is that of Penelope Harvey. Within “Hybrids of Modernity”, she draws a comprehensible picture of the interdependencies between corporate and national participants of EXPO 1992 in Seville, arguing that participating “nation states and the multinationals operated as contexts for each other” (Harvey 1996: 103). Her accounts thereby not only show the increasing corporate presence at World Fairs and thus influence in an ever more globalized world, but also surface the manifold power relations underlying EXPOs in general and the commodification of culture that they promote (cf. *ibid.*: 127). Her accounts proof a necessity and possibility for ongoing ethnographic fieldwork practices on site of an EXPO, as she also states:

“If culture and social organization are the main conceptual concerns of the discipline and provide the language through which anthropologists go about their business, then a cultural event concerned to display the existence and connection between nation states, the environment and the global economy, was treading very similar ground” (*ibid.*: 13).

Furthermore Benedict, who alludes to the institution of World’s Fairs as a marketplace of international proportions, with MNCs as their driving forces on several occasions within his writing (e.g. Benedict 1991: 9; 1983: 3/60), likewise emphasizes distinct familiarities with the objects studied by anthropology:

“A world's fair is an almost perfect example of what Marcel Mauss called a total prestation. It is a collective representation that symbolizes an entire community in a massive display of prestige vis-à-vis other communities. Symbols are used flagrantly to impress rivals and the general public, for the rivalry would lose its point without public acclaim for the winners. These features of world's fairs show striking similarities to the potlach of the Indians of the northwest coast of North America” (Benedict 1983: 7).

Thus Benedict, building his arguments on a study of San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915, was already forecasting an ethnography within the field that such a fair provides, which Harvey would then go on to conduct at Seville in 1992. As EXPOs are not only “modern international rituals” (ibid.: 9), but also “textually produced events” (Harvey 1996: 40), they are not only allowing but calling for the participant observation and interpretation by an ethnographer.

Alexa Färber would follow in the footsteps of Harvey, conducting an ethnography on the Hanover EXPO 2000, where she engaged in a prolonged participant observation to assess different forms of *Wissen* (engl.: Knowledge) produced and disseminated at an EXPO and how to access it through applied fieldwork practice. She thereby sought a threefold approach to knowledge as a “Ressource” (Färber 2006: 69f), conducting participant observation in Rabat, Morocco, within the Commisariat Général during the planning stages of the Moroccan contribution to EXPO 2000, “Modell” (ibid.: 161f), engaging with an EXPO critical artist group as well as their interpretation, participation and artistic representation of the event, and within “Transfer” (ibid.: 225f), illustrating the means of communication between the EXPO and its audience. Upon contemplating her fieldwork she writes about the ambivalent nature of World's Fairs, as an object of ethnographic research, as follows:

“They are characterized by a high degree of self-referentiality even while they retain a whiff of their past roles in colonialist objectification and the celebration of modernity. Many of their products, exhibits, and events today are marked by a constructivist understanding of culture. Thus, nowadays, national pavilions [...] typically seek to counter the ways in which nation, culture, and ethnicity were presented earlier by engaging in ironic self-portrayals” (Färber 2007: 223).

The researcher, according to her accounts, takes a special role within this setting. On the one hand he/she's being comforted by the actors within an EXPO, as a scientific entity and thus credible source of feedback on the shown exhibits, on the other hand he/she might be easy to exploit as a blatant reference for legitimizing their undertakings and their being at EXPO (cf. *ibid.*: 223f) as the same goes for (critical) artists (*ibid.*: 229f). Additionally she observed a form of professional distancing of curators and artists that had worked at EXPO 2000, once it had been termed an overall failure by Media and Public Opinion (*ibid.*: 232ff ; also see Beier 2001). In terms of her methodological approach Färber engaged within different fields of work (organization, artistry and the media) that, while being logically connected to the EXPO, were stratified in thus far, as they arguably didn't mirror common conceptions on the prototypical ethnographical field site. However her approach is drawing heavily – as she also states – on the prior ethnography of Harvey, who had also been implementing takes of journalists, visitors and employees (Färber 2006: 40; Harvey 1996: 9).

Aside from choosing “Wissen”, Färber also put emphasis on “Repräsentation” as guiding concept, within observation (Färber 2006: 10f). Openly reluctant to set clear-cut boundaries between methodology, theory and empiricism, she nevertheless emphasizes the worth of the ethnographically produced data to her research, in terms of defining a field of research and for her questioning of the representation of the anthropological other (*ibid.*: 13). She sees “representation”, within the context of EXPO, as having a twofold mandate of not only illustrating what's real but also reflexively questioning the ethnographic perspective and practice applied (*ibid.* 19). Public events, according to her, are central to the ethnological analysis of culture, since, they represent symbolic agglomerations they also promise to shed light on the cultural specificities of a society (*ibid.* 18).

EXPOographies that followed would go on to apply then already familiar approaches. Especially Shanghai EXPO 2010, as the largest ever held event in the history of mankind, would inevitably produce a series of ethnographically connotated works that would tread similar ground, as those of Harvey and Färber. For one, Björner and Berg, originally affiliated with the business department of Stockholm University, applied an ethnographical approach to their research on the Swedish participation at EXPO 2010, as they treated the event as a collective experience, co-created by its audience (cf. Björner and Berg 2012: 33). Whilst the emphasis on a single participant parallels the Färber approach, certain analogies to Harvey also cannot be denied in

thus far as they consider the EXPO to have become an experience oriented marketing device for multinational corporations (cf. *ibid.*; Smits and Jansen 2012: 174; Harvey 1996). This hypothesis is a rather prominent approach to the most recent ethnographies on EXPOs. In yet another one Tran van Troi even terms them “brandsapes” (Van Troi 2016: 679), in reference to an article on Architecture and the Experience Economy (Klingmann 2007: 83). Doing research on and subsequently comparing three beverage brands (Yili, Coca Cola and Litree) that have successfully participated in their bid to be solitary sponsors in their respective niches at Shanghai EXPO, he illustrates the means by which they’ve occupied the EXPO space not only on site of the event but also in the minds of the visitors (cf. Van Troi 2016: 687). At one of the supposedly hottest EXPOs ever held, with queuing lines of up to eight hours, the companies were looking for a betterment of their public image but also of their own understanding of the domestic crowds, as China had already been on the rise to cater for a larger consuming middle class (cf. *ibid.* 691).

While Harvey was still focusing on *nation branding* (Harvey 1996: 103; also see Chapter 6.2.2) as a means to connect corporate pavilions with possible consumers, this proceeding has inarguably expanded in both categories, moving to an identification-emphasis with the *global* rather than just the *national* (cf. Van Troi 2016: 692). It also furthered development of ever more sophisticated entertainment and appropriation strategies to immerse the visitor personally and positively with the dominating brands at an EXPO (cf. Björner and Berger 2012: 35). Quite ironically also national identities, once the centerpiece of any EXPO exhibit, are subsequently subsumed and conveyed to the audience predominantly by affects and emotions (cf. Smits and Jansen 2012: 183). But Shanghai 2010 would still be offering other focal points for ethnographic research, given the fact that it had to cope with unprecedented masses of domestic Chinese visitors.

French anthropologist Sophie Houdart took on the job of ethnographically assessing the crowds at Shanghai EXPO and the ways they’d interact with, what she termed “a city within the city” (Houdart 2012: 133). What caught her attention in particular were the queuing lines at the event, a force to be reckoned with that year (cf. Van Troi 2016: 680). In fact, the organizers supposedly even invited 500.000 students to the site prior to the opening, in order to test the durability and adequacy of provided facilities, with varying results:

“Mixing up Shanghai visitors with tourist groups, the testing crowds found out that ‘some people were queue-jumping’. In the China Pavilion, which draws the biggest queue, ‘some groups began to stand in lines two hours before their reservation time’. [...] In the case of Shanghai Expo with its specificities – citizens that have no waiting habits, Chinese people who have their own way to behave when they get together, a city that is about to mutate into something else after the Expo – the urban setting appear as reacting to, rather than ‘anticipating’ various behaviors” (Houdart 2012: 132).

A year later Houdart would go on to publish “L’universel à vue d’œil” a monograph on the planning and transaction of Aichi EXPO 2005, which had been a specialized EXPO much smaller in size, but as well as Shanghai situated at the intersection of a meet-and-greet between an Asian city and the world. Within this book she offers yet another methodological approach to the mega-event study, quasi from scratch, illustrating sketches, maps and drafts of architects, designers and involved organizations in the uprun to the event, who through the process of place-making had already been envisioning a subsequent “grand histoire” for it to have (cf. Houdart 2013). Her book presents us with an EXPOgraphy that, though being deprived of its object of study by time and space, is feeding on the initial inspiration of individuals and delivers in terms of recounting the act of creating an event and its legacy, making it an “Ethnographie du Off” (Manceron 2013: 1004); an approach that already parallels some of the methodological problems the project at hand also set out to assess.

4.2 Research Focus & Approach

For the last 30 years Ethnographies on and at EXPOs have been on the rise. This might for one be attributed to the fact that cultural anthropology itself is trending towards more transnational and global questions, in its theory as well as its practice. However theory and method, though necessary means to our research that – we are taught – have to go together well, to create valid results, are almost certainly an obstacle to deal with, when it comes to their adequate application to a given case study. Now, while most anthropologist scholars might agree that the ethnographical assessment in our current postcolonial and globalist times and debates doesn’t necessarily have to be set in indigenous communities – the more so since most have inarguably already been touched and influenced by modern societies and their

Zeitgeist, one way or the other – there still is a logical emphasis on the locale and its “thick description” by an anthropologist (Geertz 1987). Having said that, the scholars, whose works, were illustrated in the last Chapter, have admittedly already broken with that tradition, or haven’t they? At first glance an EXPO might not represent one’s typical ethnography, but then again, what does? In fact, the prior introduced ones illustrate a plurality of ethnographical approaches, as the case study of an EXPO certainly demands some creativity to go along with the scientific standards of anthropology.

As an ethnographer at a World’s Fair you’re presented with a wide range of potential research subjects, who at least in the case of one-day-visitors - hence approximately 80% of individuals there - don’t possess the precious cultural knowledge about the field site one is longing for. As soon as he/she then moves on to interviewing and studying the people involved in the daily transaction of the event, he/she might very well run into the trouble of generating biased data, as with the level of involvement of individuals usually comes a PR agenda or at least the urge to follow a certain protocol, when talking to the press or “*Cultural Brokers*” (Welz 1996: 27; as cited by Färber 2007: 16f). Hence, prior ethnographers chose different approaches to tackle this problem. Examples reach from immersing with a particular group, rather than the EXPO as a whole (cf. Färber 2007), to becoming somewhat a visitor on an self-reflective agenda or hybrid in between a researcher and a journalist (cf. Harvey 1996), to engaging with the textuality offered by maps, sketches and photographs, as well as accounts provided by formerly involved individuals instead of diving into the social categories of an actual field site (cf. Houdart 2013).

The obstacles to an EXPOgraphy are many but not seldom share familiarities between each other. As both Harvey (1996: 9) and Färber (2007: 58) recount, I also encountered resistance on behalf of interview partners or towards certain topics. Others were very keen on telling me a story they wanted to be told, instead of thoroughly answering the questions, I would’ve liked them to answer, which had me dive into the analysis of textual documents and images as well as theory to counteract and cope with the (lack of) information they provided. As this arguably signifies a general problem that expands to other case studies as well. Yet another problem was access and funding. Though having been officially accredited by the BIE, for the entirety of EXPO 2015, I haven’t been able to retrieve sufficient funding before starting my fieldwork journey there. Just as Harvey had to in 1992 (Harvey 1996: 9), because of the same reasons, I eventually cut down on my research aspirations in terms of time

spent at the EXPO site, meaning participant observation as well as interviews right from the get go.

One year later quite the contrary would be the case, as I was invited to conduct research on the legacy of EXPO 2010 in Shanghai on public funding, I would often be restraint in terms of access to information and institutions. Hereby Färber's accounts on her dismissal from the Moroccan planning bureau by the Moroccan Commisariat Général, as a matter of staying in control with regards to their representation (Färber 2007: 58), prior to EXPO 2000, proved valuable. Her coping with these circumstances methodologically, were key to realize that this didn't necessarily mean an end to my legacy-research just yet. Just as Houdart (2013) did, with her studies on Aichi 2005, I would choose to assess textual and visual artifacts, as well as to look for physical remnants of and accounts on EXPO 2010, to contrast the official legacy that I was casted to tell in the first place.

As the mentioned monographies as well as other ethnographically connotated articles on EXPOs have illustrated, there isn't just one way to go about an EXPOgraphy. The questions applied to the case study of such an event vary as much as the research methods do. Given that ethnographies are often evolving along the lines of trial and error, this specific case study is also challenging in thus far, as it takes turns of being either an object that is being studied or speaking directly to the researcher. In order to fit the monograph at hand with prior ethnographies on EXPO and further build on the methodological propositions offered by my predecessors, I chose the following research-question: *How is the "legacy" of a World's Fair constituted within the local context of its hosting city? – by comparison of EXPO 2010 (Shanghai) and EXPO 2015 (Milan).*

I opted for exclamation marks to the "legacy" term, not to emphasis it, but rather clearly mark it as a field-term of mine, just as Färber (2007: 15ff) did when assessing "Wissen" in the wake of EXPO 2000. Much like hers, my use of the term has been both, a point of reference within my ethnographies⁴³ as well as a common denominator between different research settings and methodological approaches. The venture to compare and contrast two different World EXPOs sure isn't your typical ethnography, the more so, since the case studies are spatially and temporally separated from each

⁴³ To facilitate the layout of my research program, I chose to use the plural here, for what ultimately had been subsumed under the research program of the multi-sited "Ethnography".

other, and, in the case of Shanghai EXPO 2010, even from the event itself. The legacy term therein helps the assessment, as it also carries a historical emphasis.

In fact – as I have illustrated in Chapter 1.2 – the enterprise of forging a legacy for a certain phenomenon is tied to that of legitimating it in accordance with public opinion, which I argue is happening during the course of such a Mega Event, well into the process of recounting it from a retrospective stance. In accordance with Assmann's theory on "Funktionsgedächtnis" (Assmann 1999: 137f) I'd like to further argue that this conduct goes both ways, meaning that Delegitimizing forces might at given timeframes, prior, during and after the event, also challenge ready-made narrations of EXPO in the quest for its public perception and eventual legacy. Hence, if one considers history not an invariable truth, but rather - as Assmann would (ibid.) - a manufactured one that possesses the means to (de)legitimate the present, the temporal dynamics within the given case studies might not necessarily be just an obstacle but a chance to further advance our research methodologies.

The two case studies that I will lay out to you within the following chapters are both of an ethnographical nature, yet thousands of miles and several years apart. *The first ethnography* I have conducted in Milan during the course of EXPO 2015, on site of the exposition as well as within the city itself, which I then revisited in May 2018 to conduct follow-up assessments and interviews through a PhD exchange at Bicocca University. *The second ethnography* took place in urban Shanghai in 2016, thus six years removed from EXPO 2010, and lasted for a whole year.

The choice of those two case studies was in part coincidental. As I happened to have been to the Shanghai EXPO during the summer of 2010 visiting a friend, who worked at the Austrian pavilion that year, I eventually chose to write my Bachelor thesis about the event and would subsequently be visiting the site on a daily basis as well as more than 90 pavilions. Even though – from the standpoint of a postgraduate – I wasn't by any means engaging in scientifically relevant work then, I certainly at times would draw and reflect on my collection of memories and photos after returning to Shanghai six years later. The idea to yet again engage in an EXPOgraphy in 2015 as part of my dissertational journey, was then sparked by my interest for these kind of expositions in general. An interest that I had already carried with me for five years and thus figured to potentially be able to carry on for another five. Of course, the choice to compare these respective cases then became consequential.

The introductory chapters have already showcased many epistemological aspects that come into play, when assessing the legacy of an “ephemeral phenomenon” (Greenhalgh 1988) like an EXPO. Since the first great exhibition in London 1851, they inarguably have been political tools to awe the masses, though international in their makeup, often also serving domestic purposes. Even though, we’ve been marketed this idea for more than a century, it certainly defies any logic to suppose that mega events like World Championships, Olympics or EXPOs are only altruistic gifts from those in power to those they rule. In his investigation of the event/city interplay Maurice Roche fittingly writes:

“In the course of this analysis it needs to be borne in mind that, whether their impacts are positive or negative, urban mega-events are typically conceived and produced by powerful elite groups with little democratic input to the policy-making process by local citizens. On the contrary, local citizens are typically expected to act as if they welcomed the event that is imposed upon them along with and the visitors it may attract” (Roche 2000: 126).

But how come then that we tend to think of past Mega Events prevailing in a positive way? As their legacy is ultimately defined by how they are remembered, two aspects seem important, their means of preservation/documentation as well as their narration to future generations. In reference to the theories of Assmann (1999), I’d like to argue that the development of a legacy to any mega event works asynchronously, in thus far as it already builds during the event – maybe even planning – phase, well into the ways it is subsequently narrated, and is both established and challenged within a continuing process of de/legitimization orchestrated by its various stakeholders⁴⁴ (cf. Assmann 1999: 137f), especially in the local context of the EXPO hosting cities. As Roche rightfully argues, EXPOs are to be considered “unique urban/local events” carrying “global cultural meanings through their character as tourist and media events” and thus “direct implications for the cities” hosting them (Roche 2000: 125).

With the comparison of two Ethnographies one during and one after an EXPO, I’d like to illustrate this interaction further. For the comparison to work, I’d like to propose an approach that methodologically draws on the research program of George Marcus (1995) and his multisited ethnography as well as on Foucauldian discourse

⁴⁴ Who are to be discussed and defined further in accordance with the respective case studies of Chapters 5 and 6.

theory (Foucault 1988). Hence, the next two Chapters I will devote to the conduct of this “Discourse-Ethnography”.

4.2.1 Theoretical Digression

As theory comes prior to Method, Foucauldian discourse theory will be the starting point of this shortened contemplation, even though – and as we’ll see – there are various epistemological linkages between the methodology Marcus’ proposes and the Theories of Foucault. The theory applied to the research problem introduced prior, though rather a set of ideas, is commonly known as “Discourse Theory” of Michel Foucault (1988). A famous French thinker of the past century, whose oeuvre on and historical analyses of the emergence of the modern European society and its inherent flaws often evolves around social outcasts and their oppression⁴⁵ and subsequently arrives at the intersectional question of power and knowledge, as the undisputed centerpiece of his work. His concepts of power come in a variety of shapes and forms, arguably hidden in plain sight of the public as part of the physical and moral institutions of our modern societies, they govern us towards conformity with the contemporary standards of behavior of our community (cf. Keller 2013: 27f).

In a traditional Foucauldian sense, these institutions are to be understood more thoroughly through the analysis of the literature that portrays them. However, rather than presenting a clear set of rules on how to dissect textual documents for their hidden meaning, he presents mere concepts of – what he thought to be – the key-elements of discourse (see below), leaving it to successive cultural and social scientists to interpret his work and take from it, what they’d need (ibid.: 77f). One of them is German sociologist Reiner Keller, who is also offering an explanation to what the term “Diskurs” might actually imply:

"Reference to the term 'discourse' occurs when theoretical notions and research questions are interested in the constitution and construction of 'world' in the concrete use of signs and underlying structural patterns or rules of meaning (re-)production. Discourses can be understood as more or less successful attempts to stabilize the ascription and/or order of meaning at least temporarily,

⁴⁵ As most prominently illustrated by his works on “Madness and Insanity” (Foucault 1960) as well as “Discipline and Punish” (ibid. 1975).

hence, institutionalizing a collectively binding knowledge system in a given society"⁴⁶ (Keller [transl.] 2011: 8).

In short *discourse* might be translated, as the (re)production and installation of "common sense" and "order" by textual means. Keller's notion on "*constitution and construction of 'world'*" by the use of signs and orthography is very much tied to the original Foucauldian premise that discourses are practices that continuously produce the things they are talking about (cf. Foucault 1988: 74; Keller 2011: 47). Following the notion that we produce this "world", literally as we speak and write, theories and analyses of such discourses therefore engage with the practical use of text within our lifeworld that is being produced and prolonged by agents and/or institutions to add meaning to given phenomena, often serving specific ends; assuming that there are rules of interpretation and implementation to discursive practice, which are traceable and reproducible (cf. Keller 2011: 9).

According to Foucault „discourse“ refers to a series of statements of different origin, constructed however according to the same patterns and rules, on matters of a certain phenomenon (cf. *ibid*: 46). Start and end of a discourse are determined by the Research Question, while the responsibility of the discourse-analyst resides within the reconstruction of this system of rules, to classify statements accordingly and thus be able to plausibly subsume them to a certain discourse. Thereby he's not pointing to grammatical but rather semantic rules, tied to the production of meaning on the one hand and on the other hand institutionally embedded and thus solidified practices of discourse production (cf. *ibid*: 20)

Of course a discourse is first and foremost to be understood as something textual, meant to be retrieved from books, articles and other documents rather than ethnographic fieldwork. The discourse-analyst and his research agenda are thus also "limited" to the textual domains. However, there have been a couple of authors, who already applied a Foucauldian approach to discourse to their ethnographies or vice versa an ethnographical lens to their discourse analyses (Elliker 2019; 2017; Wundrak

⁴⁶ „Der Bezug auf den Begriff ‚Diskurs‘ erfolgt dann, wenn sich die theoretischen Perspektiven und die Forschungsfragen auf die Konstitution und Konstruktion von Welt im konkreten Zeichengebrauch und auf zugrunde liegende Strukturmuster oder Regeln der Bedeutungs(re-)produktion beziehen. Diskurse lassen sich als mehr oder weniger erfolgreiche Versuche verstehen, Bedeutungszuschreibungen und Sinn-Ordnungen zumindest auf Zeit zu stabilisieren und dadurch eine kollektiv verbindliche Wissensordnung in einem sozialen Ensemble zu institutionalisieren“ (Keller 2011: 8).

2016; Huffschnid and Wildner 2009; Keller 2003), paving the way for future discourse ethnographies to follow. How to go about such a proceeding also differs according to the research question. One common denominator might be that such a proceeding actually “aims at going beyond the analysis of documents [...] by analysing discourses based on data that has been collected through participant observation and interviewing” (Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 237).

For discourse theory to be applicable to the question of the local legitimization and legacy of an EXPO, we need to further subsume the concept of the “world”, which a discourse (re)produces, to the boundaries of the “city”. One example that goes well with the epistemological interests at play within this monograph, would be that of Huffschnid and Wildner, who took on the analytical categories of “space” and “discourse” in their research on an electoral event in Mexico, eventually writing a methodological digression on an ethnography with discourse elements (Huffschnid and Wildner 2009: 9ff). Referencing Lefebvre’s notion on the triad of empirical engagement within the urban space, namely *social interaction*, *materiality*, and *representation/discourse* (cf. Lefebvre 1990; 1994) they state:

“Space materializes in buildings, places and as architecture or appears in immaterial form (for example, political public, temporary communities, virtual communities of cyberspace, Imaginario). Discursive configurations integrate into both spatial dimensions: The built space is always the result of a (also discursively articulated) negotiation process or struggle for power, the temporarily generated space a discursive effect”⁴⁷ (Huffschnid and Wildner [transl.] 2009: 5).

Their notion on the discursive configuration of the material and immaterial world, is even more noteworthy with regards to the at hand research, since their take on temporarily generated spaces, within the urban or digital space, signifies an ontological relationship with the ephemeral phenomenon, an EXPO inarguably represents. Rolshoven on the other hand would read Lefebvre against the background of Halbwachs’ emphasis on space in the material sense (cf. Halbwachs 1967), arriving

⁴⁷ „Raum materialisiert sich in Bauten, Plätzen und als Architektur oder erscheint in immaterieller Gestalt (z.B. politische Öffentlichkeit, temporäre Gemeinschaft, die virtuellen Gemeinschaften des Cyberspace, Imaginario). In beide Raumdimensionen fließen diskursive Konfigurationen ein: Der gebaute Raum ist immer das Ergebnis eines (auch diskursiv artikulierten) Aushandlungsprozesses bzw. Machtkampfes, der temporär generierte Raum ein diskursiver Effekt“ (Huffschnid and Wildner 2009: 5)

on her own triad consisting of *lived space*, *built space* and *representational space*, which represents a heuristic model that perceives acting individuals, history, society and built space conjointly (Rolshoven 2012: 164). To approach the urban as well as the EXPO by means of a discourse ethnography then makes sense and seems promising, insofar as one might explore im/material spaces but also social interactions and representational means within the event, yet also decipher its inherent discursive strategies, coalitions and formations for further assessments by doing so (Huffs Schmid and Wildner 2009: 11). In other words the ephemeral EXPO as well as its urban setting, not only turn into valid field sites for ethnographical engagement but with that also portray an actual discourse, fit to be read and interpreted by an ethnographer. Here the conduct of a discourse ethnography, might be amongst the most promising methodological approaches, given that:

“The distinction between a local context and discourses is a particular strength of a discourse-ethnographic approach, as it allows us to analyse how discourses are negotiated in the everyday lifeworlds, to study the agency of actors (i.e. how actors are affected by discourses or remain resilient to them), and to investigate how discourses are interwoven with local practices” (Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 238).

Having stated that, I'd like to further shift the attention to the main concepts of Foucault's discourse theory trying to translate them into an ethnographical research program fitting the research problem of this disquisition, before eventually engaging with its practical application in the subsequent method chapter.

According to Foucault, one needs to focus on *four key-elements of discourses*:

- ? how *things(phenomena)* are created through discourse; according to which rules;
- ? how are *statement-modes* constructed; who are (il-)legitimate speakers; from which (institutional/subjective) places are statements formulated; how do those different statement-modes relate to each other;
- ? how are *terms* constructed; how are arguments built; what rhetoric elements and schemes are being used; how are statements applied/used within other texts; how are quantitative statements translated into qualitative ones?

- ? what *strategies* does a discourse follow; what are the basic themes and theories of this discourse; how does it relate to other discourses; what are its functions within non-discursive practice;
(Foucault 1988: 48ff; Keller 2011: 47f)

Some of the epistemological interests Foucault stresses, arguably work better than others in their ethnographical application. How *terms* are constructed, seems difficult to apply in the given fieldwork context, due to its emphasis on rhetoric elements and schemes, but – for that matter – still works, as all the other points do in any case, in the analysis of ethnographically retrieved textual data, e.g. interviews, commercials and articles. However, and with regards to the ethnographies of Färber 2006 and Houdart 2013 ⁴⁸, it might help to re-narrate the planning and bidding procedures within the event study. The application of the element of *strategies* seems hardly any easier, as their assessment in the contemplation of the urban and EXPO-space appears rather difficult at first, while the textual domain would supposedly allow to read rather straightforwardly for the punchline of a discourse. In given interview situations it might however help to reveal inherent themes that support certain discourse strands as opposed to others. This element makes more sense if treated like a conclusion to the preliminary points Foucault makes. How *things* are created via discourse is an interesting obstacle to tackle ethnographically, which we'll delve into further when assessing the Foucauldian concept of *dispositif*.

However, I'd like to especially emphasize his second key-element on *statement-modes* here, since the actual possibility to even participate within discursive practices causally precedes the other discourse features Foucault proposes. So called "speakers" shape our viewpoints according to their social, cultural ranks and positioning, which might lend them argumentative power over others within Discursive practice. At his inaugural speech on "the order of discourse" at the Collège de France in Paris in 1970 Foucault once alluded to discourses, as always working by inclusion of certain speakers and arguments by exclusion of others, e.g. if people are carrying academic titles, serve as politicians, and so forth, which ultimately leads to a set of

⁴⁸ While Färber (2006) conducted part of her ethnography in the Moroccan Commissariat Général in the wake of the nation's EXPO 2000 participation, Houdart (2013) assessed sketches, maps and architectural information to delineate the development of EXPO 2005.

different *subject-positions* (cf. Foucault 1989: 13; Keller 2011: 51). Diaz-Bone further frames this argument for a potential ethnographical use, stating:

„The field is offering speaker-positions, which are to be used by persons, who have been authorized by the field. A group thus might control Discourses within the field, by controlling the distribution of such positions. [...] A speaker retrieves authority, because he acts as the legitimate speaker of a group or institution, of which he's a delegate“⁴⁹ (Diaz-Bone [transl.] 2002: 55f).

To actively search for the alluded to speakers and speaking positions not in the study of documents but within actual ethnographical research, is an approach that fit well with the overall research problem of this dissertation; the legitimation and legacy of an EXPO. The EXPO legacy therein needs to be considered the discourse, with concurrent practices of *(de)legitimation* being the main discourse-strategy. Furthermore the search for speakers and speaking positions therein signifies a recurring practice, which – given that “different local settings are linked by discourses” (Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 239) – helped to constitute an actual field site that (e.g. in the case of the Shanghai ethnography) supposedly wouldn't have been conceivable otherwise.

Within my initial address on legacy and *(de)legitimation* in Chapter 1.2 of this thesis I've already illustrated the latter to be a precondition to the former. Discourse theory further elevates this discussion as it closes an epistemological gap that we've previously left open. As Assmann's take on *(de)legitimation*, is directing us towards an asynchronous practice of writing and ascribing history to a given phenomenon (Assmann 1999: 137f) and the spatial dynamics of the field in question in relation to Lefebvre's (1990, 1994) notions on space now seem approachable for empirical fieldwork, the individuals of this field site, have yet to be defined.

Epistemologically, to further structure the discourse-ethnographical agenda, we might build on the research guiding questions which one current journal issue on matters of this methodological linkage raises: “To what extent can actors ›resist‹ discourses, and to what extent are they subjugated by them? Where is power lodged?

⁴⁹ „Das Feld hält Sprecherpositionen bereit, die von Personen eingenommen werden können, die durch das Feld autorisiert sind. Eine Gruppe kann Diskurse im Feld kontrollieren, indem sie die Besetzung solcher Positionen kontrolliert. [...] Autorität erhält ein Sprecher, weil er als legitimer Sprecher einer Gruppe oder Institution auftritt, deren Delegierter er ist“ (Diaz-Bone 2002: 55f; as cited in Keller 2011: 37).

What other powerful processes of truth production are embedded in local contexts? How do they negotiate ›demands‹ of different, conflicting discourses or ›truths‹ in situ?” (Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 240). However, Reiner Keller’s notion seem even more to the point, as he’s simply asking “*Who* is legitimized to speak and *where*? *What* might/can be said and *how*?”⁵⁰ (Keller [transl.] 2011: 67).

The state is arguably the most prominent owner and distributor of legitimacy in terms of world interpretation and denomination of phenomena, by its people or other collective *social actors* (cf. Assmann 1999: 137f; Keller 2011: 37). As opposed to *speakers*, the concept of *social actors*, also includes those, who might not inhabit speaking positions and thus are excluded from the discourse. They are however an important variable to not leave out of the theoretical equation, as (collective) social actors might join or intervene the discourse at any given point in time, with their own agenda, seemingly out of the blue, while before having only being silent or silenced bystanders; nevertheless they are entering the discourse as storied beings (Keller 2013: 36). As Keller under the premise of Giddens (2011) “duality of structure” argues that discourses only exist insofar as they are realized by social actors, he eventually adds that they are an actual requirement for their realization in the first place (Keller 2011: 67), also emphasizing that the category of the *social actor* is especially potent to help us see the different positions of speakers and non-speakers and ask for their effects (Keller 2013: 36), subsequently coming up with a subject-cartography that also offers for antagonizing identifications that are to be taken in the case of conflict of interests (ibid. 2013: 40). Such a cartography, if adopted for an ethnographical use, then might also be able to shed light on how a certain legacy or narrative strand to EXPO has survived as opposed to others, as it helps our understanding of who has been able to partake in discursive practice and who hasn’t been.

Another important term in the Foucauldian handbook on discourse is that of the *Dispositif* (Foucault 1988). As the concept of a collective social reality is very much tied to Foucault’s notions on power/-regimes (Keller 2013: 27f), discourses, as a means of further constituting this reality, are not only exercised by a fields speakers but also institutionalized in various forms⁵¹ as *Dispositives* (Foucault 1988 / Keller 2011: 67).

⁵⁰ “*Wer darf legitimer Weise wo sprechen? Was darf/kann wie gesagt werden?*” (Keller 2011: 67).

⁵¹ Such forms imply policies, architectural manifestations, ritualized and routinized practices of speech and action (Keller 2011: 53), as well as other objects, technologies, and other institutionalized (infra)structural elements and measures (ibid.: 67).

These might best be understood as an underlying infrastructure to the production of a discourse, often requirement for statements of a certain kind, but on the reverse might also result from a discourse as a means of intervening within the collective social reality in the first place (Keller 2013: 31). Such *Dispositives*, according to Keller (ibid.: 31-32), are also fit to be researched within an “ethnography of dispositifs” or “focused Discourse-Ethnographies” (Keller 2003; 2016) which put their emphasis on the analysis of such discourse materializations and institutionalizations (also see Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 235). I’d like to add that we might not only focus on an ethnography situated at one, but rather shift the ethnographical view towards the search for many such dispositives, to conceive a *discourse map* that likewise constitutes our field site for ethnographical assessments.

In accordance with the key-elements to discourse Foucault puts forth, which have been illustrated before, I’d like to additionally propose the following sub-questions to the research guiding legacy-question, namely: 1) *What’s the physical heritage of an EXPO within the local context of its hosting city? or in short: How does an EXPO “manifest” itself therein?* 2) *How is a World’s Fair constituted as a discourse object within the local context?* 3) *How does ethnographic data, derived from research in and around a World’s Fair, as well as during and after the event, relate to this discourse?*

The disquisition at hand tries to follow course with those directives and questions, I’ve just illustrated. Especially within the Chinese fieldwork settings, known to be prone to access-restraints (cf. Chapter 5.4), this Theory toolkit has provided the conduct of an EXPOgraphy with the means to interpret the reluctance of some interview partners to actively partake within the discourse on the legacy of EXPO 2010 and challenge the “Grand Narrative” put forth and institutionalized by its organizers (cf. Chapter 5.4.2). On the other hand it helped illustrating preferential speaker positions as well as *Discourse-coalitions* (cf. Keller 2011: 68) situated on the “in- and outside” of EXPO 2015 during my field stay in Milan (cf. Chapter 6).

Power and knowledge, as alternating variables, can be influenced by discourses, the knowledge derived from discourses might thereby weaken or strengthen existing power-regimes, on the other hand power is also able to shape the production of knowledge through the various means laid out within this chapter (Keller 2013: 96). The same goes for processes of (de)legitimation (Assmann 1999: 137f), which are an

inherent feature to discourse. There is a recursive connection in between singular statements and the overall discourse structure that is signified by its spatial and temporal manifestations (Keller 2011: 73), as discourses systematically constitute the things they speak about (Foucault 1988: 74; Keller 2011: 47), they are also producing *dispositives* which in turn (re)produce discourse-strands. Both of which I tried to decipher within a discourse-ethnographical approach to research.

Discourse research exercised with a qualitative approach presents a chance to gather subjective accounts on the nature of certain phenomena and see how those relate to e.g. a broad media discourse about it (Keller 2011: 74). Or as Huffs Schmid and Wildner (2009: 22) argue “qualitative space- and discourse-analytical proceedings” are interested in retrieving imminent meaning from their object of study. Thus, why not join them in the first place? Alongside the Theories of Foucault, Lefebvre and Assmann, which are key to the understanding of the epistemological interests of this thesis, its main methodological asset has been the multisited ethnography.

4.2.2 Methodological Digression

George E. Marcus, certainly is one of the more prominent names in contemporary anthropology, which is very much due to him envisioning and proposing the multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995) to a discipline faced with ever more ephemeral sites, as the introductory accounts on the scope and practice of our discipline have shown.

As he sees a “mobile ethnography” an urgent requirement for contemporary anthropological research Marcus propagates to move on from the “single-site mise-en-scene of ethnographic research” (Marcus 1995: 99) and *follow things* (ibid.: 106), *people* (ibid.: 106f) and even *conflicts* (ibid.: 110), *metaphors* (ibid.: 108) or *narratives* (ibid.: 109). He thereby demonstratively challenges the distinction of enclosed “lifeworlds” and “systems” as a foregone conclusion within the discipline by welcoming “macrotheoretical concepts and narratives of the world system” into his framework of multisited ethnography (ibid: 96). While people, things and ideas are being exceedingly scattered around in times of globalization and transnationalism, as others have acknowledged beforehand (cf. Hannerz 2002; Appadurai 1996), this mode of research looks for the common denominators to again link them to places of actual hands-on ethnographical research (cf. Marcus 1995: 105).

The researcher thereby has to *map* his/her object of study and logically connect, and associate his/her discoveries and data, derived from different locales, given that the former is rather emerging out of and throughout his/her research, than a ready-made research obstacle at one's disposal (ibid.: 102). One way to map such a field according to Marcus' proposition and as I've illustrated in the last Chapter, might then very well work alongside the search for discourse strands of a studied phenomenon (cf. Chapter 4.2.1). With regards to Marcus notions and with the use of his terminology, I tried to follow course with the methodology of a multisited ethnography by *following* the phenomenon studied (being the EXPO) as both a *Metaphor* and a *Story* (Marcus 1995: 108).

Following a metaphor means to track and describe a phenomenon first and foremost on a textual/visual basis, e.g. within language or media use, subsequently linking "locations of cultural production that had not been obviously connected [...] creating empirically argued new envisionings of social landscapes" (ibid.: 108f) in the process. Translated into the language of Foucault (1988), we might then be focusing on *dispositives*, as locations of discourse (re)production, and thus arguably – and especially by opting for a constructivist ontology – locations of "cultural production".

Looking further, we might turn to Keller's notions on "Focused Ethnographies" that are constructed around the study of such dispositives (Keller 2016; 2003; Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 235). Especially within my second fieldwork on the legacy of EXPO 2010, treating the studied phenomenon as a *Metaphor*, I followed track with its textual occurrence in a preliminary defined social realm being urban Shanghai. Putting this concept into practice, I eventually came away with a series of sites, that are elaborated on within Chapter 5.4 and following, constituting this very map, Marcus alludes to, as a field site for further research. Given my research question, its epistemological interest, emphasizing a focus on discursive practices (cf. Chapter 4.2.1), meant to then gather, analyze and compare the semantics of this map or "narratives" that were told at and by help of those locations on matters of the EXPO and its legacy.

Gathering and analyzing stories (predominantly from people) has always been an integral part of ethnography's own research logic. But, as Marcus points out,

"There are stories or narratives told in the frame of single-site fieldwork that might themselves serve as an heuristic for the fieldworker constructing multi-

sited ethnographic research [...] Reading for the plot [of those stories] and then testing this against the reality of ethnographic investigation that constructs its sites according to a compelling narrative is an interesting, virtually untried mode of constructing multi-sited research” (Marcus 1995: 108f).

An anthropological engagement with the cultural heritage and or respectively “the legacy” of e.g. an EXPO, might very well be building upon such a technique. Aside from *mapping the field of research by following a metaphor, following a story* leads to a *remapping of memory*, which in turn might best illustrate the dispute of defining what is considered *collective reality* in the first place (cf. Marcus 1995: 109; Boyarin: 5).

Herein Assmanns accounts not only on legitimation but also on cultural and communicative memory seem worthwhile (Assmann 1999: 12ff; 137f). In fact, the latter signify the actual centerpiece and starting point of her theoretical equation that builds upon the notions of Maurice Halbwachs (1967: 34ff) on “*collective-*” and “*historical memory*”. From there, we’re then able to elaborate on both the concept of what *collective reality* might mean and entail, as well as how its *communal history* (e.g. legacy of a given phenomenon) is negotiated. With that, we further shift our attention back to the people and their personal accounts, symbolizing anthropology’s main concern.

Assmann differs between a *communicative* and a *cultural memory* (Assmann 1999: 12ff), whilst the former is narrated and remembered within three generations, of contemporary witnesses, and thus actively shaped and argued by their accounts, the latter on the other hand is a normative, generation expanding memory, recounted and argued with a textual and archival foundation. She further considers the communicative memory to be a preliminary requirement for the cultural memory, which is eventually translated from individual accounts to a media-pillowed⁵² narration of the past (ibid. 15). Of course there’s an inherent problematic to this translation, as it might not result only in an intersubjective consense, but might be imposed from top to bottom for the purpose of legitimating common rule (ibid.: 137). With regards to the study of the EXPO 2010 legacy, as well as to Marcus’ accounts of *following the narrative*, Assmanns theoretical accounts are especially noteworthy, since the narratives are part of a communicative memory on the verge of being translated into a communal history, yet fit to be gathered by the ethnographer, as well as a cultural memory that is already

⁵² Meaning, manifested within museums, memorials, archives and so forth (Assmann 1999: 15).

being institutionalized within museums, arguably for the purpose of retrospectively legitimating the event for future generations to come and learn about it.

To ask about the legacy of an EXPO, also meant for this project to link issues of placemaking to those of discursive practice (cf. Foucault 1988; Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 5), especially since any ethnographer needs a field site first, to conduct his/her studies. I've already argued, that writing about *dispositives*⁵³, Foucault was already alluding to such a practice (cf. Chapter 4.2). Of course we're nevertheless facing the problem, of how to address the epistemological gap in between ethnography and discourse theory, which rather had been debated within the field of sociology than anthropology thus far (cf. Chapter 4.2.1). Gladly the methodological guidelines put forth by Keller, Elliker, Maeder, Wildner, Huffs Schmid and others, that have been introduced in the last Chapter, relate ideally to those put forth by Marcus. As their concept of a "Discourse-Ethnography" (Knoblauch 2001) ...

*"could focus on the various references to discourses within the observed field. To come away with an ethnographically grounded detail-analysis of discursive and non-discursive practices of discourse production, the establishment of dispositives, the practical reception/ acquirement/examination of Discourses as well as the analysis of interplay between situational contexts/practices with Discourses and/or the constitution of context through Discourses"*⁵⁴ (Keller [transl.] 2011: 95).⁵⁵

Therein the "joint-constitution", "the actualization" as well as the positioning against or intervention of certain discourses becomes traceable within actual fields of social and cultural practice (Keller: 95 2011; Knoblauch 1995). Elliker, who also engages in the reformulation of a methodology for a discourse ethnography, also sees a possible application focusing "on those actors, things, practices, resources, etc. that are used and combined to make up a discursive contribution, e.g. a text, a report, a leaflet"

⁵³ "Dispositif" according to Keller (2011: 68), refers to the idealistic and materialistic infrastructures and respectively discourse(re)producing entities, e.g. policies or institutions (see also Foucault 1988).

⁵⁴ „Eine solche Ethnographie könnte unterschiedliche Bezüge zu Diskursen im beobachteten Feld fokussieren. Im Einzelnen bedeutet diese bspw. eine ethnographisch fundierte Detailanalyse der diskursiven und nicht-diskursiven Praktiken der Diskursproduktion, der Einrichtung und Nutzung von Dispositiven, der praktischen Rezeption/Aneignung/Auseinandersetzung mit Diskursen und der Analyse des Zusammenspiels von situativen Kontexten und Praktiken mit Diskursen/Konstitution von Kontexten durch Diskurse" (Keller 2011: 95).

⁵⁵ According to Knoblauch (2001: 137), the research then wouldn't be centered as much on the social life of a local community, but rather on the processes of interaction- and communication, considering inherent situational, milieu-specific and institutional patterns (cf. Keller 2011: 94).

(Elliker 2019: 258). In fact the methodological layout of a discourse ethnography that sociology is currently working on, aligns well and in various ways with the notions of Marcus on the multisited ethnography, often only differing in its terminology, making a transdisciplinary approach all the more promising. According to Marcus:

“Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of ethnography” (Marcus 1995: 105).

Pointing to *chains, paths, threads, conjunctions* and *juxtapositions* (ibid.), he might – in the language of discourse theory – as well be referring to *discourse-strands*, *-fragments*, *-structures*, *-formations* or *dispositives* (Keller 2011: 68). Still, while both schools elaborate on their respective methodology and theory, their adequate application to the given case studies as well as their eventual junction have posed a serious challenge to this project. This shall come as no surprise, as also Marcus – in the closing decade of the last century – still alluded to a multisited approach focused on *narratives*, arguably constituting, what Sociology is referring to as *discourses*, as “virtually untried” (Marcus 1995: 108).

But the epistemological links between Marcus and Keller reach even further. As, within his Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (abbr.: SKAD) the latter is also introducing two concepts that share common ground with the premise of the multisited ethnography to *follow Metaphors* and *Narratives*. One of which are “Deutungsmuster”, which Keller sees as interpretations of phenomena that get manifested either symbolically or materially, as e.g. cartoons, phrases, photos, and are also to be found in discourses in their various shapes and forms (Keller 2013: 46f). The other concept he puts forth is that of “Narrative-Strukturen”⁵⁶ which help to correlate not least the afore mentioned “Deutungsmuster” with each other within a given discourse and help deciphering main- and subplots within it (ibid.: 48).

Building upon the SKAD of Reiner Keller (2011), who therein initially joined Foucauldian discourse theory with the sociology of knowledge of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), the sociological take on discourse ethnography (SKADE)

⁵⁶ Which he ironically also translates as “plots, story lines” or “rote Fäden” of Discourses (Keller 2013: 48), aligning his concepts very much with those of Marcus, who also refers to narratives as such (Marcus 1995: 109).

has most recently been discussed in a thematic issue in 2017, arriving at the following key-concepts that a linkage of discourse theoretical and ethnographical approaches might ultimately contribute to epistemologically:

1. *Social actions/practices*: A discourse ethnographical approach might go “beyond the analysis of documents [...] by analysing discourses based on data that has been collected through participant observation and interviewing” (Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 237).

2. *Micro-macro-linkage*: A discourse ethnography, opposed to the solitary method and theory it sees to merge, arguably interested in either a micro- or macro- level approach, is situated at the “meso-level”, insofar as they contest and constitute macro-conceptions of the “life-world” or “outside” within the local setting (ibid.; also see Elliker 2019: 2; Wundrak 2017; 2016).

3. *Discourse effects* that “could hardly be shown by using only »naturally« occurring documents as data, such as official administrative documentation” (Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 238) suddenly become visible. Which highlights the arguably greatest merit that ethnography might offer to discourse analysis.

4. *Ethnographic experiences* are benefited in thus far as the emphasis on discourse might help sewing superficially unrelated sites to constitute a discursive field site for research. On the other hand the self-reflexive ethos of ethnography brings a new agenda to the discourse analysis. Having said that, “a discourse ethnography will have to rely additionally on data other than ethnographic data” (ibid. 239).

5. *Data pluralism*: As the heading suggests, the authors on the issue of SKADE stress a triangulation of data that comes with this transdisciplinary approach. Wundrak (2012) is referring to a discourse ethnography as being a “montage [...] that is based on the actions and experiences of all involved individuals, including the researcher, and uses a plurality of data and cultural expressions. [...] expanding the researcher’s reflective space, allowing them to better understand social relations and the associated meanings in the field” (Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 239).

6. *Power and Truth*, which we as researchers both possess and produce are challenging us to the task of self reflectively rethinking our approach to research as well as its output. A discourse ethnography is promising both, “to observe, trace, reconstruct, and analyse how power and structure are implicated in the production of truths and realities” as well as “to understand how power dynamics and discourses – thus, meanings of truth – are constructed interactively” (ibid.: 240)

Building upon the illustrated propositions of SKADE, the multisited approach to ethnography then gives us the means to make sense of comparing such diverse case studies, as those on the local legacies of EXPO 2010 and EXPO 2015. Marcus eventually hinted to this arguably inevitable juncture of methodologies, writing:

“To bring these sites into the same frame of study and to posit their relationships on the basis of first-hand ethnographic research in both is the important contribution of this kind of ethnography, regardless of the variability of the quality and accessibility of that research at different sites [...] Indeed, the persuasiveness of the broader field that any such ethnography maps and constructs is in its capacity to make connections through translations and tracings among distinctive discourses from site to site” (Marcus 1995: 100).

Michel Foucault describes *discourses* as practices that are steadily constituting the phenomena they are referring to, while also being (re)produced by them in a recurrent constructivist circle (Foucault 1988). The EXPO 2010 for example, already a chapter in the history-books of mankind but still existent as a *metaphor* of past and future glory within nowadays Shanghai, signifies such a phenomenon that still gets constituted by the *stories* told about it, which ultimately make for its legacy. A circumstance that is – as illustrated beforehand – also emphasized in the work of Assmann (1999: 15; 137) on cultural memory and legitimation. Still, what Foucault also taught us is that we have to pay attention not only to “how those discourses create things”, but also the “rules of creation”, “the places they are formulated from”, and their “functions within non-discursive practice” (Foucault 1988: 48ff; Kendall and Wickham 1999: 26ff; Keller 2011: 49 Chapter 4.2.1). Hence, I would follow course with those directives throughout fieldwork practice.

The idea behind the proposed linkage of ethnographic and discursive approaches within this thesis, is of course to concede a higher degree of scientific

reliability and validity, than without it. Foucault's theories on discourse seem to present a mere chance to work around common research problems that (not only) I have encountered as an ethnographer doing fieldwork in and on Mainland China, as well as on site of EXPO 2015 in Milan, as they are helping to acknowledge preferential and underprivileged speaking positions and subsequent opinions on matters of the EXPO that might be able to – even retrospectively – delegitimize (Assmann 1999: 137f) its legitimacy and thus derail its intended legacy (cf. Chapter 5/6). Also they helped to decipher a phenomenon (EXPO 2010 and its legacy) in an otherwise difficult to pin down field (being the post-EXPO Shanghai).

Of course, it certainly does and always has posed a challenge to argue against the classical anthropological conception of the “homogeneous cultural/social field” that speaks through the people that are living within its clear-cut boundaries and share a mutual knowledge about the field itself (Geertz 1987). The more so since the overall narrative of an EXPO works very much alongside anthropology's traditional concepts of culture, selling “the idea that a world of human differences is to be conceptualized as a diversity of separate societies, each with its own culture” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 1). However, as current debates within the discipline are being progressively focused on notions of the global and transnational, they're moving away from the presumption of such isolated cultures (cf. *ibid.*: 2f). Which made it a necessity to feature a multitude of voices, as well as methods and theories that subsequently expanded the one-site-one-people paradigm of anthropology within this *multisited discourse-ethnography*. This also applies to the choice of my interview-partners, as my recorded conversations featured people from 12 different nations, stemming from diverse educational and professional backgrounds, only linked by the common denominator of EXPO. All of which took part in the discursive practice of constituting an EXPO legacy by sharing their respective takes, memories and stories on the event. In the wake of my research methodology being “artverwandt” to an ethnography, though – with its discourse theoretical tools – slightly adapted to fit the case study of an EXPO, I liked to think of this pool of people, as the *cosmopolitan natives* of my field⁵⁷.

The researcher and his/her analytical, creative and language capabilities (cf. Marcus 1995: 100f) are especially important within this kind of practice as one needs to connect sites and data, which are often – and certainly in this case – literally “Worlds

⁵⁷ Of course, I'm to a certain degree romanticizing the conduct of my Discourse-Ethnography here to further the understanding of my readers for this kind of approach and field study.

apart” (ibid.: 111). This project signifies an effort to comply with these instructions, as thorough as possible and contribute to the pool of works that have been trying to envision a multisited approach to their research. In this effort, I’ll move on to an illustration of the methods that I’ve used during the course of research, the data I’ve gathered as well as the means of its interpretation.

4.2.3 Applied Methods and Data Sampling

“Ethnographic research strategies involve participant observation, a practice in which the researcher joins the actors in the social domains and fields of interest and observes the corresponding social situations and (inter)actions. [...] If employed to study macro-level processes and phenomena that structure social situations but lie beyond the world in actual reach of the actors, we must address the question of how such a link between social situations and macro-level structures can be conceptualised” (Elliker 2019: 259).

Given that a World’s Fair or EXPO arguably already represents an interpretation of the world (cf. Nordin 2012a) made accessible to the public, it seems fit to become an object of reinterpretation by the researcher. Arguably the Macro-Structures Elliker alludes to are already inherent to such an event, its actors and their daily routine. Or aren’t they? What role does the intervening researcher actually play? If read through e.g. Geertz (1987), an ethnographer might come away with an interpretation of the EXPO like that of Benedict (cf. Chapter 3.2), illustrating it as “one of a series of mammoth rituals in which all sorts of power relations, both existing and wished for, are being expressed” (Benedict 1983: 6). But then one might fall into the trap of assuming a confined field-site with a coherent “EXPO-culture” (Fabian 1990; Marcus 1989; Thornton 1988), getting depicted by “the monophonic authorial voice of the conventional ethnographic monograph” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 2f) all over again.

If we ask about the local legacy of a World EXPO, like this project does, the field-site ultimately exceeds the boundaries of the fair. The ethnographer has to account for voices from in- and outside the event, as his/her empirical study moves on in spatial as well as temporal terms, to assess its idealistic and materialistic remnants. The question of “How is the local linked to the global or the regional?” (ibid.: 6), then becomes a question of how the global in return is linked to the local (cf. Harvey 1996:

6ff). One that this thesis tried to address, by tracing the local voices that constitute and contest the “World” of an EXPO as well as its subsequent legacy.

The linkage of ethnographic and discursive approaches within this project has certainly helped this undertaking by lending a lens to decipher a phenomenon (the EXPO) in otherwise difficult-to-pin-down fields that this project chose to settle in. As my initial research question(s) already suggests (cf. Chapter 4.2.1); to ask about the Legacy of an EXPO, meant for me, to link issues of placemaking (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 5) to those of legitimation (Assmann 1999) and discursive practice (Foucault 1988).

When Marcus (1995) is proposing his Multi-Sited approach he already points to the necessity of such a venture (cf. Chapter 4.2.2). However it's certainly easier to follow “things” and “people”, as materialized beings, than to follow a “narrative” or a “metaphor” (cf. *ibid.* 90ff). Regarding the latter, he points to its circulation within discourse and the possibility to trace it and decipher it within ethnographic fieldwork practice in and around various places (*ibid.* 92). Instead of retreating to either the language of the multisited ethnography or that of discourse theory, I liked to think of *metaphors* and *narratives* as the *semiotics* and *semantics* of the discursive field, I studied. “*Semiotics*” referring to a discourse's expressions, which might show themselves as “Dispositives”, hence materialistic and/or idealistic discourse (re)producing infrastructures, or sole “Discourse fragments” (e.g. textual documents); “*Semantics*” referring to their inherent meaning, or their “story line” (Keller 2011: 68). The subsequent question one then has to ask is, how to fare with this ethnographically derived data and make it fit for (discourse) analysis?

Whereas ethnography seeks a “field” of research, discourse analysis seeks a “corpus” (Keller 2011). Hence, the latter usually comes up with a much broader set of to-be-analyzed data, but, not least for blatant time-reasons and by virtue of comparability and subsequent reliability, has to forego the qualitative nature of interviews and the ethnographic fieldwork practice to a huge degree. These strongholds of the anthropological discipline however are very much related to the subsequent interpretation of data, as they ground it within the local reality of the studied field. This inevitably leads to a sampling of data that neither is only ethnographical nor discourse-analytical, but rather the result of the joint application of these research approaches. Elliker sees two possible ways of collecting data within a discourse ethnography. One by virtue of sampling the “micro-instantiations of the discourse of

interest” (Elliker 2019: 264) like putting together “film strips” to get an idea of the “film”, meaning “the discourse” (ibid.; Jepperson and Meyer 2011). That is, if the discourse ethnography is interested in “reconstructing and analysing a particular discourse” (Elliker 2019: 264). The other epistemological interest of the discourse ethnography lies in reconstructing “how a specific setting is shaped by various discourses” which “entails the study of all the different social situations of a setting and how these situations are interlinked to form a local context” (ibid. 265). I opted for the first approach.

The film metaphor fits this case study to the fullest. Aside from all the visual elements the 21st century EXPOs have applied to awe the masses, they – as their modern predecessors alike – have been carried out according to a screenplay of the organizers with the intent to convey a readymade message or story offered by an official theme. What helps this conduct is the cumulate effort of participating countries to tell their version of this story, however superficial it might often be in its narrational depth and authentic in its sincerity. Having said that, it still is not a given that the subsequent perception of the EXPO and its screenplay is interpreted the same or at least in a favorable way by its many visitors and the public. The eventual EXPO “film” is then rather to be understood as the cumulation of publicly articulated interpretations of the EXPO experience, the only thing that outlasts the otherwise ephemeral event; it’s legacy.

One such “filmstrip” (Jepperson and Meyer 2011) to the legacy of EXPO 2010 and an ethnographical retrieved visual allegory, would be the Saudi Arabian pavilion (fig.1). During Shanghai EXPO the Saudis once hosted one of the, if not the most prominent pavilion of the whole event, called “the treasure” the boat-like structure hosted the then largest IMAX cinema of the World, for which regular visitors often had to queue up to eight hours to get in (cf. Houdart 2012: 132). It would eventually be one of the last impermanent buildings dismantled in 2016, when I started my ethnography in Shanghai. Before that it was still allowing nostalgic visitors the entry to its cinema as well as rooftop, allowing for a view of the former EXPO site (fig.2) that in the meantime had given way to a city development project and thus been turned into a largescale construction site. Showcasing both, the ephemeral nature of the Mega Event as well as one of the main reasons for its initiation, largescale urban refurbishment (cf. Chapter 5.4.1). But that’s just one filmstrip amongst many.



FIGURE 1 Saudi pavilion of EXPO 2010, a few days before demolition (photo by the author, October 2016)

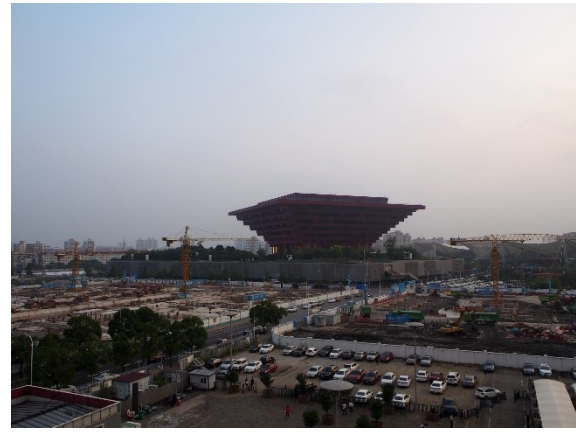


FIGURE 2 Former EXPO- meanwhile construction-site (photo by the author, October 2016)

According to Knoblauch such visual elements, as well as audio-visual and textual ones are to be welcomed to the data pool of a discourse ethnography (cf. Knoblauch 2001; also see Elliker 2019: 257). From the viewpoint of discourse-theorists a linkage of methodologies is feasible insofar as it could help tracing the processes of discourse-production and -reception, within the natural field of social practice by the help of participant observation and related ethnographical methods (Keller 2011: 94; Knoblauch 2001: 131). According to Knoblauch (2001: 137), the research then wouldn't be centered as much on the social life of a local community, but rather on the processes of interaction- and communication, considering inherent situational, milieu-specific and institutional patterns. Also Keller has been alluding to the possibility of "an ethnographically grounded detail-analysis of discursive and non-discursive practices of discourse production" as well as to see how social actors position themselves in line or in opposition to certain discourses (Keller 2011: 94f; Knoblauch 1995).

To assemble a corpus the discourse ethnographer needs to collect the "explicit" as well as "implicit" discourse elements and those "embedded in routines", which are to be retrieved "through participant observation in other contexts, and through the use of existing, naturally occurring artefacts from other contexts" to then be joined by "data from domains that are conventionally conceived of as particularly relevant to macro-level processes, such as the mass media, the political field, the education system, organised religion, or the various fields of scientific research – all relevant in distributing, generating, inculcating, and formally regulating specific discourse-related knowledge

conglomerates” (Elliker 2017: 265f)⁵⁸. In terms of interpreting that data, Reiner Keller points out that there aren’t any specific guidelines, how to go about practicing as opposed to preaching discourse analysis, since the choice of theory and method by the researcher very much relies on the question(s) he/she tries to answer and the case he/she’s studying (cf. Keller 2011: 20).

An initial visualization of my own “Discourse-Ethnography” (fig.3) that I drew while being in Shanghai in 2017, trying to link the main methodological concepts (cf. Chapter 4.2.1 and 4.2.2) of my thesis together, in some regards parallels, what Elliker writes on behalf of the superordinate domains distributing discourse strands.

The figure shows a draft of how a discourse field might look like within the ethnographical contention. It conveys the ideas that (1) the field is broader than the concept of a “homogeneous cultural/social field” that speaks through the people that are living within its clear-cut boundaries (Geertz 1987) and share a mutual knowledge about the field itself (2) in fact the illustrated discourse field might expand from material to immaterial realms - e.g. discourse practices and interventions online (3) that it has stakeholders of various kinds (e.g. C-Corporate, S-Scientific, P-Public), who have interests of different sorts in a local phenomenon, or respectively discourse (like the EXPO) and its public perception, all of which take part in the discursive practice of constituting this phenomenon and its legacy by the use of (de)legitimizing narratives. The job of the researcher therein then becomes to gather those stories and tell a cumulative story, see how its various parts relate to each other and ask how they might have changed in temporal and spatial terms and why. This approach to discourse-ethnography has then been applied to the cases of **EXPO 2010**, and **EXPO 2015** as follows.

⁵⁸ With regards to the authors accounts to the mass media, it shall be noted, that this thesis occasionally cites Twitter posts, thereby following suit with Pfaffenberger’s (2016: 111ff) notions on the rightful use and citation of this source of data gathering.

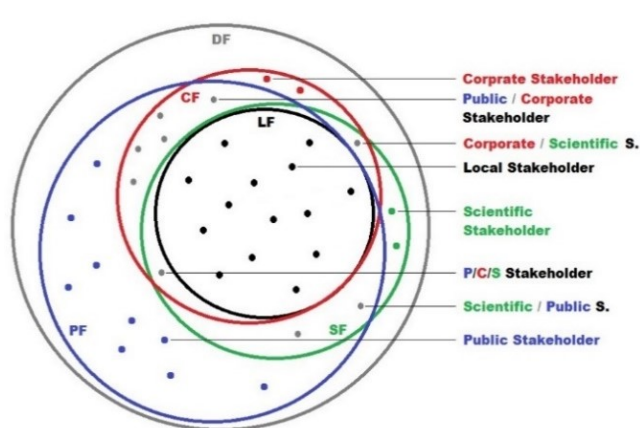


FIGURE 3 Discourse field for ethnographical assessment (visualization by the author, January 2017)

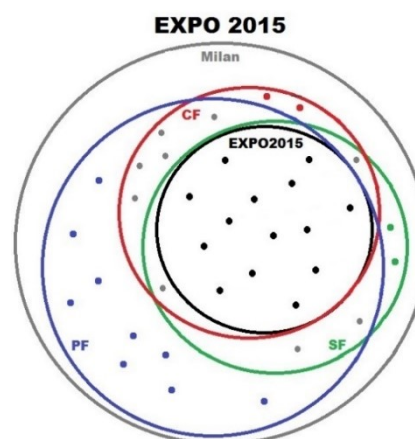


FIGURE 4 Discourse field of EXPO 2015 in Milan (visualization by the author, January 2017)

EXPO 2015, held from May 1st until October 31st 2015 in Milan, has been the site of the first discourse-ethnography, which was conducted in between 1st July and 30th September, 2015, for a duration of three months. Within research “EXPO” then simultaneously referred to the fieldsite as well as the phenomenon studied. As my discourse ethnography tried to decipher the practices of (de)legitimation of the EXPO, I focused on the *narratives* and *story lines* that constituted it, both on- and offsite the EXPO grounds, within internal and external Stakeholder-Interviews “testing [subsequent plots] against the reality of ethnographic investigation” (Marcus 1995: 109). Also *following* “EXPO” as a *metaphor* within fieldwork, documentation and participant observation in Urban Milan and (social)media.

From the viewpoint of discourse analysis this also meant to look for and document the references to the discourse on the effect/legacy of this EXPO within ethnographic research and trace *discursive practices*, *-actors* in and around this World’s Fair as well as the media, focusing on eventually emerging *discourse-manifestations* and *-dispositives* (cf. Keller 2011: 34/68/95) in the process. Within stakeholder interviews the *constitution*, *actualization* and *positioning against* the discourse were then assessed accordingly (cf. Keller 2011: 95). The second figure (fig.4) illustrates how the actual fieldsite of study subsequently looked like, in accordance to the initial layout of a discourse field.

The ethnographical methods I applied to this research settings were those of (1) *Participant Observation*, onsite (but also offsite) of EXPO 2015, immersing with a visitorlike demeanour in the daily routine of the event, being sometimes present from the early hours and the first wave of visitors until the late evening events and concerts that were taking place at the site. I would further also adopt “the guise of a journalist” (Harvey 1996: 6-7) whenever need be, or at least act in a similar capacity. As I started most of my working days within the Media Center of EXPO 2015, the homeground for all the international journalists covering the event, I often would filter the database for news and announcements that correlated with my research interests. From there I also reached out to PR and communications personel of different participants for interviews and would later eventually publish those on my Blog, as I sought to immerse also with the coverage and journalist take on EXPO. This proceeding arguably helped the conduct of finding interviewpartners, as they were made aware of my research and its purpose, but might on the other hand have also stood in the way for other interviews to happen for the very same reasons.

(2) *Stakeholder-Interviews* were conducted onsite as well as offsite following the discourse strands on EXPO well beyond the boundaries of the event. As local opposition towards the event already formed years prior to its opening, it would eventually result in critical content being published on social media platforms as well as public protest in the streets of Milan (cf. Chapter 6.1.2). While people were taking to the streets of the city, the EXPO also did the same by use of public promotion events, which also meant for the participant observation to expand beyond EXPO to those realms and online (cf. Chapter 6.3.1). In discursive terms, I tried to focus on social actors participating and dispositives (re)producing story lines on EXPO. To reevaluate my data, I would revisit Milan two years later, conducting follow-up interviews and searching for material remnants of the event, as well as eventual new dispositives.

The legacy of **EXPO 2010**, has signified the second main case-study of this thesis, which has taken place within a nearly one-year long discourse-ethnography in urban Shanghai, from September 1st 2016 to July 17th 2017. Herein the fieldsite was not as clear-cut as within the case-study on EXPO 2015. The spatial and temporal issues of this EXPO having been held seven years prior to research, with the better part of the exhibition site torn down already, called for a (re)construction of the fieldsite within urban Shanghai. Of course this (re)construction, as I’ve alluded to in the previous

chapters, was a process of logically sewing together places within the urban frame of Shanghai one wouldn't associate, if not for their connection to the discourse the EXPO legacy represents. In case of the Shanghai research, it was rather the legacy of EXPO that signified the discourse, as opposed to Milan, where the EXPO – a media present and publicly discussed phenomenon – was the discourse in question, with the legacy being its supposed outcome. Thus the ethnographical lens would shift to the dispositives that prolonged story lines on EXPO (Keller 2011; Foucault 1988), with the hypothesis being that their engagement in discursive practice served the purpose of legitimating it retrospectively (cf. Assmann 1999: 137f).

Following course with Marcus (1995) guidelines on the multisited ethnography, as this conduct certainly met the criteria by judging it from the methodological standpoint of anthropology, and by use of his terminology, at first this conduct was treating and tracing “EXPO” as a *metaphor* (cf. Chapter 4.2.2) within the given setting. This meant for me to search for material (buildings, places) and semiotic ([visual]media, language) manifestations of the fair itself, connecting, as Marcus suggests (1995: 108f), various “locations of cultural production” in the process, to come up with “new envisionings of social landscapes” that eventually helped to delimitate the field of urban Shanghai to an ethnographically manageable number of sites and interview-partners to then be assessed.

The subsequent task of *following the narrative* within this scenario took the official EXPO theme of 2010 “better city, better life” as a vantage point for engaging with the discursive-practices, actors, manifestations and means of discourse reproduction (*dispositives*) within this field (cf. Chapter 5.4). Given its theme, the eventual *plot-lines* or *story-lines* on the EXPOs legacy herein, were to a large part connected to the constitution of a local *collective reality* (cf. Marcus 1995: 109; Boyarin: 5; Halbwachs 1967: 34ff) of being and living in Shanghai post-EXPO and could thus also be tested against the reality of ethnographic investigation (Marcus 1995).

The methods applied within this second research setting were again (1) stakeholder-interviews with people formerly involved in the EXPO but also (2) participant observation within places of discourse (re)production, such as museums, exhibits, institutions, parks, malls that – in the sense of Kellers notions on focused discourse-ethnography (Keller 2003; 2016; also see Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017: 235) signified dispositives of the discourse in question. Additionally I often engaged in (3) informal talks as well as (4) textual/visual and auditive documentation and other

comparable tools of ethnographic fieldwork practice within Urban Shanghai, and (5) media and literature review on matters of the EXPOs legacy.

In terms of the epistemological outcome, I already anticipated that a multitude of opinions on matters of EXPO within the Chinese case-study would eventually remain unheard, whilst others would be overemphasized, given that a possibly delegitimizing discourse intervention might implicate reprisals, swaying the discourse on the legacy of EXPO 2010 towards the remembrance of certain positively connotated narratives as opposed to other, supposedly unfavourable, ones. Thus to forego, or rather cope with, the problem of repressed voices within this discourse ethnography, I put emphasis on the key-elements of discourses⁵⁹ put forth by Foucault within my research. Hence, I also focused on *manifestations* and *dispositives* of certain narratives (cf. Chapter 4.2.2) supposedly illustrating the underlying power-relations at play that co-constituted this discourse.

In my closing arguments of this outline of methods applied within research, I'd like to elaborate on the interpretation of data. The process of collecting and interpreting/analyzing data has a recursive moment to it, given the methodology that has been laid out so far. As Foucault writes that "Discourses systematically constitute the things they speak about" (cf. Foucault 1988: 74), the (re)production of discourses arguably relies on the cultural infrastructure of institutions, practices and policies – within this thesis also often referred to as *dispositives* (ibid.). The dissertational project sought to access them through discourse-ethnographical assessments (cf. Keller 2003; Elliker 2019; Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017).

Huffschnid, within her respective discourse ethnography, argues that "space might be read and texts might be relocated in space" (Huffschnid 2009: 10), while Marcus alludes to ethnography in general as a practice that both "evolves in the field and as it is eventually written up" (Marcus 1995: 102). The latter part is, where the ethnographer can lastly be him/herself and hasn't got to renegotiate him/herself, as well as his/her research approach, as he/she might has to within the field and during research, but rather follow through with his/her own interpretations, reclaiming the authorship of his/her research (ibid.: 112). With the act of interpretation of data gathered on matters of a discourse, however, also comes the responsibility of the

⁵⁹ In short: "how things are created through discourse", "according to which rules", "why do some discourses appear and others don't", "from which places are they formulated", "how do they relate to other discourses, what are their functions within non-discursive practice" (Foucault 1988: 48ff; Keller 2011: 47f; also see Chapter 4.2.1).

researcher to correlate and contemplate on the heterogeneous data from the field so that it becomes reproducible for his/her readers (Keller 2011: 80). The same applies to the assessment of significance of the gathered data (Keller 2013: 51), in order to be able to justify statements, filmstrips or discourse strands on behalf of the discourse as a whole (cf. Keller 2011; Jepperson and Meyer 2011). Thus I followed course with Keller's proposition to aid interpretation by the use of *Coding*, *Comments* and *Memos* (Keller 2013: 56), familiar with the *Grounded Theory* and the concept of *theoretical sampling* (Keller 2013:55, Strauss & Corbin 1996, Strauss 1998), to my data corpus using Atlas.ti and Citavi.

Finally, it shall not go unmentioned, that, while it had been just pen and a paper which served Bronislaw Malinowski well in the early days of ethnographic fieldwork, the times have certainly changed with regards to the necessities and the flux of field sites, not least showcased by this dissertation. Hence this project inevitably evolved around video-, audio-, photography, social-media and blogs, in addition to traditional fieldwork tools like fieldnotes, memos and interviews. We shall not disregard that the quality of social scientific research not only relies on the theoretical presets of questioning and analytical capacities of the researcher, but the initial quality and textuality of his/her material and his/her technological means of data gathering and interpretation and – last but not least – sufficient funding.

5. Case Study on the Legacy of EXPO'10 (Shanghai)

5.1 From China to the World – Communicating the PRC

When Shanghai hosted its first World EXPO in 2010, the first ever to be held on Chinese soil, themed “better city, better life”, it promised its domestic and international audiences a foresight on the city of the future. The goal was arguably set: to showcase the “Chinese Dream”⁶⁰, how far the People’s Republic has developed since its foundation (cf. Nordin 2012b: 241). In his introductory commentary to the 2016 edition of the Shanghai Manual the PRC’s Minister of Housing and Rural-Urban Development states that China’s urbanization increased “from 17.9% in 1978 to 56.1% in 2015 and 770 million Chinese [...] living in cities” (Chen 2016: 7). This latest Chinese achievement is certainly paralleled by the success story of the inarguably most globalized metropolis, which was unsurprisingly chosen to host the 2010 EXPO, since the Olympics had already taken place in Beijing two years prior. Hence, those two events together with the Guangzhou Asian Games, also having taken place in 2010, offered a unique possibility to solidify domestic rule as well as redefine the PRC’s international standing and that of their most important cities, within the first decade of this new century. Certainly the PRC’s leading figures were eager to emphasize the importance of hosting these events and the merits they would eventually bring to the country and its three largest cities which should be “branded nationally and internationally” (Chen 2012: 732; also see Hong 2010). Amongst those merits, however, was inevitably also the agenda of establishing current rule and refurbishing the nation’s image amongst the international community, as Schneider states:

“Over the past decade, the leaders of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and its vanguard Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have updated their media and propaganda endeavors with the hope of creating a believable and attractive public relations strategy that would improve legitimacy at home while countering China Threat rhetoric abroad” (Schneider 2013: 2)

Given that the EXPO was second in line and “since the event lasted for six months, much longer than the Olympic Games, the spectacle of the Expo provided longer global exposure and impact” (Yu, Wang and Seo 2012: 49). Nevertheless, these events might

⁶⁰ Not to be conflated with the current party ideology under Xi Jinping (cf. Aarase 2016; Wang 2014; also see Chapter 5.3.3).

arguably be considered as different sides of the same medal, both in global as well as domestic terms. As Roche writes:

“The Olympic genre need not be invisible in a discussion of expos and public culture. Both genres involved not only spectacular exhibitions (in Expos exhibitions of special objects, in Olympics of elite bodily capacities) but also mass participation in spectacular elite ceremonial performances and a range of other crowd performances” (Roche 1998: 26).

In terms of communicating those events, Winter argues that “the 2008 Olympics facilitating the world to learn about China, the Shanghai Expo enabled China to learn about the world” (Winter 2012: 70), while Chen on behalf of the same event states “With both domestic and foreign publics, Beijing may intend to foster a more favorable image of not only the country but also the government (including its institutions) than what it was” (Chen 2012: 732), pointing to a second agenda of not only inviting the world but edutaining the domestic audience towards a more favorable perception of the party rule.

Even though my interviews with domestic Shanghainese and such, who were involved in the event, were keen on highlighting the local merits and effects of the EXPO especially those of the kind of city development projects, as opposed to meta-narratives of state- and world-wide publicity stunts, the case has been made by a wide range of authors that those were actually at the heart of the Chinese efforts (e.g. Chen 2012; Brownell 2013; Nordin 2012b; Dynon 2011). One of which is, Susan Brownell, who has done research on both the government communication strategies behind the Beijing Olympics as well as Shanghai EXPO. However, she argues that the state fell short of its goals in both cases (Brownell 2013: 66).

While the Beijing Olympics drew huge media attention, they set the ground for an eventual contest with international NGOs on matters of “Human Rights” with nothing less but this striving nations’ image at stake. According to the author, state efforts to use the event for pushing its own “‘soft power’ initiative to extend its global influence” (ibid.: 66) eventually failed, as did foreign efforts to further a Chinese contention with its party’s policy making. Domestic interest not being focused on issues of HR, paired with state imposed media censorship, eventually robbed both sides of the chance to use the Olympics for conveying their respective messages to its intended audiences and arguably served the public perception of the involved NGOs within the western

hemisphere most of all (ibid. 75). Unsurprisingly, this then led to a call for further investments in the country's "soft power initiative" (Nye 2004) voiced by politicians and PR-strategists all over China alike (Li 2008; Sun 2010b). Brownell's subsequent take on the Olympic legacy would then be that "The most immediate and evident legacy of this contest was not a decision by the Chinese leadership to initiate political reform but a decision to make a massive investment of US\$6 billion dollars to strengthen its foreign communications capacity" (Brownell 2013: 66).

With EXPO 2010 already on its way, again hopes were high to succeed, in the PR-department, the more so since the Olympics couldn't sway western opinion on the Chinese One-Party rule, but similarly was there a pressing need to deliver on all ends and by all means this time around. Amongst those pushing the agenda from the beginning, was deputy director of the Expo 2010 Shanghai China executive committee, Zhou Hanmin. Having been the PRC's delegate to the BIE, when successfully bidding for a Chinese World EXPO, in 2002, just one year after China won the bid for hosting the Olympics, he was eager to display his optimism. After having been awarded the event by the BIE, he was quick to term this "a testimony to the country's integrated diplomatic strength and the perseverance and solidarity of the people in Shanghai and in China at large", stating that the event would "both speak to us from the distant past and take us to an even brighter future" (Zhou 2012: 16)⁶¹. Indeed, the total amount spent to see the event through was much higher than what Beijing had, but arguably also resulted in a significant return on investment. "The overall budget was 28.6 billion yuan (US\$4.19 billion) and the estimated economic benefit was 80 billion yuan (US\$12 billion) in tourism revenues, which was approximately 3.5 times that of Beijing's profit from the 2008 summer Olympic Games" (Lee et al 2013: 638). However some authors are even suggesting figures of up to 400 billion RMB, an equivalent of \$45 billion, in public financing (Yu et al 2012: 48; Schneider 2013: 2).

With regards to Human Rights however this event again and prior to its opening had all the necessary ingredients for boasting the next PR-disaster for the CCP, given that already during its construction-phase a threatening image of the state handling of its people shimmered through to Western media (cf. Moore 2010). This was the eventual result of municipal relocation efforts to see the event through. As Yunpeng Zhang remembers:

⁶¹ This sentiment on the Chinese rich history and promising future, has been a popular theme to work with, both prior during and after the EXPO, as the next Chapters 5.3 and 5.4 will show.

“To pave the way for this six-month temporary mega-event, more than 18,000 households, according to official statistics, lost their homes and communities. For the ruling elites, those families are inevitable sacrifices to make way for urban development and national fame” (Zhang 2015: 26).

The author, who has done his dissertational research on the people displaced from the hosting grounds of EXPO 2010 would even go as far as to label “Infinite Injustice as the Real Legacy of the Expo” (Zhang 2015: 249f). Other international commentators were similarly unflattering in their assessments, e.g. Cull wrote with regards to the reuse of well-visited yet abandoned EXPO site and in reference to the artistic hordes at the Olympic opening ceremony:

“The situation in Shanghai is a loss for the image of China. The Beijing government’s preferred image of the country marching in lockstep to prosperity behind the party has only limited utility overseas. Images of immense strength tend to intimidate. Images of an undifferentiated mass tend to alienate” (Cull 2012: 101).

Indeed, right from the start the EXPO already seemed to be a hard-sell for the PRC to gain positive foreign media attention. Shanghai’s party leader Yu Zhensheng thus was quick to assure that “the ultimate goal of our [party’s] work is to make [the Shanghainese] lives better” (Yu 2010) as other party members and public figures were keen to counteract such negative assessments by emphasizing the “positive impacts on the Chinese peoples’ attitude toward, perception of, and belief in the government and leadership, enhancing the ‘solidarity’ between the peoples and the government” (Chen 2012: 733; also see Hu 2010; Zhang 2010).

Having stated that, the image and idea of the “Chinese threat” within global public perception (Rabinovitch 2008: 33) – arguably one of the party’s biggest concerns ever since Tiananmen, 1989 – likewise wouldn’t be as widespread as feared by officials. Rather, according to Brownell, the EXPO posed a “No Story” (Brownell 2013: 79), arguing that it paled in comparison to “the huge communications platform provided by the global press coverage surrounding” (ibid.: 66) the Beijing Olympics. With regards to Shanghai’s own city image, Xue et al., who engaged in media assessments of 198 news-reports with Shanghai related content, concluded on the other hand that the EXPO was well covered and received throughout the months leading up to it, as well as the event phase, but would quickly disappear afterwards

and although they “discovered that the number of total reports about Shanghai significantly increased after the Expo, we can hardly attribute such increase to a ‘post-Expo effect’” (Xue et al 2012: 752). However there are also post-event assessments that are suggesting otherwise. Such authors see the “Tourists’ positive perception of the Expo brand significantly influenced their perception of the Shanghai brand” (Yu et al. 2012: 60), while the event “provided an unparalleled opportunity for the tourism industry [...] with visitors who may return for a further holiday and new visitors attracted to the destination after the event” (Lee et al 2013: 638), especially since “the Chinese government heavily promoted the Expo by broadcasting it in the mass media” (ibid.: 656).

As illustrated within this chapter, the comparison of the Beijing Olympics with the Shanghai EXPO is an interesting venture, with a comparable agenda of pushing the PRC’s soft power initiative (Brownell 2013: 66), as well as the Nation/City Brand (Lee et al 2013: 638), that eventually lead to very different outcomes. While perceived from a coverage standpoint the Olympics arguably interested the world audience more, while the Shanghai EXPO sure had a bigger influence on the locale and domestic visitors. Certainly the legacy question posed by this dissertation, can’t be answered only by reiteration of the media and scientific discourse on EXPO, but also seeks to implement individual accounts and discourse-ethnographical observations within Shanghai, to see, feel and reflect on the steps that have been taken since the event has taken place, with all its promising themes and objectives (also see Cull 2012: 101).

5.2 “better city, better life” – An Initial Assessment

5.2.1 *The Medium and the Message*

“In reality, except for a small number of people who can directly see and feel a city, most of the international public has to imagine the city through mass media. The narratives of media thus play a significant role in agenda setting and framing the public’s cognition of city image” (Xue et al 2012 2012: 748).

There are many things to take away from this reference. The authors – as we’ve learned in the previous Chapter – having applied an ambitious content analysis of news reports on matters of the EXPO, represent arguably one distinct epistemological approach in trying to understand such a mega event and its communicational means. Having said that, the quantitative pragmatism, with which we usually attend to the event

study, documentation and common perception, are also bound to misdirect us from the many effects such events might have on the individual as well as on the locale. Numbers arguably speak for themselves and numbers might certainly have been the most stunning outcome of EXPO 2010. Roughly 73 Million people have been to the event-site during its six month long transaction, approximately 4.2 million of which being foreigners, by far the most that had ever been to an EXPO, 246 nations as well as international organizations participating and 528 hectares of land occupied for the purpose (cf. Yu et al 2012: 48-49; Barboza 2010).

Hence, wouldn't it make sense to then regard the EXPO itself the "mass-medium", and not only "the medium" but also "the message" (Roche 1998: 14) conveying the idea of this Chinese metropolis being not only "a" but "the" global city of the 21st century. Certainly throughout the interviews and informal conversations that I've gathered in Shanghai, I noticed a trend stressing that the EXPO has made Shanghai much more international (cf. Luo Xiang 2017; Bao 2017; Lola Hui 2017; Honisch 2017b).

Furthermore, one Brazilian architect I've interviewed, might be considered a living proof of that turn to cosmopolitanism, since he has opened his studio in the aftermath of EXPO 2010 as many other former EXPO architects did at a newly founded Design Department at the Songjiang University Campus south of the city center. As his life has been changed by the event, so have been the lives of many individuals within Shanghai due to EXPO, for better or for worse, of course (cf. Zhang 2015). Thus, if we don't regard the introductory commentary "*except for a small number of people who can directly see and feel a city*" (Xue et al. 2012: 748) as an impediment, but chance to advance our research, to understand how those bold numbers of visitors to this EXPO, as well as the people affected by it, actually translate to a collective memory inherent to present day Shanghai (cf. Assmann 1999), having another epistemological building block to work with, we might end up at a more complete take on what the legacy of an EXPO actually entails. Then again, the EXPO 2010 seems like an ideal vantage point to ethnographically engage with the Chinese metropolis itself, just like Houdart writes:

"To approach Shanghai through the lens of this particular event is interesting not because, just like Russian dolls that unfold, one can get endless visions of cities embedded into cities, but because it helps us resisting any attempt of generalization. The expo won't last, but in the Expo one can find embryonic

pieces of a Shanghai to come (roads, infrastructure, and buildings)” (Houdart 2012: 130).

Indeed, the ethnographer him/herself might represent the embodiment of “*seeing and feeling a city*” (Xue et al. 2012: 748). He/she, who is arguably schooled to empathetically see, feel and understand the cultural and social specifics of the locale and its inhabitants best by being and living onsite. He/she also arguably possesses the means to reevaluate a mass mediated image by interpreting its narrative strands, which in the case of present-day Shanghai correlate or rather carry on many of the guiding themes of EXPO 2010, at the very least by superficially branding the city on the Huangpu river basin more internationally. His/her subsequent interpretations then feed into the scientific sum that makes for a more profound image to counteract the mass-mediated one. That is, if the scientific discourse on matters of Shanghai and its EXPOs legacy, is not biased in and of itself. With reference to afore mentioned notion of “the medium being the message” Dynon might put it best by stating:

“Whereas a poster or billboard contains merely ‘visual’ propaganda, the model locality of the Expo site contains ‘experiential’ messaging that can be touched, walked through and dined in as opposed to being merely looked at. [...] Within this network the medium becomes the landscape itself” (Dynon 2011: 190).

A landscape that this dissertation set out to engage with discourse-analytically, as well as ethnographically and which shall further be discussed within the next two Chapters.

5.2.2 The Mission and the Legacies in Perspective

The Shanghai EXPO having been themed “better city, better life”, would unsurprisingly result in a few authors partaking in openly questioning the mission of the event, occasionally even by self-evidently adding a question mark to this statement and using it as a title (Zhang 2015; Li, Li & Chen 2010). However the approaches are as diverse as are their results, with ethnographic takes accounting for just a fracture of research done on the event (Van Troi 2016; Zhang 2015; Björner and Berger 2012; Houdart 2012). Amongst the total of scientific EXPO assessments many are survey-based studies, interested in the visitor motivation that drew so many to the event (cf. Lee et al 2013; Yu, Wang, Seo 2012; Ye et al. 2012; Yang et al. 2010), with also the motivation of volunteers drawing occasional interest. No wonder since,

“According to the official statistics, altogether more than 2 million volunteers, including 70,000 volunteers who served at the World Expo site, 130,000 volunteers who staffed the service stations in the different parts of Shanghai during the event and 2 million urban civilization volunteers, have contributed for the success of Shanghai Expo” (Wang & Wu 2014: 758), again adding to the sheer unbelievable statistics this event accounted for.

Other takes on EXPO see and analyze the event as part of an official agenda of city refurbishment (cf. Yu 2012; Deng & Poon 2012; Liu, Chu 2011). Lastly a significant number of works focus on the city-branding efforts and strategies behind EXPO 2010 (cf. Nordin 2012b; Xue et al 2012; Yu et al 2012; Dynon 2011). Of course this list only illustrates a very sociocentric cutout of the totality of works on EXPO 2010, which also tends to overlap on certain issues and in their empirical focus. With all these questions raised towards “better city, better life” having been as diverse, as the ways to interpret such a statement or mission were manifold, they all arguably shed light on the legacy of the Shanghai EXPO from a scientific standpoint. Having said that, amongst those articles referenced, we’ll find objective takes, as well as bad – or rather biased – apples to go along with them, which unsurprisingly to the most part correlate with the nationality of their authors, being Chinese, and thus often result in contradicting assessments.

For instance, we’ll learn that in terms of the “residents’ perceptions and attitudes” towards EXPO 2010, over 90% either “strongly supported (77.9%) or supported (12.7%) the event” (Ye et al 2012: 1087), and its subsequent impact has also been considered utmost positive (ibid.: ; 1101; Yang et al. 2010 161) while readers of such studies are deprived of the information that “each household in Shanghai was given a free admission ticket (160 yuan or US\$25 per person) to the Expo 2010 and may not be representative of the study population in assessing genuine motives for visiting the Expo 2010” (Lee et al 2013: 643), to begin with⁶².

Another assessment on the EXPO impact suggesting that it has transferred “obsolete buildings to original and creative case pavilions” (Liu and Chu 2011: 3478) subsequently leading to and demonstrating “a unique productive landscape evoking

⁶² One of my interview-partners would even go as far as to argue that domestic factories workers “were paid for their factory work. Even though they weren’t in the factory” to be able “to go to Expo” (Shallis, C., personal interview, May 12, 2017). Having stated that, I didn’t find scientific proof to support his statement.

memories of the past and the future of the ecological civilization” (Yu 2012: 192), contrasts the many individual accounts of EXPO displacees towards the event (cf. Zhang 2015: 162), who have been forced out of their homes before the restructuring of the Huangpu riverfront, the eventual hosting-site of EXPO 2010, even started and – as often – go unmentioned. Of course those, would arguably pose a challenge to the Urban legacy of a fair themed “better city, better life”. Indeed, Dynon offers an interpretation that seems fit to be applied not only to the event but also the polemic that accompanies this urban legacy:

“A key moment in the formulation of the CCP’s approach to public relations – it was decided that propaganda was to have both a ‘time quality’ and a ‘local quality’ [...] Shanghai World Expo demonstrates both of these qualities, yet it remains tied to an ideological narrative that is concerned ultimately not with Shanghai itself but rather with the continuing political legitimacy of the CCP. The Shanghai Expo is therefore less of a place branding exercise than it is an exercise in the continuous rebranding of the CCP” (Dynon 2011: 195).

Another highly debated issue was the EXPO organizers concept of “harmony” (“和谐”). On the one hand Chinese academia e.g. argued that

“The concept of sustainability in Chinese culture means harmony: harmonious relationships between people, society and nature. The traditional Confucian belief system and culture – which encourages its citizens to follow the mainstream consensus viewpoint, to respect authority and stresses the importance of nation and collectivism (Ye et al. 2012: 1088),

actually mirroring some of the narratives offered by the China National Pavilion to its visitors during EXPO 2010 (Nordin 2012b: 243), but also beyond that during its present-day use as China Art Museum (cf. Chapter 5.4.1). Western academic observers thus sensed indoctrination of the domestic visitors by its own government (cf. Dynon 2011: 189) and would go on to argue that the concept of harmony is questionable, being not only “problematic because it marginalizes concepts of equality and difference” but also since it illustrated “an already nationalistic domestic audience a China that rightfully rises to the place of a world leader and the folly of anyone imagining that such a rise would be less than beneficial to all” (Nordin 2012b: 245-246).

As the articles cited show, the scientific discourse on the Shanghai EXPO's effect, impact or legacy is a highly problematic one, especially the domestic discourse, which inevitably also fed into the international assessment of the event. This signifies a problem that in general applies to state-funded research in the PRC that is widely known of and appears even more alarming, if we take the Olympics as an example, on which Brownell states:

“Research on the promotion of China’s national image through the Olympics [...] was conducted in three key point research projects commissioned by the National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science, which is administered by the Central Propaganda Department of the Communist Party. These grants are the government’s way of channelling academic research in directions that serve its needs” (Brownell 2013: 69).

Similar things must be said about the domestic media discourse on Chinese mega-events, which – as we’ve learned in the previous chapter – was also severely influenced by state actors, during the uprun to EXPO 2010 (ibid. 66; Schneider 2013: 2f) and beyond (Lee et al 2013: 656). However a case can be made that journalism in general, more than the scientific branch, is arguably prone to be influenced and subjective, due to its dependency on reader- and sponsorship, which the comparative case-study of EXPO 2015 in Chapter 6 shall further illustrate.

Lastly, if we intend to engage with a discourse ethnography on Shanghai’s EXPO legacy, we might initially also turn to the body of literature that actually leads the discourse from the forefront by occupying the respective terminology. The engagement with an EXPOs legacy is arguably rendered unnecessary, since already taken care of, by the continuous and in many ways scientifically framed textual output of the EXPO organizing entities themselves. Supposedly, since London 1851 (cf. Chapter 2.1), a “World’s Fairs legacy” is regarded as part of the agenda to host such an event. Scientific and diplomatic gatherings are part of every EXPO, hence, so are pamphlets to their communal mission, its future objectives as well as intermediate success-stories (also see Veca 2015; Gatti et al. 2018). The documentation of these events is an act of friendship, seldom political in its ways and thus an eventual output that all the participants, be they corporate or national might agree and sign off on. Also, since it proofs marketable for everyone for the exact same reasons. However, given that an EXPOs legacy is already set in stone and upon the closure of the event (cf. Clos 2016;

Loscertales 2016), is seldom questioned or judged scientifically, with maybe the exception of historical studies, leaves us with an epistemological gap to be further explored. Thus I'd like to focus not only on the informational value of these legacies, but also its means of (re)production and question its utilization in the long term.

If we turn to the BIE, as awarding entity and biggest archive to past and future EXPOs, we'll find an "Urban Legacy" as well as an "Intellectual Legacy" to Shanghai 2010. The former translates to the largescale urban transformation that took place prior and after the event, referring to infrastructural projects like highspeed railways, airport runways and the refurbishment of the Huangpu river banks (cf. BIE 2019a). The latter is based on "a series of forums, seminars and round-tables that took place before and during the Expo" and led to two significant publications, one being the *Shanghai Declaration*, the other the *Shanghai Manual*, "jointly compiled by the United Nations, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China, the Shanghai Municipal Government and the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE)" (ibid.), which shall be illustrated shortly.

The *Shanghai Declaration*, is a short multilingual pamphlet to give ideological direction to the nations of the world in accordance with the official EXPO mission of 2010. In general, it needs to be considered, a neutral product of scientific and diplomatic discourse, putting an emphasis on "We" as the common citizens and nations of the world, while positively urging us to further ecological sustainability, equal rights and opportunities and lastly a "harmonious development" (cf. XinHua 2010a). A concept that, as I've illustrated, in the EXPO context also narratively implied a subordination to authority (cf. Ye et al 2012: 1088) and thus remains questionable (cf. Nordin 2012b; Dynon 2011).

The *Shanghai Manual*, on the other hand, originally issued in 2011 by the UN, the BIE and the Shanghai 2010 World Exposition National Organizing Committee is a jointly compiled "reference book in the regular training of urban managers in China and in other relevant countries" perceived as a "living document" and thus regularly updated (Xia et al. 2016: 15). Though being originally published in the wake of the closure of World EXPO 2010 summit, on the 31st October 2019, which then was promoted to eventually be remembered as "World Cities Day" (Clos 2016: 4), it was meant to carry on the mission of the event being about a sustainable urban development worldwide rather than having a sole focus on Shanghai (Xia et al 2016: 16f). Having said that, it

positions the PRC prominently within this framework of stakeholders in city development, as well as leaves the EXPO legacy another positive connotation within its contemporary perception, given the name of the pamphlet being “Shanghai Manual”. A perception that further seeks to be carried on scientifically, ideally as “first-hand reference material for scholars engaged in relevant studies” (ibid.: 18).

Within the Shanghai Manual the terminology of “the legacy” is also well emphasized by the issuing institutions in the introductory Preface, stating:

“The World Cities Day celebration [...] was created based on the legacy of the Shanghai Expo of 2010 [...] to build on the inheritance of the EXPO legacy”

Dr. Joan Clos (2016: 4) (Executive Director of UN Habitat and Habitat III)

“Six years after the closing of Expo 2010 Shanghai, its legacy lives on. [...] its spiritual legacy represented by the ideas and practices of the Shanghai Declaration for future development carries forward. [...] [the World Cities Day] represents a concrete outcome of the rich legacy of Shanghai 2010 to promote sustainable urban development”

Vincente Gonzalez Loscertales (2016: 6) (Secretary General of BIE)

In comparison the commentary of the Chinese leading institutions behind the publication seems pleasantly subdued, illustrating their will to continuously see to their mission through rather than to consider it already completed:

“Shanghai will embrace and practice the philosophy of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development, adhere to the road of sustainable development, and join hands with cities around the world for a better common future!” Yang, Xiong 杨雄 (2016: 9) (Mayor of Shanghai)

“China’s achievements in urban development have attracted worldwide attention. However, China is faced with similar situations as other developing countries. [...] How to seize the opportunities for urban development? How to deal with the risks that come along with rapid urbanization? Those will be the questions that government administrators, experts and scholars, corporate managers, and citizens have to think about.”

Chen, Zhenggao 陈政高 (2016: 7) (Minister of Urban-Rural Development PRC)

5.3 A Harmonious World, a Harmonious Future – the Expo in Hindsight

The paradox of exhibitions is that they present national identities as both distinctive and converging, and they achieve this through both the shared themes that nations adopt in representing themselves, and the technologies deployed to do so. For the host city, the display of national identity is mainly directed at domestic audiences the overwhelming majority of visitors to exhibitions are domestic while for other nations, the focus is of course foreign visitors, particularly those from the host country. (Smits and Jansen 2012: 173)

The above statement of Smits and Jansen on their joint-experience of being at and studying EXPO 2010, in Shanghai, certainly holds truth, when dissecting the underlying communication processes such an exposition employs to reach out to “the world”. It likewise points to their driving aims, potential gains and eventual failures in doing so. The multitude of parallel narratives used by participating as well as host-countries and other involved organizations are bound through their common interest in bettering the world by bettering their International- but also Public Relations. Hence, more often than not, are those exposition as much about global as about local publicity. This has arguably always been the case with EXPOs or World’s Fairs and their participants (also see Benedict 1991). At first glance, Shanghai might not have been any different, looking more closely, however, it turns out to be a building block, in a China-wide PR agenda, as I’ve indicated in the previous Chapters. To follow up on this notion this Chapter shall be a recourse to the inherent imagery, media-narratives and other discursive traits applied at EXPO 2010. In her commentary on Sevilla EXPO 1992 Penelope Harvey once recounted that:

“The Expo world constructed its own external reality to which the public were offered numerous guiding frameworks, to the extent that it was not necessary to go to Seville to find out a great deal about the Expo. In this sense, the exhibition was in many ways a typical instance of its kind and reproduced many of the forms and intentions of world fairs of the nineteenth century” (Harvey 1996: 34).

Mere twenty years after this event, her comment still applied to the Shanghai case. Indeed the state, as illustrated beforehand, applied vast mediatory means to make EXPO 2010 an ever present – and ideally unforgettable – feature in the daily (Chinese) tabloids on the other hand the vast nature of the event, made it rather inevitable to not

be pondered with, when being in Shanghai during its transaction. Aside from its numerous visitors and other relevant historical records, EXPO 2010 also boasted the largest site since the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904, with 528ha outmatching its predecessors in even that comparably negligible category by twenty hectares (Yu et al 2012; Groote 2005). One could say, it inevitably occupied a large space, both in spatial as well as cognitive terms, meaning the minds of domestic Chinese and visitors of the country, eventually causing its own “external reality” that made you familiar with the EXPO concept and goals, even if you haven’t been to the EXPO Park once.

One exemplary interpretation that I gathered on several occasions with regards to the immediate effect of the event, stated that it had sparked an unprecedented interest among local Shanghainese to learn English. Other interview partners indicated that the EXPO led to a general improvement of public manners and behaviour, saying:

“Let’s say you go to the subway and are standing on the escalator, right? We may not have paid much attention to it before, but now we anticipate that if you are not going, you stand on the right; if you are quick and in a hurry, you are going to the left. In fact, this [...] habit started from the World Expo. In fact, there are many such people’s ways of doing things that have changed since the year of the World Expo” (Lang, L.⁶³, personal interview, April 20, 2017).

“A lot of people changed their behavior, because [...] the first time in their lives they met one foreigner [...] After a lot of years, they understand it’s this one world. [...] I remember six, 10 years ago, on the streets, the people stopped me, far apart. Today no more. Sometimes on the country, but here in Shanghai no more. But in one day, I took 20, 30 pictures. Welcome to city” (Brenao, F., personal interview, April 4, 2017).

“A lot of ideas came out the expo, the demonstration by all sorts of foreign countries and they definitely continued with that. We talked about critical thinking earlier. You can’t learn critical thinking by one visit to the expo but it could fire something. These millennials that would work for voluntarily, they are amazing” (Shallis, C., personal interview, May 12, 2017).

⁶³ These are the accounts of a Shanghainese Professor, with whom I talked as part of an expert-interview on matters of the EXPO legacy, but ultimately chose to make anonymous within this disquisition, as I did with other domestic interviewees, if I considered their accounts to be in any way politically detrimental to them.

These social changes might not least be attributed to “expo-related promotion of civilized behaviour, [...] aimed at playing an exemplary role in relation to the fair’s millions of domestic visitors” (Dynon 2011: 191). The EXPO itself on the other hand would serve as a statement of Chinese pragmatism, having erased a supposedly futile and “obsolete” industrial harbor (cf. Liu and Chu 2011: 3478) causing the occasional human collateral damage the PRC is infamously known for (cf. Zhang 2015: 151), it would further feed on the narrative of refurbishing the municipal city-scape for the greater good of the local residents (cf. Liu and Chu 2011; also see Chapter 5.4.1), as Dynon writes:

“As a branding installation, the site’s green spaces, its ecologically sustainable structures and its cultural embellishments constitute the exemplary heart of the harmonious city. The site is a billboard – or rather a theme park – for the story of the idealized future state of the city” (Dynon 2011: 190).

As I’ve already illustrated the scientific as well as the media discourse on EXPO 2010 and its theme “better city better life” within the previous Chapters, I’d like to further engage with the former site itself, as well as its inherent narratives, before eventually illustrating how specifically “the story of the idealized future state of the city” unfolds within a discourse ethnography on the EXPO’s legacy six years after the event.

There are two things to point out within the above citation of Dynon, on the one hand “the harmonious city” concept, that we’ve already briefly engaged with in Chapter 5.2.2, on the other hand the remark on EXPO being a “theme park”. I’d like to discuss both, but in reverse order, to convey an idea of what it felt liked to have been to this EXPO, to begin with.

5.3.1 “...and they lived happily ever after” - The Theme Park Analogy

What is the meaning of expo today? I will say, for me, this demonstration of political power, or this national pride is still very strong. [...] Countries like China, they like these kind of events because money is not a problem. The other way China like to show and start to be more and more strong in this world. [...] The second thing why people need expo, expo has become a very big business. This business is to create an event. You can treat it as kind of an event like a theme park or something. A theme park. This event can attract people, attract tourists, and can promote economy (Lang, L., personal interview, April 20, 2017).

The theme-park comparison is not new to World's Fairs, in fact – as Chapter 2 has shown – London's 1851 Exposition's Crystal Palace was arguably "the world's first theme park" (Holland 2014). Not without reason, World's fairs are often also referred to as "edutaining" ventures (cf. Smits and Jansen 2012: 181) and have proven that time and time again, coming all the way from the Midway of the White City, 1983 (cf. Treagus 2013; also see Chapter 2.3/3.1) to the Race to Space at Brussels, 1958 (Kargon, Molella et al. 2015; Iber and Knoll 2010; also see Chapter 2.4), trying to do both, entertaining as well as educating the crowds. Doing that, they progressively evolved from solely exhibiting technological might, to showcasing their culture and thus nationhood with ever more multi-esthetic means, eventually trying to engage the visitors with all their senses, who "in turn are no longer addressed even as citizens of particular nations, but are increasingly catered for as individual consumers" (Harvey 1996: 6), which in return also parallels the EXPO having become a playground for Multinational Corporations as well (cf. Björner and Berg 2012: 33; Van Troi 2016: 679).

EXPO 2010 might easily be considered the epitome of all these constituents, catering for the largest crowd at the largest ever seen (cf. Yu et al 2012: 48f). Quite interestingly, the numbers line up well with Shanghai's latest addition in the entertainment sector, being its own Disneyland Resort, which since its opening, 2016, accounts for roughly 11 million visitors annually (Rubin 2017: 10). However, even prior to its opening a range of authors had already drawn parallels between the superficially similar phenomena (cf. Schneider 2013; Nordin 2012a; Roche 1998), as e.g. Nordin writes:

"The adults' parallel to Disneyland in the contemporary era is the world fair, the most recent, the biggest, the most expensive and the most visited of which, again, was Expo 2010. Like Disneyland, Expo 2010 is built up of fantasy [...] At the same time [...] Expo 2010 involves truth claims in an explicit way that Disneyland never has" (Nordin 2012a: 6f).

She is making this claim with regards to the work of Baudrillard (1994), within which Disneyland mirrors the outside world, with the former functioning as the latter's "simulacrum", eventually making it difficult to tell truth from fiction. Indeed the French author's perception is that – while we engage with Disneyland, as if it was a fictional world within the real one – we're actually mislead to believe that what we engage with on a daily basis, is (more) real, when it's actually not (ibid.: 12).



FIGURE 5 EXPO 2010 Map (expanding to both sides of the Huangpu River) illustrating the event site and zones. From *EXPO Museum*, 2019, <http://www.expomuseum.com/2010/map/>. Copyright 2010 by EXPO 2010.

Schneider (2013: 4) takes this argument further stating that “places like Disneyland are so spectacular that they force visitors to abandon any critical view of the world as a whole”. Nordin applies that same logic to the EXPO, arguing that it needs to be read “not only as an exercise of nation-building, but as an event of worlding, by which I mean that it shapes not only the imaginary of a particular state or nation, but of the world as a holistic unit” (Nordin 2012a: 3), an image that the fairgoers then would eventually adopt. As “Reading the Expo through Baudrillard turns the world into a fair and the fair into the world” (ibid.: 8).

Aside from the notions of EXPO and Disneyland being somewhat “mimicries” (Baudrillard 1994) of the outside world, Roche also drew implicit parallels between these ventures. By arguing that Disneyland would be divided into a series of specially themed “zones” (e.g. “futuristic” and “traditional”) but also “provide an ideal marketing context [...] [enabling] brand reinforcement and development” (Roche 2000: 129), just like an EXPO does (Harvey 1996; also see fig.5/6).



FIGURE 6 Disneyland Shanghai Map - Illustrated Highlights. From *China Discovery*, 2019, <https://www.chinadiscovery.com/shanghai/shanghai-disney-resort.html> Copyright 2016 by Disney.

No wonder - it seems - that Walt Disney himself is said to have been influenced by the New York EXPO 1939, as it is arguably applicable to many “contemporary theme parks” to suppose that they to some degree have been drawing on the concept of such fairs (Roche 2000: 129f; cf. Davis 1996: 400).

Having been to both, EXPO 2010, as well as Disneyland Shanghai, during the summer months of 2010 and 2017, such an analogy seemed appropriate to me. As the two figures above suggest, both parks function as inherently thematically zoned enclaves of entertainment, whereas the left one is narratively divided into regions (cf. fig.5), the right one applies more “childish” themes (cf. fig.6). The latter are supposedly more readily conceivable and thus closer to our imminent aspirations, and understandably so, given the short timeframe and ambivalent temper a visitor, especially one with children, usually has. Having said that, the EXPO might be regarded “the adults' parallel to Disneyland” (Nordin 2012a: 6), applying a more sophisticated geographical terminology and thus subsequent associations.

The vast crowds and waiting lines are certainly characteristics of both the EXPO and Disneyland with the additional hot Shanghainese weather having been another noteworthy and strenuous companion of mine (also see Houdart 2012), while visiting them between June and August of 2010 and 2017, respectively. The former being a subtle reminder of the extraordinariness of the being at such an occasion in the first place, as Baudrillard would say “the only phantasmagoria in this imaginary world lies in the tenderness and warmth of the crowd, and in the sufficient and excessive number of gadgets necessary to create the multitudinous effect” (Baudrillard 1994: 12). Other common denominators are “the high price of admission [...] the blend of progress and consumerism in selling corporate image, and the landscape of ‘a new fantasy world that could be enjoyed because it could be controlled’” (Zukin 1993: 227). The subsequent immersion of the visitor with the offered experiences is as inevitable as it is intended by those running the show, be they corporate and/or governmental players (cf. Harvey 1996). The only job the visitor has, is to let loose and submerge to the multitude of commercial narratives, he’s confronted with, as both national and corporate imagery turn real for the time being and their brands are arguably paving the way to the subliminal of their consumers.

When being to EXPO 2010, I remember that my mindset also had been altered instantly when passing through the gates to the exhibition site, even though on an arguably inquisitive agenda, my curiosity wouldn’t help but rather furthered my giving

into becoming the usual experience-hungry consumer at this occasion. Certainly the crowds, hot weather and teasing visuals also took their toll on me, in subsequently remembering some features of the event better than others. Hence, when visiting Disneyland Shanghai in 2017, I didn't just intend to reflect on my prior experience of being at EXPO 2010, but also briefly interview visitors of the Resort, for their reasons of visiting Disneyland and eventually comparing their experience to the EXPO, as the vast domestic visitor numbers to EXPO (Yu et al 2012: 48f) as well as the free tickets given to domestic Shanghainese (cf. Lee et al 2013: 643) indicated that many would have been to the EXPO 2010 prior to coming to Disneyland.

These "footnotes from the field"⁶⁴, as I'd liked to call them due to their interrogatively pointed nature, would much to my surprise result in a variety of reasons, people chose to visit Disneyland. They came not only for "relaxation" ("休息") and "fun" ("玩") (Participant 2, short interview, May 17, 2017), but also traveling on "company business" ("出差"; Participant 6, short interview, May 17, 2017) or were vacationing on a "company organized tour" ("公司组织旅游"; Participant 9, short interview, May 17, 2017), one couple even celebrated their "honeymoon" ("蜜月"; Participant 7, short interview, May 17, 2017). Of course, some came due to their children being interested in and often even grown up with the Disney "brand" ("品牌"; Participant 15, short interview, May 17, 2017), some because of plain curiosity, as one stated:

"We want to come over and have a look, and then we want to play, just turn around and relax. Because it's novel and curious. Before, there were only two places like Disney in China. So it's close to us, so I came here with curiosity" (Participant 11, short interview, May 17, 2017).

Furthermore – and even more curiously – the better part of my interviewees weren't even Shanghainese, but people from nearby provinces, e.g. Hubei, who appeared to have been drawn not only by Disneyland, but also the "opportunity to come to Shanghai" ("这次来上海的机会就来了"; Participant 10, short interview, May 17, 2017), to experience its "advanced state" ("先进的"; Participant 5, short interview, May 17, 2017) and its "tidiness" ("干净"; Participant 12, short interview, May 17, 2017). Hence, Disneyland as well as Shanghai for them also embodied a fair sense of modernization.

⁶⁴ As these can be described as short survey like interviews, they will be marked with the indication "participant no." instead of their names. All interviews have been translated by the author.

When asked about, if Disneyland would have a distinct culture, one replied that Disneyland would “create a fairy tale atmosphere for people, so it might be considered a fairy tale culture” (Participant 16, short interview, May 17, 2017), which mirrors the initial notions of Baudrillard (1994: 12ff), but not so much what we’d apply to the EXPO case, since there arguably are degrees of abstraction between “imagination”, “fantasy” and “fairy tale”. The comparison with the EXPO, in this regard, would also be difficult to apprehend and rather lead to an initial confusion of my interviewees, who would end up seeing more differences than commonalities between those two :

“Of course Disney is fun. Where can I have fun at the Shanghai World Expo? I can only go to the exhibitions, that’s all. I don’t have any significant memories” (Participant 10, short interview, May 17, 2017).

“I think Disney is more fun, because the Shanghai World Expo is an exhibition, our country shows some of its own products and receives some publicity. Disney is a pure tourist attraction” (Participant 13, short interview, May 17, 2017).

“Shanghai World EXPO was mainly about architecture and culture. The Disneyland Park brands are mainly aimed at children and their families, who are coming here to have fun [...] they are essentially different. When you ask me how they compare, they are not very comparable” (Participant 15, short interview, May 17, 2017).

“You can’t compare the Shanghai World Expo and Disneyland at all. Because one is about fun, pure fun, the other one is about exchange. When we talk about pure fun, it must be Disney, EXPO has more of a business atmosphere” (Participant 9, short interview, May 20, 2017⁶⁵).

Though there are certain parallels between Expos and theme parks, as I’ve indicated prior, there are significant differences, as argued by my interviewees, in terms of the entertainment and overall content offered, as well as its eventual perception by the visitors. While we might relate to the notions of immersion that both examples provide

⁶⁵ The latter comparison was taken as part of a similar survey on the EXPO memory and repurposing of its pavilion, at its former hosting grounds (cf. Chapter 5.4.1).

us with, the “fairy tale culture” of Disneyland, doesn’t apply to EXPO, which tends to be more realistic in its ways and for that reason is arguably also perceived as an authentic and employable model of the world as opposed to a mere imagination.

Also if we turn to Schneider, he ultimately concludes that the appropriation of Baudrillard to the Expo case is too farfetched, as he disagrees with the idea that his “understanding of semiotic simulation provides a helpful framework for analysis” (Schneider 2013: 4). However, he also adds that “even without the recourse to Baudrillard, criticism of the Expo and its perceived hegemonic discourse may still be valid” (ibid.: 5). What he’s referring to here needs to be understood in context of China’s self-portrayal during its first World expositions, which I’d like to further engage with within the next sub-chapter.

5.3.2 Hegemony and Harmony

What Disneyland Shanghai and Expo 2010 arguably shared with each other, which has already been hinted to in Chapter 5.3, yet not thoroughly discussed, was their explicit sense of “harmony”. On the one hand you have the “happily ever after” fairy-tale narrative, on the other hand you’d find a more worldly narrative of “belonging to”, on an individual level, but also “cooperation with” on a broader international one. A theme that the – then acting – PRC administration declared to its propaganda scheme (cf. Schneider 2013: 6; also see Barmé 2009; Brady 2008; Callahan 2008) was eager to impose on Expo 2010 and carried on throughout the event. Nevertheless this needs to be considered problematic, given the country’s self-portrayal at the fair (cf. Ye et al 2012: 1088; also see Dynon 2011; Nordin 2012a) as well as beyond (cf. Brownell 2013). Having said that, both ventures also place a world at your disposal that might be considered implicitly hegemonic.

Although rightfully dismissed by Schneider (2013: 5) as offering more of a political critique than a theoretical foundation to work with, the reference of Baudrillard on the Disney franchise as “a digest of American way of life, panegyric of American values” (Baudrillard 1994: 12) certainly sounds logical to someone culturally brought up in the western-hemisphere of the world. Ultimately Disney is the epitome of an all-American cultural hegemony that has been getting traction almost automatically since the second half of the 20th century due to Globalization (Nye 2004: 33ff). My interviews at the Disneyland Resort also showcased that families in particular came to visit, not least because their children were fond of and grown up with the Disney brand. Having

said that, “Shanghai Expo [...] was far more than a theme park. It was a large-scale attempt at political communication” (Schneider 2013: 3).

Until now, Chinese global culture initiatives have proven to be hard to sell a western audience. I already alluded to the Chinese media expenses to strengthen its Soft Power initiative (Brownell 2013: 66) in the Chapters leading up to this one. In many regards the EXPO as well as the Beijing Olympics served that very cause, while also boasting unparalleled media-budgets (Lee et al 2013: 638; Yu et al 2012: 48). The Shanghai exposition further provided an unprecedented opportunity to position the People’s Republic figuratively as well as prominently amidst the international community, framing it as the future global leader of the 21st century (Nordin 2012a; 2012b). Hence I’d like to reassess some of the arguably hegemonial semiotics that were applied to EXPO 2010, but might have been marketed differently, to see what to make of them as well as the overarching narrative of a harmonious world order.

Being a visitor to the Shanghai EXPO, the Chinese National Pavilion wasn’t something, you’d miss by any chance. Its total height of 69m easily made it the largest structure of the event and impossible to overlook, as it – on the contrary – overlooked the whole compound of the fair, eventually earning it the nickname “Eastern Crown” (“东方之冠”; Schriefers 2014: 374). The red pagoda planned and built by architect He Jingtang would further be one of the rare structures outliving the exposition, only to instantly become the largest Museum in Asia (cf. CNNgo 2012). But that occurrence does not in the slightest convey the whole picture.

According to the fair’s official catalogue the China Pavilion consisted “of a National Pavilion, Provinces Pavilion, and Pavilion of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan” (EXPO 2010: 66f), the latter three having been built in utmost proximity of the Eastern Crown (fig.7), which meant that on sunny days it would symbolically cast a large shadow over its autonomous city-states and the island, it still lays sovereign claims to today. All the while its domestic regions were to be found in the lower levels of the pagoda, making no exception to the likes of Xinjiang or Tibet, ultimately functioning as cultural enclaves to illustrate the notion of “harmony in diversity” (ibid.: 67), or as Nordin concludes: “there can be no outside to the system, or it will fail. All things must be incorporated. This, the claim is, is a distinctly Chinese idea of world order” (Nordin 2012: 243).

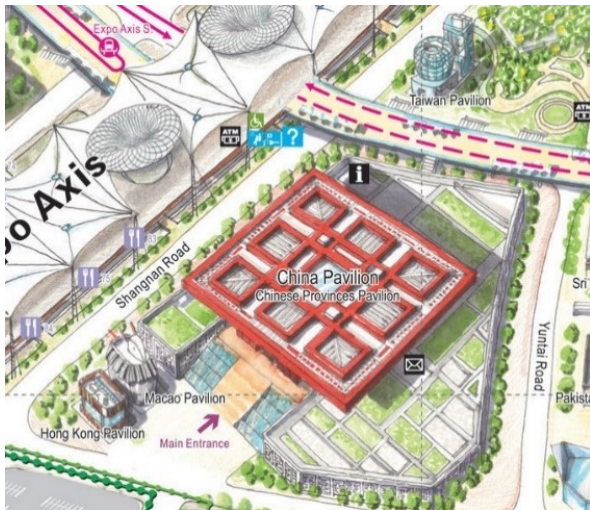


FIGURE 7 EXPO 2010 China Pavilion (zoomed cutout of fig.5) in proximity to the pavilions of Macao and Hong Kong. From *EXPO Museum*, 2019, <http://www.expomuseum.com/2010/map/>. Copyright 2010 by EXPO 2010.

The appearance of the Chinese exhibits and its dominion-appendages, further expanded its narrative structures to the inside, according to Schneider illustrating a “civilizational discourse in which economic and social development were depicted as a teleological process” (Schneider 2013: 3). It did so by the help of exhibits, videos, depicting prevalingly the timeframe starting with Deng Xiaoping’s policies of “Opening Up” (cf. Calahan 2012: 254), as well as an excessive use of metaphors such as “dates, timelines, time lapses, clocks, slow-motion editing, and so on, to symbolize China’s unstoppable movement towards a hypermodern future” (Schneider 2013: 3). Other noteworthy symbolism would evolve around families, old and young, bound by generation expanding dialogue, as well as transcultural relationships illustrated by “Chinese wives” and “Euro-American husbands”, all of which inarguably intended to serve the overarching theme of harmony, that some would nevertheless disapprove of:

“This gendered and raced world harmony defines identities in terms of grand coherent traditions, which are chosen off a menu of cultural stereotypes. [...] But this East/West cosmopolitanism, which ignores the rest of the world and fosters racist views, often serves to solidify perceived differences between China and the world” (Callahan 2012: 257).

Indeed, it was not only the nation’s auspicious future that got depicted, but also insinuations of its historical grandeur to demonstrate where all these impending endeavors would be rooted in. The arguably most noteworthy display could be found towards the end of the exhibition, being a visualization of the traditional Song Dynasty painting, known as “Along the River of Qingming Festival” (清明上河图), dating back as far as approximately 1100 AD. It would eventually be kept at the China Art Museum

after the EXPO to reflect the rich culture and history of China (cf. Bao 2017). Given the curation of interior and make-up of the exterior of the Eastern Crown, outlined by Schneider, Nordin goes on to argue that:

“World fairs were from the outset an exercise where self/other relations were heavily tinted by imperialism. Today [...] their fundamental manoeuvre is the same. The articulation of time/space with the narrative of harmony is problematic because it marginalizes concepts of equality and difference. Others are not properly different, they are just behind” (Nordin 2012: 245).

These notions would get additional traction in the context of the whole fair. Though not new to the World’s Fair concept, as Nordin rightfully states, the imperial telltale has always implicitly worked along the lines of backward and forward countries (cf. Chapter 3; Treagus 2013: 47), often inconsiderately retreating to literal representation of nations inapt to finance their own exhibits, arguably with good intentions, the more so illustrating them as poor. Maybe the Chinese case seemed more peculiar, since the two prior EXPOs, Sevilla 1992 and Hanover 2000, had actively withdrawn from this meta-narrative, rather emphasizing global unity upon the end of the Cold War. Being only the second⁶⁶ development country to host an EXPO in its history, to non-political observers it might have seemed a comprehensible decision to position itself and of course its economic powerhouse, Shanghai, according to the generally rapid ascension of the nation. Or as Nordin frames it:

“The Expo was made possible by China’s economic rise, but was also part of establishing the story of such a rise as true, and of narrating a future where China is no longer second in the world, but rises to be the benevolent leader of a new harmonious world order” (Nordin 2012: 236).

Piecing together the sum of pavilions that made for the EXPO experience, one would eventually learn that the PRC’s imperial conduct was second to none. Schneider, who did so by comparing the varying EXPO-exhibits in size (fig. 8), also states that the “organizers I interviewed felt that the host’s predominance at this particular event was unprecedented in Expo history” (Schneider 2013: 5). Furthermore, Callahan would sarcastically claim to have witnessed “a stable harmonious utopia that combines global

⁶⁶ The PRC seemed eager to emphasize that EXPO 2010 had been the first ever to be held in a developing country, when this title actually applied to Haiti 1949 (BIE 2019b).

capitalism with Chinese civilization” (Callahan 2012: 257). Having said all that, one “should be careful not to overstate the power of seemingly hegemonic discourse” (Schneider 2013: 12).



FIGURE 8 National exhibit sizes at the Shanghai World Exposition. From *"The Futurities and Utopias of the Shanghai World Exposition"*, by F. Schneider, 2013, *Asiascape*, p. 5.

Hence, while revisiting Shanghai in 2016, I would ask myself, what to make of these excessively promoted yet also criticized narratives of “harmony” and “better city, better life” and how and if they survived this grand spectacle. As one of the lone survivors of the show, I took the Chinese national pavilion as the vantage point for this discussion/investigation and – starting from there – tried to examine the lasting impressions and discursive strands the ephemeral event in question had relinquished to nowadays Shanghai (cf. Chapter 5.4.2). However, at a certain point, I also had to ask myself how the narratives and ideologies in question would compare to those of the current PRC administration, which I’d like to contemplate on shortly, before eventually illustrating my discourse ethnography.

5.3.3 The Shanghainese Dream – Looking back to the Future

There seem to be certain parallels between the Cultural Agendas of American and Chinese Soft Power Initiatives, not to be missed by schooled observers of contemporary blockbuster movies, most notably those of the Sci-Fi Genre. Many might still remember Bruce Willis saving the World from imminent destruction of a meteoroid in “Armageddon”, or Will Smith preventing an alien race from taking over the world in “Independence Day”. The USA arguably have mastered the genre of “coming to rescue the world” on the big screen, time and time again, while implicitly spreading American ideas and values in the process, which certainly helped the public perception of their Geopolitical endeavors as well. Also an increasing number of Chinese are said to have

been influenced by American values and idea, especially those concerning the concepts of freedom and democracy, through film and music (Nye 2004: 51). However, the PRC's efforts of pushing back with their own soft-power initiatives are arguably getting traction as well, since

“Across the world, millions of people are reveling in the burst of creativity coming from India and Asia's other cultural giant, China. They are expressing and explaining their experience to the world on their own terms, and an America redefining itself as a multicultural nation within a globalized world is soaking it up” (Pocha 2003: 5).

One of the latest Chinese blockbusters to hit theatres, certainly fits that description, upon release being the highest crossing film worldwide, with even Netflix eventually buying its streaming rights (cf. Chilton 2019). It is a movie adaptation of a Chinese short-story by Hugo-Award Winning Sci-Fi Author Liu Cixin, entitled “The Wandering Earth Project” (“流浪地球”). Within his story the World has come together under a single United Earth Government to save the earth from a collapsing sun, however this time around, a Chinese literally sits at the steering wheel, astronaut Liu Peiqiang, who is – spoilers ahead – steering his spaceship into Jupiter and saving the World on Chinese New Year's eve – which was also chosen as release date of the film – from collision and subsequent obliteration.

The plotline shares significant ties with the two afore mentioned blockbusters of Hollywood origin. Having said that, it yet again mirrors the “cosmopolitan themes to build a harmonious world” (Callahan 2012: 255) with Chinese characteristics and thus the overarching narrative the Shanghai World EXPO organizers had applied to their event (cf. Nordin 2012b: 243). They are ultimately attributable to the directives of former CCP chair Hu Jintao and need to be understood in their larger contemporary context of former and present party leaders.

“Whereas Deng Xiaoping's ideas like ‘taoguang yanghui’ (literally, ‘hiding one's capacity while biding one's time’) and ‘budangtou’ (‘not seeking to lead’) painted China as a passive participant in world affairs, Jiang Zemin subtly challenged this passivity by moving China forward to ‘gear with the world’ (‘yu shijie jiegui’) and expounding ideas such as ‘developing China as a comprehensive power’ (fazhan zonghe guoli) and ‘building a new international order’” (Zheng and Tok 2007: 1)

If we turn the page to the present day policy makers, we'll eventually end up at the concept of the "Chinese dream", that current President Xi Jinping chose as the guiding ideology for his administration, which needs to be understood, however, not so much as an analogy to the "American Dream", but a continuation of the harmonious world concept of his predecessor, this time though in a more dominating role (cf. Aarase 2016: 10f). Inherent to this ideology, but also preceding ones, is a national consciousness rooted in Chinese history, commonly known as "rejuvenation narrative", Wang explains as follows:

"Lacking the procedural legitimacy of democratically elected officials while simultaneously facing the collapse of communist ideology, the CCP has no choice but to fall back on using China's history, culture and patriotism as its 'societal glue.' Therefore, Xi chose to continue working on the same path of Jiang and Hu" (Wang 2014: 6).

Thus the "Chinese Dream" signifies both, a look towards the nation's past but also towards its future, which already has partially been marketed to a preferably Chinese domestic audience throughout EXPO 2010, which served as a harbinger of the prospects the nation will bear in the 21st century, likewise illustrating the party's legitimacy in bringing those about (cf. Schneider 2013: 3; Nordin 2012b: 236; 2011: 185). Having said that, it is without a doubt an ideology to be prolonged even further and farther than the exposition, in spatial as well as temporal terms, thus making it an interesting obstacle to be explored discourse-ethnographically. As Nordin writes:

"China's present and future direction is frequently depicted in terms of a return to an original or always-intended state. The Expo itself is typically portrayed as the fulfilment (led by the PRC/CCP party-state) of an ancient Chinese dream. This portrayal appears in articles, in books such as 100 Years of Expo Dream (百年世博梦) and in the World Expo Museum that looks back at more than 150 years of historical preparation for the Shanghai Expo" (Nordin 2012: 241).

How this "ancient Chinese Dream" eventually became a contemporary one, maybe even a distinctly Shanghainese one, is what shall be debated within the next Chapters. Starting with methodological assessments, to close with spatial and narrative ones, eventually depicting the discourse ethnography that this project has applied.

I chose the initial comparison of American and Chinese blockbusters here for a reason, since in many ways the study of a discourse might be understood like the study of a “film”, where one needs to piece together single “film strips” to get an idea of its whole meaning (cf. Elliker 2019: 264; Jepperson and Meyer 2011; also see Chapter 4.2.2). Having said that, what I’d like to illustrate within the closing segment of this case-study is not a definite answer on what the legacy of EXPO 2010 is, but rather how its overarching narratives translate to present-day Shanghai and what measures are taken to ensure their ongoing existence.

5.4 Following the Metaphor to the Story – a Discourse Ethnography

“When the thing traced is within the realm of discourse and modes of thought, then the circulation of signs, symbols, and metaphors guides the design of ethnography” (Marcus 1995: 108).

How to put the notion of *Post-EXPO Shanghai* into anthropological fieldwork practice was atop of my agenda, when I came to Shanghai in 2016. Hence, asking for the legacy of EXPO 2010 by taking an ethnographical approach to research meant for me to properly locate this ethnography first, which would prove challenging, since the event had already been a thing of the past, for the last six years. Marcus’ notions, on how to follow the likes of *people*, *things* and *ideas* across various sites of research as part of a multi-sited ethnography, would literally help me pave the way to go about this objective.

Having said that, I wouldn’t opt for any of the above, but initially chose to *follow a Metaphor*, in this case “EXPO” or “世博会 shìbóhùi”, but also a *Story* (“better city, better life”), two rather unknown approaches⁶⁷ within the set of methodological guidelines put forth by the author⁶⁸. According to whom, following a Metaphor means to “trace the social correlates and groundings of associations that are most clearly alive in language use and print or visual media” (ibid.: 108). A notion that goes together well with the closing arguments of Schneider on his discourse analysis on EXPO 2010, as he explicitly opens a door for further anthropological engagement with this matter:

⁶⁷ Most Multisited Ethnographies tend to *follow things or people*, rather than immaterial conceptions.

⁶⁸ Both of which are illustrated in more detail in Chapters 4.2.2/4.2.3.

“Future research should follow [...] detailed empirical content analysis, but also methods of process tracing to show how discourse proliferates through mass media and through social interactions. Ethnographic approaches may offer avenues forward, particularly if they try to empirically explore the networks that make up human interaction [...] and consequently create the infrastructure across which discourse travels” (Schneider 2013: 13).

Indeed, put in practice “to follow a Metaphor” meant for me to search for the remnants of EXPO 2010 within nowadays Shanghai, initially scavenging media and maps for keywords associated with the event to eventually end up at actual places of social interaction and cultural production, or arguably “discourse (re)production”, where to then further engage in by the use of participant observation, interviewing and documentation (cf. Marcus 1995: 108f).

One of which was the China Art Museum (“中华艺术宫” zhōnghuá yìshù gōng), which had been the Chinese National Pavilion during the EXPO. Quite unsurprisingly so, since most of the initial settings for my ethnography arose out of the grounds of the former EXPO site itself, amongst which were e.g. the EXPO Mall (“世博源” shìbó yuán), Power Station of Art (“上海当代艺术博物馆” shànghǎi dāngdài yìshù bówùguǎn), EXPO Park (“世博公园” shìbó gōngyuán) and World EXPO Museum (“世博会博物馆” shìbóhuì bówùguǎn). Aside from these a series of other locations proofed to have inextricable ties to the event as well, which qualified them for further ethnographic investigation; most prominently the Urban Planning Exhibition Center (“城市规划展示馆” chéngshì guīhuà zhǎnshì guǎn), which narratively worked along the lines of some significant discourse strands of EXPO (cf. Chapter 5.4.2).

On that note, it must be added that some potential voices that could have contributed to this discourse and ultimately this thesis, are unfortunately left unheard herein, due to different reasons. Most prominently the accounts of former EXPO-displacees, which have proven impossible to get access to as a non-native, both in terms of interviews, as well as their current settlements, which are mostly to be found in the peripheral Pudong area of Shanghai’s city proper, as gated – thus guarded – communities, now commonly known as “EXPO Homelands” (世博家园 shìbó jiāyuán) (cf. Zhang 2014: 5). Most information I thus would withdraw from Yunpeng Zhang’s ethnography on matters of the largescale municipal resettlement projects prior to the

World's Fair, or from discussing this issue in informal conversations. The application of Foucault's discourse theoretical concepts to my – in these respects – inevitably deprived data corpus helped to cope with the problem of generally scarce polit-critical commentary within my ethnography, as it would help to decipher preferential and (il)legitimate speakers and speaking-positions (Foucault 1988: 48ff) on matters of the EXPO's legacy.

Having mapped the field according to my research problem, my second objective became to follow in tracks of the *narratives* that were told at those locations and beyond on matters of the EXPO and its legacy⁶⁹. This meant to perceive the research as both, “following” the EXPO as a *metaphor*, scattered within Shanghai's contemporary urban-scape, media-usage and social interactions, but also as an inherent *narrative*, meaning the discourse strands that would eventually (re)produce – as they retold – a communal history of this phenomenon (Assmann 1999: 137f) to future generations. The job of an anthropologist then becomes that of a hunter and gatherer scavenging for stories within his Urban surroundings – e.g. the afore mentioned sites – and tell a cumulative story on the examined phenomenon, see how its various parts relate to each other, how they might have changed over time and how they eventually fit or contradict the grand narratives introduced in the prior Chapters, most notably those concerned with “Harmony” and the “Chinese Dream”.

5.4.1 Placemaking in Context of the EXPO legacy

With their research on an electoral event in Mexico Huffschmid and Wildner contributed one of the most recent works to apply a discourse ethnography, arguing a twofold approach to space, which according to them might be “read” by an ethnographer, while textual data might on the other hand be relocated within text (Huffschmid & Wildner 2009: 10). I tried to apply as similar proceeding during my Shanghai case study.

When I first revisited the former hosting grounds of its famed EXPO in 2016, my initial observation was that most of it has already been gone. The event had given way to huge construction sites that spoke volumes in terms of Shanghai's rapid development, but also the considerations behind the EXPO bid to start with. As there had been an obvious plan put in place, how to fare with the site once the exposition concluded, which would be confirmed by my interview partners and the literature

⁶⁹ For a thorough elaboration on these concepts please refer to Chapters 4.2.2/4.2.3.

review, all that remained on the river shores – particularly between Lupu and Nanpu Bridge – had inevitably been left there for a reason. Aside from the Saudi Pavilion, once amongst the most visited and famed pavilions of the whole fair, which still attracted occasional EXPO nostalgists, who could visit it for free and devoid of eight hour queues (cf. Houdart 2012), but which would eventually meet the same fate as all the other former buildings, three sights would immediately catch my attention.

The most obvious one was the China Art Museum, still glaring in the same red color that the Chinese national flag prominently applies, as a reminder of the communist revolution. Though missing the five stars, standing for the Chinese unity under the CCP, to complete the image, its direct descendance from the former Chinese national pavilion certainly inspires the comparison. Right across the Shibo (“世博”) – meaning “EXPO” – Avenue, one further encounters the Hamburger shaped Mercedes Benz Arena, formerly the Shanghai World Expo Cultural Center, now predominantly hosting sport and music events. On the opposite side of the road, the EXPO Axis, the main entrance and elevated walking lane of the event, has now been turned into, the EXPO Mall, a multistoried shopping and entertainment complex.



FIGURE 9 Inside the Metro Station “China Art Museum” the underground passage still keeps the memory of EXPO 2010 alive (photo by the author, May 2017)



FIGURE 10 Street signs on the grounds of the former EXPO site, are now increasingly carrying the indication “世博” (“EXPO”) (photo by the author, May 2017)

Amidst these structures, which are in utmost proximity to and outmatching each other in size, is one of the many metro stations that were opened in recent years after the event. This one, named after the China Art Museum, had officially been opened just a few days prior than the museum itself. Once one sets foot outside the Metro one’s path

towards the exit is peppered with images of EXPO 2010 (fig.9), once he/she reaches the ground level the sight he/she encounters – serving as a statement in and of itself – complete this narrative trail, as also many street signs are now carrying its name (fig. 10). Having been to the EXPO, for me, this truly felt like it has opened its doors again.

However, the further one explores these grounds, the more fading the memory of the event becomes. Where once European and American pavilions welcomed predominantly Chinese visitors, one now finds a mixture of gated EXPO ruins (fig.11), side by side with construction sites and sky-scrapers upon completion. In a rare instance I would eventually come across hybrids like a pavilion that has been turned into a sports field (fig.12), or the African Joint Pavilion, which was repurposed to a market area just to eventually become a sports center as well (cf. Zang 2012). The green strip ashore of the Huangpu river has been left, yet redeveloped and named after one of Shanghai’s main attractions Waitan (外滩; “the Bund“), Houtan (后滩), incorporating the old industrial heritage, as well as offering a re-cultivated wetland to explore (cf. Lang 2017). Its recreational purpose, arguably makes it the most pleasant feature of the whole area.

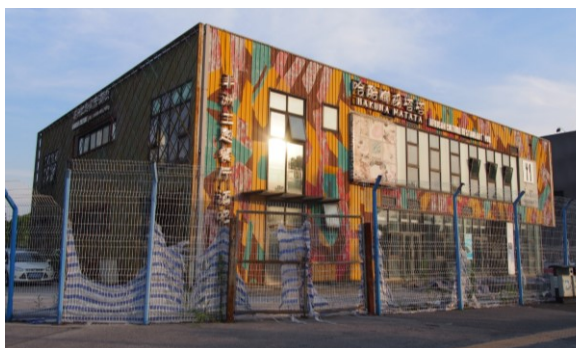


FIGURE 11 “Hakuna Matata”, a former EXPO restaurant, now one of many gated EXPO ruins (photo by the author, May 2017)



FIGURE 12 A repurposed EXPO pavilion, now 世博体育公园 (“EXPO sports park”) (photo by the author, May 2017)

Across the river, where most of the business related and themed pavilions were, the transition continues. To the right, the fairs “Pavilion of the Future” has experienced a third lifecycle, after being an electric power plant founded under the Qing Dynasty in 1897 (cf. Zhang 2013) it eventually would become the “Power Station of Art” and, ever since, the hosting site for the Shanghai Biennale, the most important contemporary art fair in China. Adjacent to its north, where the city pavilions had their compound, now a bunch of creative and design firms as well as faculties have taken refuge in a seemingly

successful effort to occupy the small but eye-catching former EXPO venues rather than to demolish them. Lastly to the west, one finds the inarguably most important memorial to EXPO 2010, the recently inaugurated World EXPO Museum, which shall be object of further discussion within the next Chapter.

When Shanghai hosted the World EXPO 2010 themed “better city, better life”, it promised its domestic and international audience a foresight on the city of the future. Inherent to this proposal hence was another promise that was given on behalf of the organizers to the people of Shanghai, to use this mega event to initiate significant but ultimately expedient urban changes to Shanghai’s city proper in the process, well aware that

“A prosperous Shanghai with a successfully redeveloped Expo quarter would do much for the image of China as a whole. A disgruntled Shanghai with a derelict Expo zone will seem like a badge of poor planning and short-termism: a gift for China’s detractors” (Cull 2012: 101).

According to Deng & Poon (2012: 186), who themselves reference the Bureau of Shanghai World Expo Coordination (2006), post-EXPO rededication foresaw the site extending Shanghai’s downtown area, while eventually serving as a “service-oriented sub center”, with four key-functions: “convention and exhibition, cultural exchange, commerce and trading, tourism and entertainment”.

When making myself acquainted with the area that seemed to still be transitioning from the Mega event in 2016, while trying to “read the space” as Hufschmid and Wildner (2009) suggested, I would gather local commentary on my preliminary observations from pedestrians within the EXPO park and EXPO Mall, to reflect on my own thoughts and see what their take on the urban legacy of the event would be. The feedback I received was predominantly positive. People argued that it is “convenient for residents” (方便周围的居民) as well as their children and the scenery very beautiful, while also “corresponding to international standards” (跟国际接轨了) (Participant 3, short interview, May 20, 2017). Others considered the area to be clean (干净), comfortable (舒适), and pleasantly quiet (挺安静), as opposed to its past where factories (Pudong) and a shipyard stood (Puxi) in the way of further development and made the place supposedly feel deserted and messy (荒芜) (Participant 6/7/8, short interview, May 20, 2017).

One local Shanghainese, who also had been to the EXPO many times, stated seemingly confident in the cities future development that:

*“For Shanghainese people, the World Expo will leave a deep impression on us and a lasting brand for this city. Before and after the Expo, great changes have taken place in the whole area. Of course, Shanghai is changing every day, not that only the Expo has been changing this place, but other places may change more and better than this place. But it is true that this area has left a different impression [...] The World Expo is very important for Shanghai’s urban development. It helps the city spread to the whole world and let the world know about Shanghai”*⁷⁰ (Participant 9, short interview, May 20, 2017).

Indeed, the EXPO is just one in a series of restructuring projects of the Shanghai municipality, might however also be understood in a larger context of what Deng (2011; 2012) refers to as the “Huangpu River Fronts Trilogy” (fig. 6). Aside from the post-EXPO site, this concept comprises the two main sights along the Huangpu river, namely the “Bund”, the main settlement area for internationals and their businesses in the 19th century, and Lujiazui, Shanghai’s contemporary Financial Center and a direct descendant of Deng Xiao Ping’s Opening Up Policies towards the end of the last century (cf. Deng & Poon 2013: 179). According to this suggestion the post-EXPO area is in line to become their 21st century-proxy.

Also according to Luo Xiang, one of my interview-partners and policy advisor to the Pudong Urban Planning & Design Institute⁷¹, the Shanghai EXPO would have had a “good spillover effect” (很好的溢出了) to the adjacent communities, as it brought along environmental changes, like new roads. Furthermore, according to a Professor I spoke with, the value of their property increased alongside the refurbishment of the EXPO site, so that they “have become very rich people” (Lang, L., personal interview, April 20, 2017) in the process. As he was also stating that “in the future it’s going to be a place for high class business or real estate development. You will see new people move in and most of them are rich people” (ibid.). With both of these interviewees

⁷⁰ “对于上海人来说，世博会给我们留下了很深的印象，给这个城市留下了很深的烙印。这个世博会办之前和办之后对于整块区域有很大的改变。当然上海每一天都在变，不是说只有世博会这一个地方在变，其他地方有可能比这个地方变化的更大、更好。但是确实这块区域是留下了不一样的印象 [...] 世博会对上海城市发展非常重要，非常重要，帮助这个城市推广到了整个世界，让世界也了解到了上海” (Participant 9, short interview, May 20, 2017).

⁷¹ This agency wasn’t, however, the official contractor to see the redevelopment through.

insisting that the former residents of the area also have been fairly compensated, being generally in line with the positive commentary domestic researchers (Liu and Chu 2011; Yu 2012) on the refurbishment project.

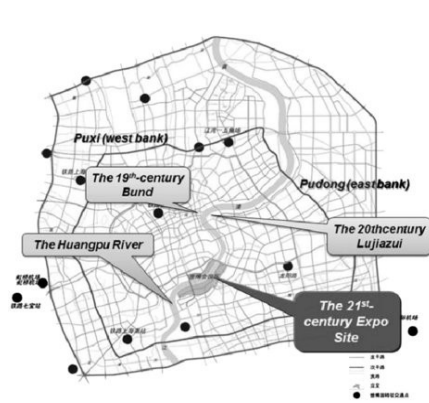


FIGURE 13 The Huangpu Riverfronts Trilogy. By “Shanghai Urban Planning Administration Bureau and Bureau of Shanghai World Expo Coordination”, 2007, courtesy of the Copyright Holder under a Creative Commons License CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

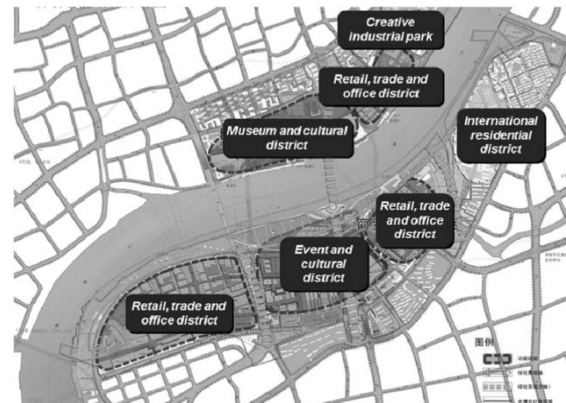


FIGURE 14 The ‘Big4’ flagships in the planned permanent zone of the site of Expo 2010. From “Mega-Challenges for Mega-Event Flagships”, by Deng and Poon, 2011, Architectural Engineering and Design Management, p. 32.

Having stated that, Zhang’s ethnography on the EXPO displacees draws another picture. Therein he writes “during the Expo, the bulldozer regime was not hesitant to use illegal violence against the displacees by appropriating and exploiting the displacees’ fear” to eventually force them out of their habitat, e.g. by “destroying the roof of a displaced family’s home while they were still living inside at the time” (Zhang 2015: 151), thus “making appropriated properties no longer habitable for the early movers, it made it impossible for them to compare their resettlement packages with later movers” (ibid.: 150), if they’d even given the chance to participate in the resettlement negotiations (cf. ibid.: 145). Another documented instance of repressed opposition to the domicide process reads as follows:

“One of the most striking counternarratives against the rhetoric of harmony and inevitable change could be found in listening to the stories of some of the eighteen thousand people relocated to make way for the expo site, which reveal a fundamentally different perspective. For instance, the housing rights activist Feng Zhenghu was under house arrest for his attempt to organize an ‘online

exp' [!] of judicial injustice for a six-month period to coincide with the world expo" (Sze 2014: 155).

Aside from makeshift houses, which were immediately demolished and not at all compensated due their illegal status (ibid.: 147; also see Shin 2013), the area was supposedly predominantly inhabited by former families dependent on the local industries, who would have settled and lived adjacent to the factories, for which they've worked for generations, as one of my interview partners would tell me. In this regard the resettlement could also result in loss of work and thus social status and identity (Zhang 2015: 42), aside from the derailment of family-bonds, as "Furiously blamed by many displacees, *chaiqian*⁷² not only killed their homes but killed their family" (ibid.:145). A development that was eventually going to happen anyways, as Professor Lang pointed out to me, that:

"If there's no expo, this place will evolve in this way, anyway, because it's in a city center. Anyway, it will evolve, it will be developed but in this kind of way. It's more like urban regeneration. There's another way we call development. Develop means that the government and the capital force they unite together to purchase the land, get this people out and move new people in. It's like a surgery. It's a [sic] operation. It's more practical, it's fast, strong, but somehow it make [sic] the society change dramatically" (Lang, L., personal interview, April 20, 2017).

Luo Xiang further emphasizes that many of the former pavilions of the EXPO, were repurposed and thus would showcase a positive, since sustainable, urban legacy of the event (Luo Xiang 2017). As far as the commentary of expats in Shanghai, who I've talked to, goes, they'd also attribute a positive urban legacy to the event, yet moving their focus predominantly away from the initial site to other parts and urban projects within Shanghai, which the EXPO indirectly accounts for, arguing that "it galvanized a lot of things slightly, the map, the metro system" (Shallis, C., personal interview, May 12, 2017), but also that "After Expo, the tax changed. The model of cars changed. I think after Expo the Chinese government understand to bring again the bikes" (Brenao, F., personal interview, April 4, 2017). A seemingly valid point which was also made by my domestic interview partners. Having said that, the critical voices (cf. Zhang 2015;

⁷² The term *chaiqian* (拆迁; engl: "demolish and evict") signifies a common term, within Chinese urban planning and development, where the indication "拆" is usually painted on to be destroyed house walls.

Dynon 2011) might argue that government intervention would still factor in these changes, as also Lang recounts:

“All these companies, they are occupying big places [...] became a very big cancer here [...] you cannot move them. You cannot buy them, because they know the value. In this political reason or taking this good political opportunity, the Shanghai government sent application to the central government saying, ‘We are going to use the expo area, this area for expo. Please, would you give the land back to us so we can bring the Expo here?’ Then, there was the central government decision to move out. This is a political change” (Lang, L., personal interview, April 20, 2017).

Parts of the industry would then eventually be relocated, as e.g. the shipyard, who is now to be found on Changxing Island (Sze 2014: 143). His comment mirrors Hufschmid and Wildner’s (2009: 5) argument that „The built space is always the result of a (also discursively articulated) negotiation process or respectively a struggle for power, with the temporarily generated space being a discursive effect“. Applied to the case study at hand, there has been neither a public nor scientific discourse on this matter that would do justice to the phrase “negotiation”. If just based on the available literature and ethnography on this matter, the Urban Legacy of Shanghai EXPO seems a rather one-sided affair, utmost positive and widely agreed upon, with mere flaws, as the fates of the displacees are brushed aside as collateral damage or depicts them as involuntary profiteers. If we turn to Foucault (1988), the speaking positions are inarguably unevenly distributed, with the access being denied not being able to draw a different, or more informed conclusion on this matter. Given that Assmann’s notions on *cultural memory*, preceding our historical understanding of a phenomenon, rely on a *communicative memory*, negotiated by contemporary witnesses (Assmann 1999: 137f), already pose a significant problem to how EXPO 2010 will be perceived by future generations. I’d like to further build upon these questions within the next Chapter, wherein I’d like to further illustrate the institutional framework behind the cultural memory of this EXPO 2010. Hence, moving on from the places, to the stories they tell.

5.4.2 Placed Stories, Storied Places

“History has proven that the World Expo leaves us valuable cultural assets, which have great influence on time and space. [...] The Expo promotes human cultural exchange and information dissemination with limited time and space, and the library will record the Expo for a long time, so as to deepen the exchange and dissemination, and stimulate cultural reflection, cultural consciousness and cultural creativity of all mankind”⁷³ (Wu [transl.] 2010: 32).

Indeed, a library is supposedly the first place a researcher turns to, if interested in any given matter. The more so since he asks about the legacy of an already ephemeral event like a World's Fair. In fact, Appadurai argues that locality per se “is ephemeral unless hard and regular work is undertaken to produce and maintain its materiality” (Appadurai 1996: 180f; as cited by Kobi 2019: 3). Hence, upon learning about the existence of a World EXPO information center of the Shanghai Library (世博信息中心), established in 2003, I did immediately pay it a visit, not only for extended literature review, but also since I envisioned it to be an interesting feature to my discourse ethnographical assessments.

However, as promising the above statement reads, it couldn't be farther from reality. When I had found the supposed “World EXPO Information Reading Room” within the Shanghai Library, it didn't feature much significant information on the event, aside from promotional brochures. It rather seemed, as if the librarians had sought to fill the otherwise empty book-shelves with foreign-language classics, to arguably evoke at least a sense of internationality. A disillusioning sight. Upon asking for a spokesperson or an official statement, I was further told that the information center was no longer operating and instead handed the pamphlet, which the above citation originates from.

Therein the author fittingly asserts the scarcity and dust-laden literature of the Modern World Expo in China and information asymmetry between the government and the public but also foreign and Chinese publics, as the reasons for the centers initiation in the first place (Wu 2010: 33). Yet another motive to be implicitly read, within this

⁷³ “历史证明，世博会留给人类的是有价值的文化资产，在时间和空间上的影响极其深远。[...] 世博会正是以有限的时间和空间促进着人类文化交流与信息传播，而图书馆将以久远的世博会记载，使这种交流和传播走向纵深，激发全人类的文化反思、文化自觉和文化创意” (Wu 2010: 32).

statement, is that of grounding the Chinese endeavor within the long history of the event, tracing it back all the way to its beginnings in London:

“as early as 1851, Xu Rongcun, a Shanghai businessman, participated in the London World Expo with 12 bags of ‘Rongji Silk’, a Chinese specialty he dealt with, which caused a sensation and won two gold and silver awards”⁷⁴ (ibid. [transl.]: 33).

At first the Expo Information Center of the Shanghai Library might have done well on its promise, publishing an astounding seven book series on the EXPO history until the opening of the event (cf. Shanghai Library 2010), its efforts of retrieving and publishing further informational material on the EXPO itself, however, stalled with its conclusion. Making it seem as if the information campaign was predominantly meant to promote the event, yet not systematically document it. This example, however, illustrates yet another – very Chinese – problem, of being put off as a researcher. Seldom would the institutions that I’ve visited during my fieldwork grant me the opportunity to speak to an arguably knowledgeable person regarding my interest in the EXPOs legacy, not to mention, give me an interview, but rather ignore my asking. The only information I’d often receive upon my many requests, were official leaflets, like the one above, “to be worked with”. In one case, I had to compromise, and stick to pen and paper as my interview partner didn’t want me to record her audio. One associate would later tell me that the single most thing Chinese are afraid of are “heizibaizhi” (黑字白纸; “black letters on white paper”). I would eventually transition to informal anonymous conversations to forego this problem.

Having said that, this case also mirrors a problem that arguably many, if not most World Fairs endure, as their cultural heritage is not as easily ascribed and evaluated as its physical one. The bigger the endeavor, the more costly the public reputation. In this case the “Dongtan Eco-City” project, might be a far more telling example. A prestige project to build an eco-friendly new city on an island, north of Shanghai’s municipality, it had been famously promoted throughout China’s EXPO campaign, but would eventually turn out to be a mirage. In her book “Fantasy Islands: Chinese Dreams and Ecological Fears in an Age of Climate Crisis” Julie Sze explores the present-day footprints of this promise inevitably intertwined with the slogan “better

⁷⁴ “事实是早在 1851 年，上海商人徐荣村就以自己经营的 12 包中国特产“荣记湖丝”参加伦敦世博会，引起轰动并夺得金、银两项大奖” (Wu 2010: 33).

city, better life". Therein she concludes that this project, which had never seriously been launched to begin with, "was an engine for real estate development and regional transformation, to create economic value and enhance real estate speculation in the guise of environmental and wet- lands protection", mirroring a "top-down and technocratic view of environmental development", while also functioning as an excuse for an otherwise highly polluted Shanghainese urban space (Sze 2014: 101).

Of course, the Dongtan Eco City Project like the Shanghai EXPO information Center – having both served their purpose – are arguably but understandably not intended to be part of the public memory of the event. The references to EXPO 2010 one eventually encounters throughout contemporary Shanghai are showcasing an event that – *unimaginable* in terms of its plain numbers and the grandeur of its architectural remains – must inevitably have been the greatest World's Fair of all time and for a long time to come (cf. Yu 2012: 48f; also see Chapter 5.2.2/5.4.1), at least this mirrors the keynote of most commemorative efforts. Having said that, for one of my interview partners, a Brazilian architect, who designed the Brazilian Pavilion at EXPO 2010, this circumstance brought about a very unexpected and fortunate turn of events:

"They believe I'm the best architect of Brazil, if I designed the Brazilian pavilion, of course, [...] because to Chinese mind it's very literal, if you designed the pavilion, all the countries come to China with the best because the Expo was very important for China government. [...] You follow the architect from Chinese pavilion? One architect for 1,000,400,000 people. This guy is very important. The relationship between scale, they don't understand. If I am the architect of the Brazilian pavilion, I'm [as] important [as] the Chinese architect" (Brenao, F., personal interview, April 4, 2017).

He, amongst other former EXPO architects, would subsequently be invited to open his own studio and commence teaching at a newly founded Design Department at Songjiang University Campus South-West of Shanghai's city proper. "The standard is probably scale" (ibid.) he added sitting cheerful in his high-rise loft, from where he could overlook the whole campus. Indeed the examples for his theory are many, as Shanghainese buildings seem to grow larger in proportion, parallel to their supposed importance, as does the city in and of itself, with new railway systems, streets, residential space, airport lanes and skyscrapers.



FIGURE 15 “Better City, Bitter Life” – The EXPO now mounted atop of the entrance Hall of Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall (photo by the author, November 2016)



FIGURE 16 HaiBao, former EXPO mascot, welcoming visitors at the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall (photo by the author, November 2016)

This fact is showcased in Shanghai’s Urban Planning Exhibition Hall (SUPEH), one of the city’s main attractions. Here, where the rapid rise of the former fisher village is most thoroughly recounted, the links to its first World’s Fair are a perpetual narrative element to Shanghai’s success and growth. At the entry hall one is greeted with the slogan “better city, better life” (fig. 15) and by the official EXPO mascot Haibao (fig. 16), waving his hand. Upon proceeding to the next floor, one then meticulously learns about the refurbishment plans of the former EXPO site, only to be further illustrated by a 3D replica on the last floor (fig. 18), opposite a bronze insignia of the organizational committee of EXPO to commemorate the event in all its glory (fig. 17).



FIGURE 17 Bronze Insignia in memory of the BIE Inquiry Mission that eventually brought EXPO 2010 to Shanghai (photo by the author, November 2016)



FIGURE 18 3D Replica of EXPO site, as part of a larger installation of the Shanghainese urbanity (photo by the author, November 2016)

But the links to the mega event go far beyond these explicit illustrations, as one might engage in interactive screens to see Shanghai prior and post EXPO, with plaques intertwining its Urban Legacy with the latest achievements in Shanghai's public transport system. The whole concept of such Urban Planning Museums that are solely to be found in mainland China, most prominently in metropolises the likes of Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjin, works along a narrative that has China and its people collectively strive towards a technological and cultural advanced state, a cosmopolitan utopia with modern "western" comforts but featuring the handwriting of the CCP, highlighted by milestones like the Olympic Games or EXPO 2010.

"The abundance and massive scale of these urban planning centers on the mainland reflect a society obsessed with a temporal desire to march toward the future and a spatial desire to join the world. [...] In projecting a future, these urban planning centers tell us much about the relationship of the present with the past, how new representations of the past are necessary foundations for imagining a new present and future, and how new presents require new visions of the past" (Denton 2014: 247).

According to Denton visual depictions of urban space, like the one within Shanghai's Urban Planning Exhibition Hall, might eventually also be traced back to the 1939 New York World's Fair, which itself applied a model for the city of the future (cf. *ibid.*: 253), arguably to have something engaging and interactive at its disposal. No wonder, it seems, that it was the same World's Fair that arguably inspired Walt Disney' to open up a theme park of his own (cf. Roche 2000: 129), as the "same senses of childlike wonder and ownership are at play in the Shanghai urban planning center's model" (Denton 2014: 253). Krupar delivers yet another interpretation of the shown exhibits stating:

"SUPEH houses a virtual menagerie of models, categorizing China's road to modernization under 'the logic of global capital.' SUPEH is the door to a dream city, a displaced utopian present projected to the future — just around the corner. Layers of built and imaginary city work to construct a collective memory of the future, a world's fair dream that Shanghai is the city and people's imaginations. Visit. See Shanghai. Step inside. Now. Here" (Krupar 2007: 161).

Her comments are especially noteworthy, since she applies familiar terminology to this display, implicitly – and maybe even unintentionally – drawing parallels not only to the “rejuvenation narrative” preached by contemporary Chinese policy makers (Wang 2014: 6; also see Chapter 5.3.3), but also to Assmann’s (1999: 138; also see Chapter 1.2) theoretical notions on “collective memory”. The analogy works well, seeing that SUPEH is inarguably not only preserving the memory of EXPO but applying it as a narrative element to the telltale of Chinese progress and its foundation within the nations rich history. Having said that, these “layers of built and imaginary” city, as well as the “world’s fair dream” are also to be found in a museum, where you wouldn’t necessarily expect them.

In a subchapter of *Hybrids of Modernity* Harvey entitled “Hybrid subjects: citizens as consumers” Penelope Harvey, who has done fieldwork on EXPO 1992 in Sevilla, draws parallels in between the mega event she visited and the curation of a museum, as the preliminary considerations for both arguably work along the same path of contemplating which messages to convey to the visiting public. Herein she writes:

“The producer of an exhibit necessarily engages with the preoccupations, desires and expectations of his time, but he does not work alone. There are the people with whom he works, in this case rendered invisible in the final exhibit, and there is the institution that sponsors and contextualizes the exhibit. This public institution, a state body using public funds, seeks to educate and inspire moral responses in a visiting public. And finally there is this public, the citizen, the consumer, the site at which the exhibit will or will not take effect” (Harvey 1996: 132).

The “Eastern Crown” of EXPO 2010 poses an interesting case in this regard. Upon conclusion of the event, repurposing efforts had initially foreseen that the only national pavilion to remain as a memorial to the event, would be that of China itself, to be further used as China Art Museum (cf. Zang 2012). With its glossy red and abundant appearance, it would serve as a statement of the Chinese quest for international reputation, both during and after the EXPO, with subsequent interpretations assuming that its makeup would suggest an even bigger role than just that of being a member of the international community going forward (cf. Schneider 2013; Nordin 2012b; Dynon 2011).

But also on its inside, where the animated replica of 清明上河图 (qīngmíng shànghé tú)⁷⁵ of EXPO 2010, is still exhibited, the museum is binding together China's long history with its immediate greatness. Throughout its multitudinous halls the museum features traditional Chinese oil and watercolor paintings, alongside calligraphy, modern and contemporary works, all of which wouldn't necessarily surprise the usual art connoisseur. However, depictions of Social Realism and communist and revolutionary motives ranging from peasants, to steelworkers, to party gatherings and civil war, might. The visual footprints on the successful endeavors of the CCP are literally all over the exhibitions halls, most prominently, however, they are to be found within a "must-see" (insofar, as you have to pass it on your way to the exit) lane towards the end of the museum. This part of the museum, entitled "Shanghai Historic Context Art Creation Project Exhibition" (上海历史文脉美术创作工程成果展), is meant to illustrate

"the political and cultural development of modern Shanghai, [...] its unique revolutionary cultural heritage, national industrial cultural heritage, historical and cultural landscape areas, excellent modern and contemporary buildings, former residences of celebrities and so on. [...] to embody and preserve the achievements of these civilizations in the form of art" (China Art Museum 2012).

In effect, what you'll encounter are works, though different in their imagery, nevertheless following a discourse of progress the city has gone through in the above mentioned categories, in its modern day era. Of course, the content is narratively tied to the party, who brought about this development and whose foundation within the French Concession in Shanghai in 1921, is also depicted by a canvas entitled "Dawn: the Establishment of the Communist Party of China" (曙光-中国共产党成立). Other famous party figures like Deng Xiaoping and Mao Zedong are also shown, alongside revolutionary paintings, e.g. a depiction of the Defense of the Sihang Warehouse in 1937 martially entitled "The Great Wall of Blood and Flesh" (血肉长城), which would mark the beginning of the second Sino-Japanese war; likewise a depiction of the "Nanchang Uprising" (南昌起义) in 1927, marking a pivotal moment in the civil war

⁷⁵ The most famous drawing of Zhang Zeduan, which shows the busy street life within Kaifeng, once the capital of the Song Dynasty (cf. Chapter 5.3.2).

between the Communists and the Kuomintang. Another abundant theme are the city's architectural achievements like construction workers on a skyscraper in Liujiazui, Pudong Airport, the Shanghai metro-line and shipping port as well as the motorway ring-road systems.

Within these collection of illustrations, arguably serving rather utilitarian than actual artistic ends, the EXPO 2010 takes a significant position of marking the temporary conclusion to this saga of modern day achievements. Right alongside the portrait of former party-chair Deng Xiaoping towers a drawing of the EXPO Axis and the China Pavilion, the latter of which now serves as the home-place for the museum itself; entitled "China Red" (中国红), with a subtext stressing that the building is representing "a sense of hierarchy and space", while being "full of vitality and vigor". It's the kind of narrative that – also given the imperial looks of the building – supposedly once "prompted foreign journalists to argue that the Expo established a new world order that had China at its centre" (Schneider 2013: 3; Minter 2010). Nordin even argued that the "grand narrative" of EXPO 2010 left little to no room for other interpretations (Nordin 2012: 236; Schneider 2013: 3). Having said that, one isn't necessarily obliged to engage in particular interpretations of this drawing, to sense, where to eventually fit this illustration amongst the narrative trail established within this exhibition, as another literal depiction, with the title "Urban landscape 1949-21st century" (都市风景线 1949 年至 21 世纪), does the job for you. Herein all the above discourse strands of political, cultural, civilizational and urban development, are pieced together like "film strips" (cf. Elliker 2019: 264; Jepperson and Meyer 2011) from left to right, showcasing a Shanghainese march towards progress that ultimately concludes with its first ever World exposition.

When I interviewed one of the former curators of the China Art Museum, who had curated the international exhibition "congratulations of the world" as part of the opening ceremony, she was reluctant, since seemingly not comfortable to comment on these types of utilitarian imagery. Rather she pointed to the possibilities of cultural exchange and communication the EXPO and the subsequently repurposed art museum offered. Furthermore according to her, the common public would in the meantime also be able to attend to a substantial amount of culture, like theatres, galleries and so forth, while their children would be able to more thoroughly learn about the nation's history; developments that the EXPO brought about and venues like the China Art Museum are proof of (cf. Bao 2017).

Having said that, contemporary efforts to educate the public and youth undertaken by the CCP are arguably reaching beyond mere lessons in national history, since not least in 1990 former party chair Jiang Zemin had – in the wake of Tiananmen protests – stressed “the duty to strengthen education about the nation, strengthen patriotic education, strengthen socialist education, especially for our young people” (ZGGMBWG 2001: 14; as cited in Denton 2014: 62). Due to their content and location, I would however suppose that this “patriotic education”, though inarguably inherent to the above mentioned illustrations, is meant to not only educate the young but the old, as well as domestic and foreign visitors that are coming to and would like to get to know Shanghai, hence paralleling what Denton describes as “Red tourism”.

“Red tourism is clearly of the “collective cultural or political identity” type. As a form of patriotic education, it seeks to instill in tourists a sense of a shared past and a shared homeland, a collective relationship to a temporal narrative of revolutionary history and to the places in which that history unfolded. Red tourism is thus a powerful medium for evoking collective identities centered on revolutionary memory and national landscape” (Denton 2014: 216).

Right across the Huangpu river towers the latest addition to Shanghai’s museal landscape, where one wouldn’t necessarily suspect agendas such as “Red Tourism” and “Patriotic Education” to be guiding themes. The World EXPO Museum, inaugurated in May 2017, although a visual memorial to the Shanghai EXPO Axis (cf. fig. 19) has a curational focus that goes beyond a sole interest in the cities first World’s Fair. Appointed by the BIE itself as “the official museum and authorized documentation centre” (WEM 2017a) of World’s Fairs, it is meant to document and illustrate the long history of the event, more than anything else. Indeed it lives up to this promise, upon entry presenting 3D models of e.g. London 1851, Vienna 1873 and Chicago 1893, as well as famous inventions that have first been introduced to the international public at the occasion of a 19th century World’s Fair. It doesn’t stop there, as the visitors – now familiar with the concept – move further to a hall exhibiting the 20th century fairs and miniature installations of still prominent landmarks such as the Brussels Atomium (1958) or the Seattle Space Needle (1962). Before eventually reaching an exhibition level solely committed to the commemoration of EXPO 2010.



FIGURE 19 The Outside of the World EXPO Museum, as People are visiting it on Opening Day (photo by the author, May 2017)

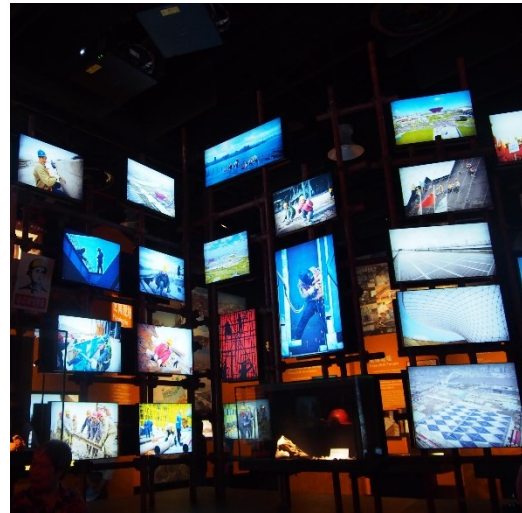


FIGURE 20 Depiction of EXPO workers within the exhibition of EXPO 2010 (photo by the author, May 2017)

Herein one eventually gets to learn about the “Century’s event [...] a milestone in the history of World Expo with the widest participation. It marked a gorgeous chapter in the more than 160-year history of World Expo with a successful, splendid and unforgettable event” (cf. WEM 2017b), while the full force of statistics is released upon us: “The largest Site” (园区面积历届之最), “Record breaking Attendance” (参观人数为历届之最), “The most Exhibitors” (参展主体...), “Unprecedented Service and Supplies” (服务供给...).

Hence, it shall come as no surprise that Shanghai’s own EXPO also occupies the largest space within the museum. Once again, one encounters images of EXPO site workers (fig. 20), who – participating in the construction of the event’s structures – are subsequently interlaced within a greater narrative that is “the EXPO spirit” (WEM 2017b). Herein the grand narrative not solely relies on architectural and statistical greatness, as well as conceptions of “time” and “space” (cf. Nordin 2012: 245), but another constituent to serve the plotline of a future World Leader, being the concept of “people”.

Within a keynote speech on the opening of the EXPO forum, former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao also put special emphasis on the people, who supposedly made the event happen in the first place, amongst them the *organizers*, *builders*, *workers*, *visitors* and *volunteers* (fig.20), who with their “*wisdom and sweat*” (智慧和汗水 *zhìhuì hé hànshuǐ*) brought glory to the EXPO (cf. Wen 2010). The *power of the people* undoubtedly has been a recurring theme within the PRC, but was especially stressed

by many leading figures of China during the year the EXPO took place (Hu 2010; Yu 2010; Zhang 2010), thus it shouldn't be much of a surprise that the museum's list of key-elements that made for this "EXPO Spirit" ("世博精神 shibó jīngshén") now reads as follows:

-
1. 为国争光的爱国精神
The patriotic pride of attaining glory for China
 2. 严谨科学的实干精神
Working diligently, conscientiously and scientifically
 3. 全心为民的服务精神
Serving the people with heart and soul
 4. 追求卓越的创新精神
Seeking excellence through innovation
 5. 团结协作的团队精神
Working as a team to create synergy
 6. 爱岗敬业的奉献精神
Devotion and dedication to duty
-

(cf. WEM 2017b)

Thus another important plotline of the patriotic narratives that recount EXPO 2010 to future generations, draws it as a collective effort, that was carried out as well as appreciated by the Chinese people.

"The personalization of displays is not unique to the internationalist phenomenon of Expos it is also apparent in similar developments in national museum culture, where there is an increasing focus on the telling of national histories through individualized accounts of those personally involved in world events" (Smits and Jansen 2012: 175).

Fittingly towards the end of the museum, the picture of a woman standing in front of the China Pavilion sticks out. It tells the visitor about Yamada Tomiyo, an old Japanese lady, better known as the "EXPO grandma" (Shibo NaiNai; 世博奶奶). Having been amazed by the Aichi EXPO in Japan 2005, she once had saved enough money to move to Shanghai and buy 183 tickets for EXPO 2010, just to be able to attend the event on a daily basis (cf. Wang 2010). Her story is inspiring and not least for that reason has probably been singled out by the curators, since it is always better to end on an emotional note and at best with a personal one.

Having said that, the EXPO 2010 has been an incisive experience for me personally as well, as it sparked the love for a country that I hadn't been familiar with until that point, but would ultimately visit another eleven times, the last time for my dissertational ethnography in 2016/17. Thus, I chose to end this chapter on this biographical footnote, since it fits the overall narrative of this dissertation, that what has brought me to Shanghai in the first place would eventually bring me back to this ever changing metropolis, where I once started my journey as an anthropologist interested in mainland China.

5.5 Shanghai and the legacy of its first World's Fair

When Shanghai hosted its very first World's Fair in 2010, it not only envisioned an event, which – together with the Beijing Olympics, two years prior – would show a once very isolated country within the heart of the international community, thus speaking volumes in terms of its contemporary development, but also envisioned its intellectual and urban legacy.

There is certainly truth in what some of my domestic interview-partners were pointing out to me, when they were saying that EXPO 2010 actually was a means towards the end of city refurbishing for the municipal government. Where an old industrial port, as well as abandoned factories and the residencies of workers once occupied considerable amounts of space to both sides of the Huangpu River, just a few kilometers south of the French concession, now shopping malls, parks, museums, entertainment venues of all sorts and a variety of other facilities cater for Shanghai's growing middleclass. It remains true today, what Houdart (2012: 130) once wrote in her ethnography on the event, when she said that "one can find embryonic pieces of a Shanghai to come" (also see fig. 21).

EXPO 2010 proofed to be a valid reason for transitioning Shanghai's riverbank reaching all the way from Nanpu Bridge to the Oriental Sports Center into what has now already been labeled after the city's most famous sightseeing strip 外滩 wàitán, as 前滩 qiántán and 后滩 hòután (the "New Bund"; fig.22). In the eyes of a current observer Shanghai must be doing great in terms of its city development, if it wasn't for those mere 18.000 households that have been deported from the core to the periphery of the city prior to the event, in order to make room for EXPO 2010 (cf. Zhang 2015). Once calmly referred to as "collateral damage" by one of my associates, such groups,

disadvantaged by Chinese policy, are still seldom talked to or about. Most of them now live in so called “EXPO Homelands” (世博家园 shìbó jiāyuán), within the more remote areas of Pudong. While some of them supposedly have been happy with their new housing situation (cf. Wang and Qu 2007), some of them haven’t (cf. Moore 2010), often depending on the news outlet your reading and the country of its origin. Unfortunately they also account for a gap this discourse-ethnography had to leave out for others to explore, due to access restraints (cf. Chapter 5.4.1). Having said that, one of my interview partners also suggested that their displacement would’ve happened anyways, as many local Shanghainese, I’ve talked to likewise seemed content with the repurposing of this land strip, and some also pointed to the development of urban infrastructure the EXPO inarguably furthered.

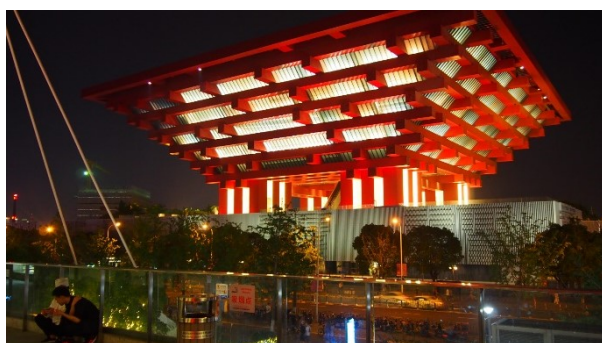


FIGURE 21 China Art Museum at Night – view from atop of the “River Mall” (former “EXPO Axis”) (photo by the author, June 2017)



FIGURE 22 Houtan EXPO Park, with material relics of the old industrial port (photo by the author, June 2017)

Throughout years of research in and on China, I’m still likewise amazed as I’m often terrified by the efficiency of CCP pragmatism. Thus, the discourse ethnography I conducted on the local legacy of World EXPO 2010 in between September 2016 and July 2017 proved to be no different in this regard. The way I saw it – from its beginning onwards – the legacy of the event in question is largely attributed to the stories told about it. Given that the Shanghai EXPO has been the largest exhibition ever held (cf. Schriefers 2014: 316) in the history of mankind, one is lead to believe that this eventually called for a broad and multifaceted discourse, reaching throughout domestic and international domains and various disciplines. Now seven years removed from the actual event, one story, however, sticks out amongst the many; which is an “official one”, according to which EXPO 2010, has been a huge success, much appreciated by

the public and the international community alike (cf. Chen 2012), at least with regards to the domestic media and scientific discourse (cf. Chapter 5.2.2). This is largely but not only attributable to the bold numbers (Yu et al 2012: 48f) and the effect it had on urban planning.

The story is “in the books”, while the attention of recent studies on World EXPOs – as it is often the case with such fairs – has already moved on to the next event. What is left, is an urban legacy to EXPO that has inarguably many advocates (cf. Yu 2012; Deng & Poon 2012; Liu, Chu 2011), but seemingly no one to speak against. Examined through the work of Foucault, the disproportion of speaking positions certainly factors into this debate. While positively connotated discourse strands on the events legacy are institutionalized and reproduced, opposing voices are muzzled (Zhang 2015) or at least captured in a Foucauldian (1977) Panopticon that the modern Chinese surveillance state arguably represents, leaving us with an urban legacy to EXPO that sometimes feels too good to be true. Hence, the latter also doesn’t traverse the communicative memory, which Assmann (1999) sees as the precondition for a cultural one, as history isn’t negotiated amongst contemporary witnesses, but rather a “Funktionsgedächtnis” (ibid.: 137f) established, to prolong the telltale of the greatest World’s Fair of all time.

Not least the museums that arose out of its former hosting grounds are the archives to serve this narrative, that eventually puts Shanghai amongst the top tier of global cities. Hence, there exists an imminent conflict of interest, as they are also obliged to carry on the intellectual legacy. One such case is the World EXPO Museum, which – being the only one of its kind – illustrates the history of World Fair’s while affirming Shanghai’s role within it and thus might also be interpreted as a institutionalized effort to redefine China’s place within modern history, paralleling what Foucault (1978) describes as a *Dispositif*. Together with the China Art Museum and the Urban Planning Museum, it also features instances of utilitarian patriotic education (Denton 2014: 216) that evolve around narrative strands of “time, space and people”. Popular motives within the contemporary CCP ideologies of “Harmony” and the “Chinese Dream” (cf. Chapter 5.3.3; also see Nordin 2012b; Aarase 2016).

The public memories I gathered throughout my discourse ethnography in contrast to official depictions of – as e.g. the Shibo NaiNai (cf. Wang 2010) – are rather unexciting. Asked about their EXPO memories, my interview-partners often recounted the visitation of a specific pavilion, for one it was the smell of the Indian Pavilion (cf.

Hui 2017), for another one the seed-theme of the British (cf. Shallis 2017). For many it was a unique opportunity “to see the World” (cf. Brenao 2017; Hui 2017; Bao 2017). On a negative note some of them recalled the long queues and waiting times (cf. Shallis 2017; Hui 2017), which at certain hours and pavilions easily amounted to more than 8 hours (also see Houdart 2012). Others wouldn’t have a significant memory at all. What to make of EXPO 2010 and how to evaluate its legacy, might have been an easier question. As most would agree that Shanghai has gone through major and predominantly positive transformation since its first EXPO, both in terms of its urban scape and public behavior (cf. Luo Xiang 2017; Bao 2017; Brenao 2017; Shallis 2017).

Today, it’s fair to say that the EXPO 2010 furthered Shanghai’s quest to become a global city with cosmopolitan characteristics, also as it helped “branding it nationally and internationally” (Chen 2012: 732; also see Hong 2010; Zhang 2010). With that in mind, one anonymous commentary, I picked up during an informal conversation about EXPO 2010, maybe put it best, by stating that “only time can tell, if it was a blessing or misfortune” (“是福是祸，只能留待历史评说”).

6. Case study on EXPO'15 (Milan)

6.1 The World coming to Town – Preliminary Observations

I remember sitting in the Media Center of EXPO 2015, going about my daily tasks, writing up my research, next to journalists from all around the world, when suddenly a Lithuanian folk dance group entered the room. With approximately 40° Celsius on the outside in mid-July, they'd chosen the Media Center as one of the sole air-conditioned places at EXPO with enough space to rehearse a cultural performance for their national day. As they were getting dressed up in their traditional cloths, the men wearing hats and boots, while the women wore long dresses and extravagant hairdos, one couldn't help himself but notice the peculiarity of this situation. Being all dressed-up the men were then progressively growing into their assigned roles, whistling and jumping around, while smiling towards us, who were sitting motionless at our desks. They were clearly aware of their alien nature within this otherwise sterile setting of the daily EXPO coverage, so they had chosen to make fun of it, to relieve us of our everyday conduct as well – at least for a couple of minutes. It was one of those rare occasions, where one could sense a rather genuine un-staged EXPO culture coming to life, one of those moments that the usual fairgoer wouldn't necessarily encounter, an experience he wouldn't take home.

During EXPO 2015, with its 145 national participants (cf. Danna 2017: 911), a multitude of National Days had taken place, often accompanied by speeches of political figures as well as cultural performances, e.g. dances and concerts. In many cases those hadn't got to be official national days, as was the case with the Lithuanian one that had taken place on the 15th of July, but rather to fit the schedule of the organizers to be able to grant one to each participating country⁷⁶. The overall concept and subsequent procedure of those events were similar in nature – thus very much foreseeable, if you'd attended more than one – and were only to be distinguished from each other through the cultural performances and folklorist aspects that they featured.

However, this arguably wasn't a concern for much of the visiting public, especially for day-ticket-holders, who would only be able to see one, if any of such performative national displays due to their limited stay. The whole EXPO compound, situated on the western outskirts of Milan at the Rho Fiera fairgrounds, was strikingly

⁷⁶ For a list of all national days please refer to the archive provided on the official EXPO 2015 webpage (EXPO'15: 2015a).

superficial in its arrangements, and had to be, as fairgoers were constricted by time but also their physical capacities to experience just a small portion of the event. Especially throughout the summer months, when I conducted my fieldwork onsite of this EXPO, one would try to move in between the airconditioned pavilions of nations, corporations and other organizations not only seeking education and entertainment but also shelter from the heat. Having said that, there were of course also must-sees, amongst which were e.g. the pavilions of Italy, UAE, Germany, Japan, Austria, the UK, South Korea for which many were willing to queue for hours, if necessary. Aside from such unanimous choices, who were able to earn a stellar reputation throughout the first months of the EXPO, the participants were competing for visitors on a daily basis, first and foremost with the help of their architectural features (e.g. Brazil, Russia, Estonia), but also shows and promotions to lure people into their exhibitions. As soon as visitors had entered their buildings, however, crowd-managers tried to keep them moving, often restricting their visitations to a fixed duration, not seldom by the help of narrative video-reels (e.g. Israel, EU, Thailand).

As visitors tried to collect nations⁷⁷, nations tried to collect visitors to climb up in the official rankings of the event (cf. Kron; Bondarenko; Schmitz; Döller 2015), while Corporations and Organizations tried to fit into this scheme and the theme of “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life”. This undertaking, while being approached by IGOs and NGOs alike as a venture to push their own agendas in line with the overall theme, was all but an easy task for the corporate partners of EXPO. As they tried to make their presence felt at the occasion (cf. Chapter 6.2.2), they likewise had to make a case for being at EXPO in the first place, especially since largescale public protests about their involvement had occurred throughout the initial planning phase of the event, well into it taking place (cf. Chapter 6.1.2/6.3.1). Helmut Döller, one of my interview-partners and project manager of the Austrian pavilion, would later argue that “also the EXPO needs money” (Döller, H., personal interview, September 3, 2015). But this estimation was too superficial to be worked with, as also it seemed, as if there were far more reason, why people took to the streets. Hence, while being at and studying the EXPO 2015 and the many stories, its participants sought to tell, I would soon leave the boundaries of the exposition trying to see and understand, why and with what means

⁷⁷ One interesting feature that has also been part of EXPO 2010, has been an EXPO Passport that allowed the visitors to collect stamps at every pavilion they visited.

an opposition to this event had formed and would partake in the discourse about its legitimacy and eventual legacy.

6.1.1 *The Researchers Role and the Role of Research*

In the past, the venture of an ethnography on a World's Fair or EXPO has not only been alluded to (cf. Benedict 1983,1991), but already put into practice on several occasions (cf. Houdart 2013; 2012; Harvey 1996; Färber 2006; Beier 2001). Having said that, I felt strongly about it still being a vibrant field of study for contemporary anthropology as well as other disciplines, given its temporal and spatial dynamics opposite a well archived history (cf. BIE 2019). As an EXPO tries to put the world in a nutshell, it offers us a taste of *Global Culture* (Harvey 1996: 129), which – inarguably artificial in many, if not, most regards – leaves us researchers with a concept for further interpretation and study. Still, an ethnography like this is subsequently prone to be criticized for its scientific conduct, especially by anthropologists.

Still, there is an indisputable connection of the field of anthropology with that of World's Fairs, as has been laid out within Chapter 3, which begs the chance to further ground theoretical notions of the social sciences, which tend to be just as generalizing as EXPOs reputedly are (cf. Callahan 2012: 257; Treagus 2013: 47; also see Chapters 2.1-2.3), within empirical practice (also see Harvey 1996: 8). Having said that, the field-site that an EXPO offers, is arguably too big to be assessed properly and entirely, as such a proceeding lacks the possibility to really immerse into a field and its people⁷⁸, given the wide range of different actors and interests such a Mega-Event features, but also its ephemeral nature. As always, the core question, what the research is ultimately interested in, remains the deciding factor in choosing interview partners, as well as observation- and protocolling techniques. In line with my ethnography on the legacy of Shanghai EXPO 2010, my research in Milan assumed the discourse on EXPO 2015 as eventual foundation to its subsequent legacy. Hence, I would shift my research focus on the discourse on this exposition within the local context of its hosting city, while also asking, how ethnographic data derived from research in and around a World's Fair, as well as off- and online, relates and compares to each other?

⁷⁸ Färber (2006) might be an exception, as she conducted her Ethnography not least by immersion into the Moroccan planning bureau and tried to follow up with large scale interpretations on the production of "Wissen" during EXPO 2000.

To answer these questions, I tried to gather *narratives* (Marcus 1995: 109) on the nature of this EXPO and its aims⁷⁹ onsite of it but also beyond, seeking a dichotomy of voices from the in- and outside to counter the probable bias that an ethnography solely focused on the EXPO would have otherwise entailed. Given the large scale of possible interview partners, I chose to focus on stakeholder interviews, accompanied by participant observation onsite of EXPO 2015. The latter meant for me to become a regular visitor to the pavilions, often also by queuing up and taking part in activities, but also a journalist, tracking the proceedings in the Media Center of the event, while producing content for my own blog at the same time. This proceeding arguably helped me a huge deal throughout fieldwork in finding my interview partners, as some treated me more like a journalistic entity than a researcher, if agreed upon publishing our interviews.⁸⁰ Furthermore it offered another epistemological feature to my participant observation, since I arguably actively partook in the discourse practice on the phenomenon “EXPO”. However, it eventually also stood in the way of some other possible interviews to happen, for the very same reason.⁸¹ That’s why I eventually chose to feature critical voices towards the end of my fieldwork rather than at the beginning, while participant observation also entailed informal talks and questioning as well as keeping a diary, notes and memos throughout my stay of three months.⁸² In many regards my ethnography on EXPO 2015 subsequently treaded similar ground as did the ethnography of Harvey on Seville EXPO 1992.

“I adopted the guise of a journalist. The obvious and immediate advantages of this position were entirely practical and included the ease of access to informants from the production teams and the speed with which the exhibition could be visited. Journalists were quite central to the workings of the exhibition. They were encouraged to gather information about the event and disseminate it around the world” (Harvey 1996: 9–10).

⁷⁹ Of course I also refer to the aims of its respective participants here.

⁸⁰ I also anticipated later-to-be-published interviews to possibly have a PR related agenda to them. Also I gave my interview partners the chance to decide for themselves, what parts of our interviews, or if they at all, should be published. Foucault’s (1988: 48ff) key-elements to Discourse, especially his notions on statement-modes and Discourse- strategies (also see Chapter 4.2.1), would later help me to contextualize these interviews with the overall gathered data, thus comprehending the communicational means of different participants.

⁸¹ E.g. one interview partner, who had previously agreed upon an interview but shall not be mentioned here, wouldn’t reply to my subsequent emails, after I had published an Interview with the Iranian director.

⁸² See Chapter 4.2.3 for a more detailed layout of the applied methods.

Indeed, we both assumed a hybrid role of being a journalist/anthropologist within participant observation and interviewing (Harvey 1996: 10). Her fieldwork was however restricted to three site visits with an additional site visit one year later (ibid.: 9). I on the other hand was staying in Milan for a duration of three months while visiting the EXPO on a daily basis sometimes also queuing up and assuming the role of a visitor myself, while also engaging in some additional interviewing outside of EXPO⁸³. Furthermore I revisited Milan for a month in May 2015 via a fellowship at Bicocca University, which gave me the chance to contextualize my initial findings by asking what's left of this EXPO and its discourse (cf. Chapter 6.4). Overall it shall be noted that prior ethnographies by other anthropologists (cf. Harvey 1996; Färber 2007; Houdart 2012) on the matter of World EXPOs have been an invaluable guideline and source of reference throughout my own research.

To the most part, my ethnography on EXPO 2015 focused on being at the EXPO and immersing into this field. Which seemed a rather easy task at first. The world put forth and advertised by these kind of events, is one that tries to actively draw you into it anyways and even further with every minute you spend onsite of it, as “the visitor” is the undisputable target for attending corporations, nations and organizations alike. Also journalists or the media in general are precious entities to those, who exhibit themselves at an EXPO, as they possess the means to interest a broader visiting public for events, exhibits, attractions and brands, that's why I assumed a hybrid role, often becoming a quasi-journalist myself to facilitate the access to certain information and pavilions, the more so since researchers present a much more complex issue.

As my interviews at EXPO 2015 have shown, (social) science for one is often considered and treated as an auxiliary force to come up with ideas and concepts in the uprun to the event. Research teams have e.g. played a part in coming up and scientifically proofreading the interactive components within the Nestlé exhibit (Kron 2015) or realized the transposition of an Austrian forest to the EXPO (Döller 2015), but also came up with an agenda and eventually carta to the event, to which they saw to by scientific panels, roundtables, papers, symposia and conferences adjacent to the EXPO themes outside and onsite of it. Some took it as far as to make this *knowledge*

⁸³ The conception of in- and outside also shows some familiarity with the work Färber has conducted on EXPO 2000, as hers e.g. featured an artist group, who – even though critical of the EXPO conduct – chose to become a part of it anyways (Färber 2007: 229) but later would distance themselves from the event once again (ibid.: 230).

exchange their main purpose for being at the EXPO, e.g. the European Union whose Communication officer stated:

“It was clear from the very beginning that science was something really important. So what has been done in the frame of the participation is - together with the European Parliament - to set a scientific committee that had a few things to do, which was to set up a scientific program for the six months of EXPO and - most importantly - to come up with a discussion paper that should be in a way the intellectual contribution of the European Union to the debates that took place at EXPO” (Denigot, T., personal interview, September 17, 2015).

In interviews there has often been an overall emphasis on *science* and *research* playing an active role for EXPO participants not only with regards to the event and their exhibits, as well as the planning procedures for both, but also their problem-solving capabilities (Le Ba 2015) and real-life adaptability beyond the EXPO showreel (Broch 2015). *Research* and *Science* have also often been linked to the educational merits that participants supposedly brought to EXPO and were able to provide (Denigot; Esfahbodi 2015). *Education* on the other hand, often in the context of educating young people at EXPO, has been an even bigger issue that got stressed by most of my interview partners (cf. Broch; Denigot; Kron; Alessandra; Schmitz; Esfahbodi; Tafeche 2015). These roles that were assigned to research, science and education, were often of an utilitarian nature, that served to make a case for certain messages adjacent to a participation, which was also openly communicated by some of my interview partners, as a proceeding.

“We put together the three teams of scientists in a sort of arena and then we told them ‘ok, we want to engage people now come you scientists, come to a decision of what can be used, because you see it in the same way’ [...] it took us weeks, maybe months to get them come out with something that each of them was ready to sign in a scientific way. So we had our concepts and then we went to an agency specialized in making something fun, enjoyable, edutainment, entertaining for people, to put together an exhibit, based on what the science had given us to use” (Kron, M., personal interview, September 20, 2015).

World's Fairs in general are and always have been concerned with showcasing the civilizational evolution of man as well as his technological and scientific capacities and

inventions. EXPO 2015 hadn't been any different in this regard. The messages and stories, sophisticatedly crafted by scientists and agencies, that the different participants told at this EXPO, in interviews and observations alike, often seemed to offer *ready-made interpretations and associations* to the visiting public. A reinterpretation of the latter by a researcher on a synchronous rather than a historical basis on the other hand wasn't something that all EXPO participants had necessarily planned for and sometimes avoided⁸⁴ or treated like a PR venture. Some sought a twofold approach of advertising their own exhibits and agendas while offering me an insight into their inner workings. Personal opinions were seldom to be found (cf. Tafeche; Denigot 2015). Which had me wondering, what stories and opinions on the EXPO I might ultimately retrieve outside of it realms, the more so, since public protest accompanied the event's conduct arguably from start to finish.

6.1.2 Public Protest and the #NOEXPO movement

Unquestionably, the most memorable public outburst involving the EXPO happened on May 1st 2015, the day of its opening, as masked protestors took to the streets in Milan's center to rebel against the event they apparently never wanted, eventually violently clashing with the police and causing a fire and smoke in the inner city (cf. Guardian 2015). At least that is what most news outlets would focus on, disregarding that "tens of thousands gathered and marched", peacefully demonstrating, while only the "'black bloc' of a few hundred masked people set fire to a dozen cars and broke the windows of some 50 shops in the streets of the city center" (Danna 2017: 908).

It wasn't only corporate involvement in the EXPO 2015, but the unpaid workforce of EXPO "volunteers", supposed corruption and an unfinished site, as well as tax-money wasted, that seemed to have preceded the clash, as Sara Rossi of Reuters reported: "The event had already been hit by a corruption investigation that saw several officials arrested and by cost overruns and construction hold-ups. Large parts of the site were not ready for opening day" (Rossi 2015). These accusations were partially proven (cf. Parodi 2014; Danna 2017; Maggioni 2013) and further pushed by an polit-critical network, which, comprised by a range of prevailingly local Milanese activists, had declared their opposition and taken on the EXPO project as early as 2007,

⁸⁴ As many interviews that I've asked for finally didn't realize for differing reasons that I've already elaborated on, other than that they are object to speculation.

going by the name and subsequent hashtag “#NOEXPO”. One of my associates in Milan, who I’ve interviewed during my fieldwork in 2015 and would eventually revisit in 2018 for an additional assessment of post-EXPO Milan, participated in a collective called Offtopic, which was also part of this movement. The latter’s development he described as follows:

“Since 2007 there was an opposition against EXPO, back then we didn’t yet know if it would be assigned to Milan or Izmir, and then, let’s say, Offtopic was a group, which [...] built a foundation for a broader network, not only a single commitment, like in the first years. Hm, Why EXPO? Because EXPO is the key, not only the event to be challenged but the key to interpret how Milan is changing, what Milan will be like in 2016 because it is a problem to continue promoting great events and major operations in our territory”⁸⁵ (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).



FIGURE 23 “NO EXPO” graffiti sprayed on housewall on the streets of Milan (photo by the author, June 2015)



FIGURE 24 EXPOPOLI(S) Boardgame 2010 Map (expanding to both sides of the Huangpu River) illustrating the event site and zones. From *Offtopiclab*, 2019, <https://www.offtopiclab.org/expopolis/>. Copyright 2015 by Offtopic et al.

⁸⁵ “Dal 2007 esiste un percorso di opposizione ad Expo, da quando ancora non si sapeva se sarebbe stato assegnato a Milano o a Smirne [Izmir, Turkey], e poi, diciamo, che Off Topic è stato il gruppo che scrivendo il libro ha dato un po’ il via alla costruzione di una rete ampia, non solo di un singolo comitato come era nei primi anni. Hmm... Perché Expo? Perché Expo era la chiave... non soltanto l’evento da contestare ma la chiave di lettura per raccontare come cambia Milano, come sarà la Milano del 2016 perché è un problema continuare a promuovere i grandi eventi e grandi opere nei nostri territory” (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

Being in Milan one would eventually encounter the term “NOEXPO” (fig.23), one way or another. As the catchy slogan was to be found on Twitter as well as sprayed on house walls (cf. Chapter 6.3.1). Furthermore the opposition against the conduct of this mega event inspired grassroot projects like Apps, Books, Magazines, Boardgames and so forth, as well as synergies between creative, scientific, media and political activists under a common cause (fig.24; cf. Chapter 6.3.1). As part of my discourse ethnography on EXPO 2015, I would progressively gather and assess these materials to reflect on the interviews and participant observations that I had collected on the EXPO site.

Amongst the most distinctive intellectual outputs Offtopic accounted for, had been its “Pieghevole” (engl.: leaflets), comprising critical commentary i.a. on the execution of the EXPO theme “Nutrire il pianeta, energia per la vita” (engl.: “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life”) (Offtopic 2015c), as well as urban transformation and financial exploitation the Milanese arguably endured (ibid. 2015a/b) due to the event taking place in the city. Serving as somewhat the manifesto of the collective, one of its main aims had been to relativize the public perception of EXPO, which then Prime Minister Matteo Renzi had inaugurated as follows “Oggi inizia il domani dell'Italia” (engl.: “Today we start the tomorrow of Italy”) (Renzi 2015; as cited in Carra 2015). Pieghevole argued:

“We leave it to other spaces to analyze, why Milan, the country's economic and industrial capital city, but also the center and laboratory of social conflict, began the transformation process that leads to today. [...] All attempts to impose an identity upon it have failed, generating the new big dream: Milan, capital of the planet. With a year of grace: EXPO's 2015. A prospect that failed even before Expo began, betrayed by its own supporters and ridiculed by those who should have suffered the consequences, the Milanese”⁸⁶ (Offtopic [transl.] 2015b).

Another noteworthy publication is the book “Expopolis”, which written by the local journalist Roberto Maggioni, draws parallels to the boardgame Monopoly and – as the title suggests – rather polemically investigates the misconduct of managers and organizers during the preparational phase of the Mega Event, starting as early as 2006.

⁸⁶ “Lasciamo ad altri spazi l'analisi sul perché Milano, capitale economica e produttiva del Paese, ma anche cuore e laboratorio del conflitto sociale, iniziò il processo di trasformazione che porta a oggi. [...] Tutti i tentativi di forzare un'identità hanno fallito, generando il nuovo grande sogno: Milano capitale del Pianeta. Con un anno di grazia: il 2015 di Expo. Una speranza fallita prima ancora che Expo cominci, tradito dai suoi stessi sostenitori e snobbato da chi avrebbe dovuto subirlo, i milanesi” (Offtopic 2015b).

Within his book the author tries to demystify the EXPO conduct; e.g. the telltale of the “green event” the organizers had publicly proclaimed the EXPO to be, pointing to an alleged 10 billion⁸⁷ euro of investments, which to the most part were channeled into infrastructural projects (cf. Maggioni 2013: 23), according to Danna including:

“two new highways; BreBeMi (€2 billion or US\$2.3bn for 61 km) and Pedemontana (€5 billion or US\$5.9bn for 67 km), an outer bypass called TEM (€1.7 billion or US\$2bn for 30 km, dubbed the most expensive highway in Europe) [...] plus the enhancement of railways and junctions. [...] Expo facilitated the building of these highway projects which had been fiercely opposed for two decades by the local committees opposing an increase in traffic and the destruction of fields and agricultural land. (Danna 2017: 910).

Not without reason, Maggioni (2013: 113) and Danna (2017: 918) both would also link these constructions to Mafia syndicates like the ‘Ndrangheta, who allegedly have conspired with the municipal government to receive tenders on numerous occasions leading up to the EXPO (cf. Ferrarella 2012; Milanotoday 2015). Arguing that “Where there is money and contracts, there are mafias and power groups. It has been a structural rule for at least twenty years also in Lombardy”⁸⁸ (Maggioni [transl.] 2013: 123). But neither the critique of Expopolis nor the NOEXPO movement ends herewith. What public protesters complained about, might be subsumable to the following key-failures the EXPO arguably accounted for, which eventually add up to the communal narrative of the “l’evento fallito” (engl. “the failed event”; Offtopic 2015b): *corruption, financial mismanagement, inadequate salaries, hypocrisy, deception, neoliberal urban transformation and a missing plan for repurposing* the hosting site, after the event’s conclusion.

While widespread belief of corrupt business-practices and mafia involvement had been preceding, accompanying and ensuing EXPO 2015, the overall financial mismanagement had been alarmingly evident. As firms, to see the event through, had been founded and named “EXPO S.p.A.” and “Arexpo”, the latter bought a land strip for the conduct at a 120million €, ten-times the amount of its actual real-estate value, further impending conflicts of interest, since Fondazione Fiera as well as the Municipal

⁸⁷ This figure doesn’t parallel the official figures on the event, that indicate slightly more than 3 billion Euro in total costs for the event (cf. Gatti [et al.] 2018: 15).

⁸⁸ “Dove ci sono soldi e appalti ci sono mafie e gruppi di potere. È una regola strutturale da almeno vent’anni anche in Lombardia” (Maggioni 2013: 123).

Government, were both: sellers and buyers (cf. Danna 2017: 910f). Furthermore EXPO S.p.A. CEO Giuseppe Sala, who in 2016 became Mayor of Milan, earned an estimated 400.000 € annual salary (cf. Il Giorno 2010) during the event, while 10.000 volunteers worked for free, which supposedly was “against the law, because ‘volunteering’ can be done for a not-for-profit association, but never for a commercial company” (Danna 2017: 9). These series of misdemeanors even had Bocconi professor Roberto Perotti, arguably known for his neoliberalist tendencies (cf. *ibid.* 909), arguing that “Neither corruption nor delays are the main problem of Expo 2015. The main problem is that the Expo should not have happened. It was born and grew out of a collective amnesia of human rationality”⁸⁹ (Perotti [transl.] 2014: 3).

What many envisioned to produce work and wealth, would only call for more precarious and unpaid labor, as the expected return on investment, wouldn’t be able to compensate the expenditures ramped up umpteen times before (cf. *ibid.* 4ff). To make matters worse, the site which until 2017 still hadn’t found a suiting buyer and ultimately accounted for another 98 million in reclamation costs between 2015-2018 (cf. Lana 2019), was eventually chosen to host MIND (Milano Innovation District), a campus comprised of start-ups, research faculties and public institutions, again accounting for an estimated 1.8 billion Euro in public spending and set to be finished in 2021 (cf. Piemontese 2019; MIND 2019). This enterprise, though supposedly idealistic and maybe even successful in the long run, might still suffer the same criticism as the EXPO conduct, for obvious reasons, given that an otherwise fairly unpopulated and peripheral area, 10 miles away from the city center, arguably isn’t worth such an investment, to begin with (cf. Perotti 2014: 9).

Of course, eventual positives the neoliberals such as Perotti still would’ve acknowledged the EXPO circus might have with regards to the city’s overall attractiveness for tourism, entrepreneurship and foreign investments (cf. *ibid.*: 6), wouldn’t help to pacify the mob, already complaining about progressing gentrification and real estate speculation in Milan, who in the style of Henri Lefebvre (1968) demanded their “Diritto alla città” (engl.: “right to the city”; Offtopic 2015a;). Last but not least, it were the narratives the event sold to the public that inarguably had many excited, others upset. Given that the theme “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life”

⁸⁹ “né la corruzione né i ritardi sono il problema principale di Expo 2015. Il problema principale è che l’Expo non sarebbe dovuto accadere. Esso è nato e cresciuto per una amnesia collettiva della razionalità umana” (Perotti 2014: 3).

symbolized pressing issues like *world hunger* and *ecological sustainability*, bearing both the chance to raise awareness on them, but also the risk to caricature them, with the world watching.

6.2 Storytelling at EXPO 2015

When my grandmother once asked me about the meaning of “Nachhaltigkeit” (engl.: “sustainability”), as she had heard it for the first time on the TV news, I wasn’t quite sure how to explain it to her. Though familiar with the term, I just had started studying anthropology and she already took me for an expert in everything. It must have been around that time that another term was eventually introduced, to arguably solve this very problem, being “enkelgerecht” (“right for a grandchild”), which puts an emphasis on the following generations, their wellbeing and living in our shared world. Still, the problem endures when telling a child. How would e.g. an EXPO – amongst other topics – concerned with this issue, bypass such complex terminologies and arrive at more comprehensible explanations for the global challenges ahead?

EXPO 2015 certainly was in many ways conceptualized and widely perceived as a place to educate the young. In fact, children in particular were targeted with TV commercials “in order to exploit ‘the nag factor’, enticing them to the Children’s Park” (Danna 2017: 912) while *la scuola italiana* campaign sought to interest school classes of up to 2 million pupils at reduced rates of 10€ to see the event (ibid.). When asked about the ways of self-representation chosen for EXPO, the communication officer of the European Union pavilion for example replied as follows:

“The first idea was, we’re going to target in the very first place the young people, as you may have noticed, because - you’ve seen it - I think it’s a very good idea since the EXPO is about sustainability, sustainability is about the future and the future are of course the kids. The second idea was that we wanted to convey messages in a very emotional way. We wanted to touch the heart of the people more than the mind. It’s not about being simplistic, but to be simple for sure and once you trigger the emotion in a way, then you can perhaps learn a bit more about what the European Union is doing” (Denigot, T., personal interview, September 17, 2015).

His response appeared as a very honest account amongst the plurality of interviews that I’ve gathered at EXPO, which often sought to take this opportunity for free PR. As

the many stories, narratives or messages that were conveyed to the audience by means of videos, texts, human guides, or interactive exhibits to be subsequently reproduced by (social)media, would often even find their way into scientifically connotated interviews. Thus, at times, the fieldwork conducted on EXPO 2015 became an act of (re)interpreting for me rather than just reading and reproducing the superficial textuality the EXPO provided its visitors with. On one such occasion, it had been Coca Cola pavilion, which tried to counteract common perception of the alleged unhealthiness of its products, by having an entertainer do jumping jacks with visitors, arguing that the brand “has been sponsor of big events, for example Olympics since 1928. So we are absolutely – always have been really linked to sports, but on the other side – also in each country, where we operate, we have at least one local sports program for young people” (Broch, C., personal interview, September 7, 2015).

Only a small number of interview-partners would grant my request of laying out their approach to storytelling rather than the story itself (Kron 2015; Denigot 2015). However most of them acknowledged the fact that, to convey a certain message about themselves as a nation/brand/organization, was indeed also a priority to them (cf. Döller 2015; Broch 2015; Le Ba 2015; Kron 2015; Denigot 2015; Bondarenko 2015; Tafeche 2015). Thereby the different exhibitors and participants had to fit in the general narrative that the EXPO put forth, being about the world as first and foremost constituted and run by nations. While this was seemingly easier to implement for the international and civil society organizations, who would emphasize their roles of being either *ecological* or *humanistic* or both and for that reason also present at the occasion; corporate participants had to get creative, to work around or credibly join into these overarching themes, to not be subsumed to a plainly commercial agenda (cf. Chapter 6.2.2). One of my interview partners – quite to the point – stated:

“People, who came to EXPO, [...] their interest is in the countries, their interest is to see, what each single country has to say [to] that specific theme. So the exhibits of the big companies, either they are very smart [...] or people are not attracted visiting brands and products, which makes a lot of sense” (Kron, M., personal interview, September 20, 2015).

The ways and means of storytelling, besides a credible story, were key to join not only the discourse on the future of the planet and humanity during the EXPO, but by doing so also represent oneself well in the wake of an international audience and attract

visitors on a daily basis.⁹⁰ Having said that, it were not only the aforementioned corporate and NGO/IGO participants to EXPO, who would follow through with that proceeding, but subsequently also nations that would often seek to *(re)brand* themselves as well. Germany, which amongst the participants was initially most open towards my research and questioning, as well as engaged, comforting and showing me around the pavilion in the process, also openly admitted to be acting on purpose of its EXPO mission:

*„It's largescale mission, of course we want to do PR for Germany. We want to inform many people, young people. But we also want to show the German culture, maybe we also want to show visitors a different picture of Germany. Everyone always goes to or approaches a country with a certain bias, if they do not know it yet“*⁹¹ (Schmitz, D., personal interview, September 7, 2015).

Austria tried to move on from the picture usually associated with it being all about “Sissi und Lederhosen” to a country full of forests and fresh air, thereby taking a backdoor approach to the initial theme of “feeding the planet” as its project Manager argued:

*“A secret of success of our pavilion is its story. It's also about storytelling. It just has to be easy to tell and short. Our architects believed that you could survive five weeks without food, five days without drinking, but not even five minutes without oxygen, and that's why it's "nutrient # 1" for humans, for animals, for any kind of life”*⁹² (Döller, H., personal interview, September 3, 2015).

Russia on the other hand would take a very common approach, of showing its “rich” cuisine, thus eventually also its culture, which according to the director of its pavilion, were based on both a large country, with about 180 ethnic minorities, as well as its long history. The latter part would also be emphasized by the architectural grandeur of its building, which drew visual parallels to the Soviet Pavilion at Montreal ‘76 (fig. 25/26).

⁹⁰ Regarding solely the corporate participants please refer to Chapter 6.2.2.

⁹¹ „Das ist ein breit gefächerter Auftrag, wir wollen natürlich Öffentlichkeitsarbeit für Deutschland betreiben. Wir wollen viele Menschen, junge Menschen informieren. Wir wollen aber auch deutsche Kultur zeigen, wir wollen den Besuchern vielleicht auch ein anderes Deutschland-Bild zeigen. Jeder geht ja immer mit einer fest vorgefassten Meinung in ein Land oder auf ein Land zu, wenn er es noch nicht kennt“ (Schmitz, D., personal interview, September 7, 2015).

⁹² „Ein Erfolgsgeheimnis von unserem Pavillon ist seine Geschichte. Es geht ja auch um Storytelling. Es muss einfach leicht erzählt werden und kurz. Unsere Architekten gingen davon aus, dass man fünf Wochen ohne Essen überleben kann, fünf Tage ohne Trinken, aber keine fünf Minuten ohne Sauerstoff und deswegen ist es nun einmal „Lebensmittel Nr. 1“ für Mensch, für Tier, für jegliches Leben“ (Döller, H., personal interview, September 3, 2015).

“Creating the shape of this pavilion, they certainly were basing on the very rich history of Russia and even the Soviet pavilions at EXPO. You know we have very similar shapes to the Soviet Pavilion at Montreal EXPO, and this cannot be an accident. We wanted to create a dynamic upwards movement” (Bondarenko, S., personal interview, September 16, 2015).

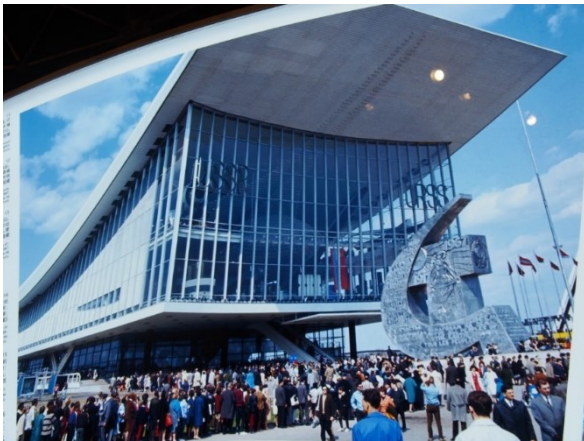


FIGURE 25 Photograph of Soviet Pavilion at Montreal EXPO '76, exhibited in the World EXPO Museum, Shanghai (photo by the author, May 2017)



FIGURE 26 Russian Pavilion featuring “a dynamic” upward movement, just like the Soviet Pavilion of '76 (photo by the author, June 2015)



FIGURE 27 Advertisement urging visitors to “Eat Belgian Fries” at EXPO 2015 (photo by the author, June 2015)



FIGURE 28 “Discover our Revolution” - Slogan on the outside of the Ecuador Pavilion (photo by the author, June 2015)

France would “try to emerge the viewer” (Le Ba, M., personal interview, August 3, 2015) in the way the French cultivate and eat food with a narrative trail that led him through a garden of crops and video screenings into their pavilion, as the theme “feeding the planet”, would also be used by corporate and national participants alike to market their

products (cf. Chapter 6.2.2; fig. 27). Then there were nations the likes of Iran, trying to shift its international perception, seeing the event as a chance to “create a mutual understanding between the nations and make them acquainted with the world’s culture and civilization” (Esfahbodi, H., email interview, September 15, 2015) or Ecuador, who tagged its pavilion “Discover our (R)evolution”, trying to approach theme and visitors on an initial textual basis (fig.28).

The way meaning would be assigned to text in general, was something that had to the most part been meticulously processed (Denigot; Kron 2015), as it would eventually be emphatically criticized as well. On one occasion e.g. a young employee of the Palestine-Pavilion, wasn’t at all impressed by the above slogan, arguing:

“Ecuador uses it like a tag-line. It’s the only thing political, but it’s fake, I mean it’s a tag-line, it’s just a commercial. It’s just for marketing, but I don’t believe that EXPO is made to cause a real change in our life. No. I think that it helps to move money, a lot, move business, a lot, and that’s the top of the pyramid-sight. But for us, for the people, we can gain a real political change, a real cultural change, because we are meeting each other and because we are having a real talk together. Because we are meeting and we are facing our different experiences and backgrounds through relationships. That’s the real revolution” (Tafeche, N., personal interview, July 15, 2015).

Indeed, the actual strongside of the EXPO, might have very well been the cultural exchange on a personal level. Having said that, I’d seldom encountered visitors engaging with employees in this way, if it wasn’t just for asking for the toilets, exit or water dispenser. Rather they’d rush from exhibit to exhibit to get the most out of their entry-fee and time, experience-hungry focusing on predominantly the big nations and corporations, which inarguably implemented the most interesting features, cinemas, installations that would automatically draw your attention away from the by-standing staffers and their personal accounts. One could easily discharge all of his physical and mental batteries on one sophisticated EXPO-visit, already standing in line for up to one-and-a-half hours at the entry-gates, with the heat rising above 40 degrees at noon and mosquitos joining in during the evening (cf. Donadio 2015), hopping from must-see to must-see pavilion, well aware that one wouldn’t be able to see them all. Where on the one hand, you’d go in for the freebies, on the other you’d go in for the fun, and sometimes, you’d go in for the air conditioner.

Where you'd eventually end-up, roaming around the EXPO site, wasn't something to really plan for prior to going there. The arguably most interesting pavilions, such as Italy, South-Korea, Japan and Germany were usually those, for which one had to queue for up to an hour to get in. On the flipside this circumstance arguably helped smaller nations as well to attract some impatient visitors on their behalf, e.g. the Cluster pavilions, which will be addressed within the following Chapter.

The differences in the ways the fairly prominent nations above would exhibit themselves and approach the EXPO theme, might best be showcased by the accounts of one of my interview partners, who had been to the German and Japan pavilions concluding:

"The first is an amazing pavilion, one of the biggest and it's giving a lot of knowledge. It's based on information, you can see experiments, a lot of text to read and things like that, a bit like a museum, where you learn about different topics related to food. You - perhaps I'm wrong - but you don't really get any kind of strong emotion or very strong message about Germany, it's much more about the topic really. It's very interesting. Then you go to Japan, where you really feel to be in Japan, it really feels like in Japan, it's very much based on emotion, feelings and things like that. Is it very much based on a lot of knowledge about research and food? Not that much. The two pavilions are very, very interesting and they are complementary in a way, but you see that they've decided to treat the theme very different ways" (Denigot, T., personal interview, September 17, 2015).

As an anthropologist you're arguably inclined to do both: interact on a personal level, but also contextualize and reflect what you see and experience against your theoretical background, which also mirrors the proceeding of Harvey within her ethnography on EXPO '92. In fact she argues that this field is ideally suited "to draw out a contrast between concepts of culture, understandings of context and kinds of knowledge that are produced through the interpretive process" (Harvey 1996: 46), hence, dismissing the Geertzian model of thick description (1987) just partially, but joining it with Ingold's notion of an anthropologist that is inclined to predominantly studying himself (cf. Ingold 1992: 695).

With that in mind, one has to pay attention to not fall in the trap of disengaging himself from the smaller arguably less interesting national exhibits and their stories at

EXPO, who aren't demanding one's attention as much, but also feed into the overall story-tale of the event for better or for worse. What shall not go unmentioned here are also the unevenly distributed financial capabilities of these differing participants at EXPO. While most of the afore mentioned nations would draw on huge budgets⁹³ to realize their exhibits, others were forced to rather literal representations of themselves, not least due to their lack of a budget to work with, which resulted in a two-class society of nations at Milan 2015. Those in the ranks of industrialized and wealthy countries such as Japan, France and Germany on the one and the likes of Cuba, Palestine or Eritrea on the other hand.

6.2.1 Peripheries within – the Case of the EXPO Clusters

Throughout the more than 150 years of their existence EXPOs have certainly made a name for themselves for being the place, where one could experience the entire world at once, subsequently they are also a place for an ever growing number of nations to showcase themselves to a broad cosmopolitan public. The number of participants to World's Fairs had continuously risen from 50 in London (Ellis et.al. 1851) to 246 in 2010 (cf. Yu et al 2012: 48). However they are also known to be expensive not only for visitors but also participating countries⁹⁴, who to a large part have to account for the cost of their exhibition space and the construction of their pavilions themselves. On the other side there are those nations, who are not able to provide the financials necessary to deploy a self-built pavilion and are thus assigned a smaller exhibition space by the organizers. In recent history, since Seville 1992⁹⁵ onwards, those have been assorted in geographic terms, within e.g. the Plazas of the Americas, Arab Countries and Africa at Seville (cf. Harvey 1996: 116), or the Caribbean, Pacific, European and African Joint Pavilions at Shanghai 2010 (cf. EXPO 2010). Milan 2015 took a different approach, assembling nations in so called *Clusters*, according to thematic rather than geographic characteristics (cf. Gatti et. al.: 392f). This conjuncture led to varied responses amongst the people I've talked to, who would argue that the Cluster themes, being *Rice*, *Coffee*,

⁹³ Some pavilion were solely financed by tax-money, as in the case of the German Pavilion (Schmitz 2015), while others were partially publicly/privately funded, e.g. the French exhibit with a total cost of 20 Mio. Euro (Le Ba 2015) and others solely privately funded, as e.g. is and has been the case with the USA exhibits at EXPOs (Smits and Jansen 2012: 176).

⁹⁴ For more information on the money deployed at EXPO visit their homepage (EXPO 2015e).

⁹⁵ Which marked a trend of former communist countries to become self-governing entities, who would subsequently also represent themselves as autonomous nations at international occasions (cf. Chapter 3.2).

Cocoa and chocolate, Cereals, Spices, Bio-Mediterranean, Fruit and legumes, Islands, sea and food as well as Arid zones, were superficial or simply not fitting (Tafeche 2015), or as some pavilions and details, especially with regards to these clusters, weren't ready and opened as late as June and July (Abo 2015), being treated stepmotherly compared to other participants.

However, there were also positive voices towards the idea of Clusters e.g. the associate of Fairtrade that I've interviewed, who sensed a connection factor for her firm to the theme of food that was new to EXPO, stating:

"We thought that, given that the Expo brought this innovative theme of clusters, and therefore the focus on certain products, we also decided to focus on the product, which was present within a cluster, which was that of cocoa, with a specific theme"⁹⁶ (Alessandra, personal interview, August 30, 2015).

Indeed the Clusters that were divided into the nine themes – mentioned above – also offered an opportunity for the corporate partners of EXPO to further connect to the overall idea and theme of the event and showcase their role in the production and distribution of food between nations. In fact, big brands were amongst the main sponsors of these joints, with e.g. illycaffè sponsoring the Coffee-Cluster (cf. Kaufman 2014). Here, it remained true what Benedict had already stressed about MNC's at World's Fairs being that "Their logos have become better known than many national symbols" (Benedict 1991: 9). Having said that, the thematic clustering of nations according to the goods they produced and exported, besides their alignment within confined EXPO spaces reserved for the budgetarily limited, sometimes felt odd and wasn't necessarily met with enthusiasm by those assigned there. Amongst which the most outspoken one - maybe out of all my interview-partners - was an employee at the Palestine Pavilion situated in the *Arid Zones Cluster*⁹⁷. A concept that she commented on as "completely inappropriate" (Tafeche 2015) as she went on to explain:

"if you look into some vocabulary or dictionary, you are going to find just bad synonyms to 'arid', as it means something that is infertile, something which is not developing in any way and it's getting worse, worse and worst. So it's

⁹⁶ "Abbiamo pensato che, visto che l'Expo portava questo tema innovativo dei cluster, e quindi del focus su determinati prodotti, abbiamo deciso anche noi di focalizzarsi sul prodotto, che era presente all'interno di un cluster, che era quello del cacao, con un tema specifico" (Alessandra, personal interview, August 30, 2015).

⁹⁷ Constituted by Palestine, Eritrea, Djibouti, Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Somalia, Jordan (cf. EXPO 2015f).

completely meaningless and I do believe that it is a political choice. [...] The only thing that we share with the other pavilions [here] is struggle, is that we have a real independence history. [...] we are collected altogether, just because we are left quite apart from the rest, because we have a really strong story to tell. Because we are fighting against injustice” (Tafeche, N., personal interview, July 15, 2015).

Indeed I myself was under the impression that the theme applied to this cluster in particular was one to be easily misconceived by visitors. The *arid*-tag implied the notion of unfertile places, which in turn deprived the present nations of their self-representative capabilities and moved them to a thematic periphery within the EXPO site and its theme, given that the event evolved mostly around the production and distribution of food. Neither of which those countries, solely stemming from Africa and the Middle-East, seemed to factor-, or fit in. Given that the form and function that had been imposed on these nations by the organizers, eventually clustering them together, was often also a silent reminder of their colonial past, and left them with little to no room to narratively work with and reshape their image. As my Palestine associate stressed:

“There is nothing to see in our pavilion, there is just a video, showing how business, how tourism, how cathedrals, architectural environment are made of. Which is very nice, it’s cute. [...] We have a guide, that unfortunately has not even a map of Palestine and we fight a lot between each other about this, because it seems like not facing a reality. Just face this conflict, just try to talk about this problem” (Tafeche, N., personal interview, July 15, 2015).

To forgo the stories usually related with the country, the employees of the Palestine pavilion chose to sell e.g. Christian crosses, one of its religion minorities, and souvenirs in order to allow for positive openminded associations on behalf of their visitors. It also forced them to engage on a rather personal level with their visitors, as opposed to machines and installations other pavilions deployed, showing them around and telling them a different story, which they hadn’t got the means to advertise any other way.

“I think that EXPO actually is something like a bubble, completely parallel to the real world. What is going to happen outside, is not going ever to happen inside of this EXPO, still there are a lot of people coming and a lot of people need to

be helped to discover the world. [...] We are trying to help them to achieve a real consciousness and gain awareness of travelling through Palestine" (ibid.)

Even though the concept of Clusters was new and slightly different to the usual geographical allocation of poorer nations at EXPO, Harvey's (1996: 127) accounts on them being forced to only literal cultural representations of themselves remained alarmingly true. Cluster exhibitions in general resembled Bazaars, very much the likes of the Midway at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 (cf. Chapter 3.1), often featuring strangely compiled culturally connotated paraphernalia aside from a small kitchen, to serve the local food. With that, also with regards to the accounts of Tafeche (2015) a personal engagement with them often offered a genuine authenticity and sometimes unique unplanned-ness. As e.g. one of the most curious encounters I had while visiting the Mauritanian Pavilion and notice that their local kitchen was run by Vietnamese (fig. 29). When I asked the chef, why they were cooking fried chicken chops at the Mauritanian Pavilion presence at EXPO he simply replied: "Because Mauritians are Muslims and wouldn't eat pig."



FIGURE 29 Vietnamese Menu standing outside of the Mauritanian Pavilion, Arid Zones Cluster (photo by the author, June 2015)



FIGURE 30 Walking lane within the Cereals and Tubers Cluster with Togo (left), Haiti (right) (photo by the author, June 2015)

On another occasion I observed a woman within the coffee cluster manually culling coffee beans in a ducked position as part of a showcasing act by the Rwandan pavilion. Though I never personally observed such showings in other Clusters, similar things could have been expected from e.g. the *rice* or *tubers* Cluster (fig. 30) at any instance, as to showcase the means of production of the different nations present at EXPO subsequently meant to showcase the persisting state of underdevelopment of formerly

colonized nations. This was only to be aggravated by the technological advancement of the former colonial powers. My interview-partner from Fairtrade, which was involved in the Cocoa Cluster – though not criticizing the concept per se – would implicitly hint at this problem, in her assessment of contemporary global supply chains, saying:

“if we go to analyze the cocoa supply chain, we discover that, in truth, cocoa can produce a very negative atmosphere for the people, who cultivate it and for the environment because, lastly, there is a significant exploitation of farmers, and use of child labor, women are not involved in this type of agriculture as the environment is very blemished”⁹⁸ (Alessandra, personal interview, August 30, 2015).

In effect, the corporate presence at EXPO, but especially their presence within the Cluster zones – though unintentionally – subsequently served to fill a disreputable gap in this asynchronous cost-benefit equation that had one party on the commodity-, one on the business-market side. It often were confectionery companies the likes of Lindt or Perugina who would themselves cluster around the Cocoa Cluster with their pavilions, showing off their goods and offering tasters, ironically attracting larger crowds than the Cluster itself.

The main aim of visitors often seemed to consume rather than to learn about the world. Though the event arguably allowed for a contention with its themes, it wouldn't max it out. Only seldom disparity was thematically picked up by the EXPO, e.g. at the Pavilion Zero that openly criticized the commodity trading and speculation on food. But even those rare instances of self-reflexivity need to be judged by the knowledgeable and interested visitor as part of his quest to perceive the world through EXPO, as Harvey writes:

The ironic commentaries on the fairs themselves, which always existed, but which were previously a critical reaction to the fairs articulated from the outside, are now integrated as further perspectives. Audiences are encouraged to interpret and make national cultures for themselves, and new technologies thus appear to encourage greater participation and reflexivity. Yet those same

⁹⁸ “se noi andiamo ad analizzare la filiera del cacao, scopriamo che, in verità, il cacao può produrre una grande energia negativa per le persone che lo coltivano e per l'ambiente perché, comunque, c'è un grande sfruttamento degli agricoltori, un grande utilizzo della manodopera minorile, le donne non sono coinvolte in questo tipo di agricoltura così come l'ambiente è molto deturpato” (Alessandra, personal interview, August 30, 2015).

technologies also produce new techniques of exclusion and control (Harvey 1996: 129).

Especially the food/energy conjuncture that came with the EXPO theme being “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life” presented a pressing issue in terms of World Hunger and Malnutrition on the one hand, but also quite openly offered a backdoor to advertising and product placement in those two segments on the other. This called for an inherent contradiction within EXPO and a wide range of approaches to deal with it from corporate and national standpoints. Here it remained true, what Benedict had once alluded to:

Former colonies may have achieved political independence, but few have achieved economic independence. Their displays at international exhibitions may symbolize their nationhood, but the exhibitions as a whole show that the imperial nations of the past have been replaced by the multinational corporations of the present. International exhibitions now seem to reflect a new form of dependency. (Benedict 1991: 9)

6.2.2 Nation Branding and the Problem of Feeding the Planet

Looking all the way back to the first Great Exhibition in London 1951, Penelope Harvey (1996: 99f) argues, that this had already been the first instance of a celebration of “capital and empire” on a global scale, but while the imperial nature of those exhibition steadily faded, quite the contrary has to be said about its capitalist characteristics, as since the 1930s Multinational corporations have been getting more and more involved in these fairs (cf. Chapter 2.4). In fact EXPOs wouldn’t be conceivable nowadays without their corporate partners, who are serving as the main financiers of those fairs, aside from nations, who themselves are increasingly relying on the help of private sponsorship, most prominently the USA (cf. Smits and Jansen 2012: 176). This in return also makes for them being a constant factor in the overall display that an Mega-Event, like this, offers to its visitors. The ubiquitous corporate influence at EXPO might not necessarily be traceable by fairgoers as much, since the modern cosmopolitan has arguably been growing so familiar with advertisements in general that he stopped paying attention to detail. However, there might be other explanations. In fact, the

different means of corporate representation at EXPO would to the most part mirror what Harvey alludes to within her ethnography on Seville 1992. Herein she writes:

“There were four principal modes of participation. In the first place there was the massive corporate sponsorship of the national participants. The visibility of such sponsors varied from pavilion to pavilion. [...] In many other cases corporate sponsors were simply acknowledged on the written leaflets available but not always seen by visitors. [...] And there were companies that operated both the above strategies. [...] Finally there were companies which participated as ‘independent’ (i.e. non-national) entities” (Harvey 1996: 102).

These differing approaches were also showcased by the public information on EXPO 2015, which reported only six *official corporate participants* being *Alessandro Rosso/Joomoo, China Corporate United, Coca Cola, Federalimentare4EXPO, New Holland* and *Vanke*, all of which were present at the occasion with their own pavilion (cf. Gatti et al. 2018: 511). However the list only illustrates a fraction of corporate involvement within the event. Other brands were solely reported as *partners* of the EXPO (ibid.: 280f), e.g. *Ferrero, Fiat, Samsung, or Coop*, to only name a few. However, during my fieldwork and interviewing I eventually became aware of the fact that especially one of the biggest MNCs present at Milan 2015, given their often ambivalent reputation, had tried to think outside of the box, to market its brands. While some corporations chose to represent themselves more openly to the visiting public, others had chosen to retreat from the spotlight to a more subliminal presence. This is probably best illustrated by the different approaches of the Coca Cola and Nestlé corporation to EXPO.

Coca Cola, who had been listed as one of the *corporate participants* as well as *partners* of the EXPO from the get-go, had built an own pavilion, besides functioning as the official soft drink partner of the event (Broch 2015) and thus also a wide range of participating nations, especially those of the Cluster zones (cf. Chapter 6.2.1). The reasons for their participation and broad appearance at the occasion were explained as follows by their communication manager:

“Coca Cola has been part of the EXPO for the last 120 years [...] Now it's much more about showing our commitments in this kind of participation and indeed in this EXPO in Milan we are the only food and beverage company with an own pavilion, all the other food and beverage companies are only here for

commercial purposes, while we have this pavilion, not to sell products but to show our commitments on sustainability” (Broch, C., personal interview, September 7, 2015).

Indeed Coca Cola, as one of the early corporate participants to EXPO is deeply intertwined with the history of the event (cf. Chapter 2.4). Thus the firms participation certainly made sense in a way of prolonging that legacy. Having said that, the brand also tried to withdraw itself from a sole commercial purpose and thus image, to function as a credible part to the EXPOs allegedly idealist objectives. Hence, Coca Cola tried to advertise to the visitor, a global humanist agenda that featured e.g. “local sport programs for young people”, an “Ekocenter”⁹⁹, “advocating jobs to women”, “recycling PETs for T-Shirts, bag etc.” (Broch, C., personal interview, September 7, 2015). This line of reasoning subsequently tried putting the company in the ranks of nations and NGOs, as an ambitious and engaging global player of their likes while also making a case for it being at EXPO with a standalone pavilion and agenda. With that it was also willingly avoiding any national associations, while rather longing for multinational ones. However the accounts of Harvey on Seville 1992 allow for a comparison of this line of reasoning with corporate EXPO participants in general, as she writes:

“All the multinational exhibits stressed the ways in which the technologies which they were responsible for producing and which they were promoting at the Expo, were technologies which operated for the benefit of humanity generally, for the global community in which the deterritorialized multinationals operate” (Harvey 1996: 119).

In fact, this argument was further stressed, when being asked why Coca Cola hadn’t chosen to become a sponsor of the American Pavilion instead¹⁰⁰, as its communication manager Broch replied:

“Because for two reasons, one, we didn’t want to convey [...] that we are so American. So being sponsor of the US-Pavilion would have said, ok then we don’t do this pavilion, because of cost. But since we are much more global and not only Americanized as we are, we wanted to stay out of this idea, and second

⁹⁹ A Container that offered drinkable water and a served as a fridge and a small shop in the same time to be opened in rural places in Africa (cf. Broch 2015).

¹⁰⁰ Since 1994 American pavilions are to be solely financed by private partners/sponsors (cf. Smits and Jansen 2012: 176). In the case of EXPO 2015 PepsiCo., amongst other corporate partners, has filled in for the Coca Cola company (Donadio 2015).

because we wanted to show much more commitment to the Italian country and participate in a much stronger way [...] to give the local, positive impact, instead of being only sponsor of the US-pavilion” (Broch, C., personal interview, September 7, 2015).

Opting for a standalone presence also meant for the company to opt against national connotations, that usually work in favor of brands being present at EXPO, which after all is first and foremost concerned with showcasing nations.

Nestlé on the other hand would take a much more different approach. When asked about Coca Cola the Director of Nestlé Italy argued that it functions differently as a brand, given that people associate it with just one single product, making it easier for Coca Cola than other food & beverage companies to interest the visitors in its exhibit, as they know what to associate it with and whether they like that or not (cf. Kron 2015). Of course, this further raised the question of how they themselves would tackle the issue of marketing their products at EXPO.

If consulting the official 600 page strong report on EXPO 2015, one would solely find a single reference to the Nestlé company, stating that it had sponsored a scientific exhibit on the interaction of mind and food, as within the Suisse pavilion (cf. *ibid.* 383). Here comes into effect, what Harvey once alluded to as *nation branding*, pointing to:

“a relationship of interdependence between the corporate and national participants. The nation states and the multinationals operated as contexts for each other, each dependent on the presence of the other for the generation of particular effects. Universal expositions have always been explicitly concerned to display the nation state in a global context and to produce a particular relationship between political economy and culture” (Harvey 1996: 103).

In fact, the Director of Nestlé wouldn’t even bother disavowing this notion, but rather explained the preliminary considerations that went into the companies exhibit as part of the Suisse participation, arguing:

“We don't want to have a situation, where people don't enter our exhibit, because they think it's just a Nestlé corporate stuff. We want them to enter because they are curious, because they know their surrounding is the one of a country and it worked very well, by the way” (Kron, M., personal interview, September 20, 2015).

To realize the display, the company had employed scientists and an agency, to not only come up with a scientifically sound exhibit, but also make it “edutaining”, to finally have something in place that couldn’t be criticized due to its content (ibid.). In fact, Nestlé would take the concept of *nation branding* even one step further at Milan 2015, than what Harvey (1996: 102) had concluded it would entail in her assessments on Seville 1992. In the case of Nestlé, its multinational make-up would allow the company to seemingly retreat from the fair, while still being omnipresent with its sub-brands, especially with regards to its regional Italian ones (fig. 31).

“We’re in Italy and we have two fantastic brands of the Italian tradition, very well-known abroad. [...] That was let’s say the more tactical decision, to say ‘ok, now, as we as a corporate, we will be in the Swiss pavilion. Why not showing, what Nestlé is, also using the Italian iconic brands.’ Therefore San Pellegrino became the official water of the EXPO [...] and Baci Perugina simply got this fantastic opportunity to have a standalone thing, because in our strategy for that brand, which is already in fifty something countries all over the world, we want to become bigger than that” (Kron, M., personal interview, September 20, 2015).

“What Nestlé is”, is a tricky assessment in this regard, since most people arguably would associate those brands rather with Italy than the MNC.



FIGURE 31 The “Baci Perugina Pavilion” with a slight reminder on the side of being associated with the Nestlé group (photo by the author, June 2015)



FIGURE 32 The Poster at the entrance of EXPO 2015, thanking their partners, suggested only a fracture of the actual corporate involvement within the fair (photo by the author, June 2015)

Another *corporate participant* (fig. 32) to EXPO had been New Holland. A MNC that produces agriculture machines, such as tractors and combine harvesters. Here the reasoning for participating at EXPO was evident and, given the theme of the event

and the inarguable increase of largescale farming worldwide, also hard to argue with, however that didn't necessarily apply to the message conveyed by the pavilion, for the same reasons. Aside from huge machines that were showcased at the ground floor of the pavilion and immediately catch a visitors attention, since one would enter from above, the way down would be decorated with depictions of so called "heroes" and the slogan "Together we feed the world". These heroes introduced as farmers were barely peasants but rather largescale landowners, as the accompanying narrative was as follows:

"Our idea was, 'Ok, we're at an EXPO, where we talk about nutrition, but we have to show people [...] where this whole diet comes from and it's important to communicate what farming is, and what the mechanization of agriculture furthers, because it is nice to say that everyone grows their own tomatoes, but the whole earth cannot be fed only with local agriculture' [...] The third theme was to show [...] that there are indeed small farmers, but land - which is now the future - is also in the hands of big entrepreneurs, big farmers"¹⁰¹ (Prossen, B., personal interview, September 16, 2015).

Of course, the proposition of largescale farming and the continuous permeation of technology in agriculture as well as in our society in general, are not easy to market even or especially at a World EXPO, or as Danna would put it "Only for a short time can people enjoy the machines that amuse them, and incessant advertising is always employed to draw attention to their exceptionality" (Danna 2017: 911). To be a corporate participant to EXPO, sure wasn't an easy task to begin with, as vocal opposition throughout Milan as well as on the Internet (cf. Chapters 6.1.2/6.3.1) preliminary focused on the EXPO being held, would soon translate into an opposition against the ways it had implemented its themes. Aside from the unpaid work force of volunteers, corporate participants, like New Holland and COOP, showcased a future run by machines instead of humans in the wake of a financial crisis that cost many their jobs, and with that arguably speaking against the objective of sustainability (cf.

¹⁰¹ „Unsere Idee war ‚Ok, wir sind auf einer EXPO, wo man von Ernährung spricht, wir müssen den Leute aber zeigen [...] woher diese ganze Ernährung kommt und es ist wichtig zu kommunizieren, was die Landwirtschaft, was die Technisierung in der Landwirtschaft bewirkt, weil es ist schön zu sagen, dass jeder sich die eigenen Tomaten wachsen lässt, aber die gesamte Erde kann man nicht nur mit lokaler Landwirtschaft ernähren‘ [...] Das dritte Thema war [...] [zu] zeigen, dass es auch kleine Landwirte gibt, aber Land - das jetzt die Zukunft ist – auch in den Händen von großen Entrepreneurs, großen Landwirten“ (Prossen, B., personal interview, September 16, 2015).

Macao 2015). But also with regards to its slogan “Feeding the Planet” the EXPO allowed for many interpretations on behalf of its participants that would often choose to market their products rather than holistic solutions for world hunger, also inciting critical media commentary as e.g. the New York Times wrote:

“In all, Expo has around 150 dining spots, including McDonald’s [...] and a Coca-Cola pavilion, where visitors wait in line for a free Coke. A question came to mind: Is Expo part of the problem or part of the solution?” (Donadio 2015).

Arguably the most easy PR was to be received on behalf of the 24 NGOs and Civil Society partners at EXPO, who categorized as *unofficial participants* wouldn’t however find themselves as advertised as the *corporate participants* and partners, also because they were participating at their own expense (cf. Gatti et al. 2018: 488). One of which was Fairtrade International, whose unique selling point being the empowerment of underprivileged farmers in developing countries, served as somewhat the counter-narrative to what New Holland had been proposing, though lacking a self-built pavilion to help spreading its message.

Having said that, the representative that I talked to would surprisingly come to the defense of some food focused MNCs, stating that though their will for cooperating in terms of a fair supply-chain had been evident and occasionally worked out, the Fairtrade idea works contrary to the largescale production some cooperations apply and thus hadn’t as of now been able to really come to fruition. As she told me that “We in the office, sometimes, smile, regarding the theme of the Expo, because we say: ‘But how? This is what Fairtrade has always done, that’s the mission, fundamentally, to have a sustainable supply chain’”¹⁰² (Alessandra, personal interview, August 30, 2015).

Certainly Fairtrade, as well as the other *unofficial participants*, had something going for them in contrast to the MNCs and Nations, being a credible mission that was going beyond the sole purpose of the event. What they would often lack however were the means to tell it at EXPO, due to financial decision making. Fairtrade for one would be solely do a program of events (cf. Gatti et al. 2018: 499). On the other hand, the Nestlé exhibit within the Suisse pavilion had already attracted more than 200.000 visitors (Kron 2015), New Holland even 600.000 (Prossen 2015) at the time of our

¹⁰² “Noi in ufficio, ogni tanto, sorridiamo, rispetto al tema dell’Expo, perché diciamo: ‘Ma come? E’ quello che Fairtrade ha sempre fatto, ed è la mission, fondamentalmente, avere una filiera sostenibile” (Alessandra, personal interview, August 30, 2015).

respective interviews. Some unique exceptions of pavilions built by Civil Society participants were Caritas, being present opposite and due to the Vatican's participation, and the Save the Children foundation, which put an emphasis on child starvation. However, this would eventually draw criticism from even the pope himself, who wasn't at all pleased with the approximate investment of 3 million Euro in the event, arguing that the money could've been spent more wisely (Di Francesco 2015).

In his assessments on EXPO 2010, Chen states that "Event sponsorship is believed to generate effects on image building" (Chen 2012: 732). That same logic was applied to Milan 2015, but arguably more difficult in its application for NGOs, MNCs or Nations alike, due to the theme and potential mishaps in its subsequent interpretation on behalf of the participants and of course a well-organized and outspoken opposition (Danna 2017; Offtopic 2015a/b/c; Abo 2015; Maggioni 2013), who would argue:

*"COOP doesn't solve the problem of climate-change, the UN don't solve the problem of wars, the Expo doesn't solve the problem of feeding [the planet]. This thing is trivial. It doesn't work like this. It would be stupid to think that the multinationals and the countries see themselves making a tourism-fair and solving the problems of the world. Instead, given that Mc Donalds is not working, shows that Expo is a fair of capital"*¹⁰³ (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

What my associate would refer to herewith is a particular instance that occurred during the event, of Milanese McDonalds employees striking for new contracts, while at the EXPO it was effectively forbidden to strike, as a direct consequence of a trade union agreement in 2014 (Danna 2017: 909; Clash City Workers 2015). In fact, the noise from outside was seldom to be heard at the EXPO, probably also since it was held several kilometers away from the city proper and intensely guarded. In total 13,391 police men and women as well as 13,457 military patrol services were deployed at the site throughout the six months, with the central objective to make the event a "perfectly functional" and "sterile" place (Gatti et al. 583/589). Hence, the exposition indeed might have been called an independent island, maybe even a fortress in peripheral Milan, or,

¹⁰³ "Non risolvono il problema del clima le Coop, non risolvono il problema delle guerre l'Onu, non risolve il problema dell'alimentazione Expo. Questa cosa è banale. Non funziona così. Sarebbe stupido pensare che le multinazionali e i paesi si vedono per fare una fiera del turismo e questo risolve i problemi del mondo. E invece visto che c'è Mc Donalds non funziona, cioè Expo è una fiera del capitale" (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

as one interviewee put it: “a bubble, completely parallel to the real world” (Tafeche, N., personal interview, July 15, 2015).

6.3 Stories from the in- and outside

2015 was inarguably a year that would change Europe and its people for the years to come, however, within the tabloid headlines that were written and read during that time, the World’s Fair was merely a footnote.

It was that year, millions of refugees predominantly from the Middle East made their way to Europe, as German chancellor Angela Merkel had famously proclaimed “Wir schaffen das” (engl.: “We can do it”) (Merkel 2015; as cited by Delcker 2016) sparking a transnational movement, later often referred to as “Willkommenskultur”¹⁰⁴ (engl.: “welcoming culture”), but also dividing the political and social landscape of the continent in the process. It was also that year, a newly elected Greek government made waves across Europe, opposing the bailout program and formerly negotiated terms of the European Troika that according to SYRIZA, the winning party, had turmoiled the country into billions of debt, with austerity measures resulting in disproportionate cuts in social services and welfare (cf. BBC 2015). Amidst, the back and forth of renegotiations and a referendum that followed, the dichotomous positions of the German and Greek Finance Ministers, Wolfgang Schäuble and Yanis Varoufakis, who both would gain dubious publicity at that time, became particularly evident to international audiences (cf. Varoufakis 2015), showcasing a then unprecedented, since uncordial, relationship of two European member-states (cf. European Council 2015; European Commission 2015).

In the meantime the EXPO would showcase a crises-free international utopia. Asked about the current problems the Europe was facing as well as how and if the EXPO saw its daily conduct influenced by them, the director of the German pavilion would simply say:

"I don't think we should – or are able to – convert or change an event like the World's Fair, especially since we only have two months to go. One might certainly ponder how, in the future, these current political developments, if known prior, can be incorporated in a world exhibition. But I think you always

¹⁰⁴ In Austria „Willkommenskultur“ even managed to become word of the year (cf. DerStandard 2015).

have to keep in mind that the pace of these developments is so fast that it is not possible to react to them with such a mega event [...] We certainly don't have solutions for the currently rapidly increasing number of refugees. These are matters that you can take note of here at a World's Fair, but there are no solutions here, not political ones" ¹⁰⁵ (Schmitz, D., personal interview, September 7, 2015).

When I tried to gather a comment from the Greek pavilion, located within the Mediterranean Cluster, on matters of the bailout program, the employees wouldn't even want to comment at all on the issue. The EU communications manager on the other hand would:

"you've got to adapt the way you communicate to the reality of the events. So in that event you have families that are coming, spending a day, visiting as many pavilions as they can, receiving a lot of information. [...] Especially in a period, as you know, where Europe is suffering from a lot of problems and that young kids in particular take Europe for granted, when in fact there is nothing granted. Europe is a new process in a way and it's still a work in process" (Denigot, T., personal interview, September 17, 2015).

The story-tale the European pavilion applied at EXPO arguably helped my interview-partner to underline his line of arguing. "Alex and Sylvia" two different people with varying backgrounds, a brown haired girl interested in science and a blonde farm-boy, initially don't liking each other, would eventually fall in love and open up a bakery. Indeed the story possessed all the necessary ingredients, to make a case for the EU being present at EXPO without the moral baggage other participants had to carry, due to their commercial makeup. As the only thing the EU presence at Milan arguably tried to sell, were ideas of solidarity and peace. Having said that, it again demonstrated the reluctance to speak about the struggles of the outside world within the confines of the mega event. Hence, in the wake of the European refugee crisis my associate form

¹⁰⁵ „Ich glaube, man darf jetzt aber nicht ein Ereignis, wie die Weltausstellung – und man kann es auch nicht – umswitchen oder anders gestalten, zumal es jetzt noch zwei Monate Restlaufzeit sind. Man kann sicher überlegen, wie können zukünftig diese aktuellen politischen Entwicklungen, wenn sie rechtzeitig bekannt sind, in eine Weltausstellung ansatzweise mitaufgenommen werden. Ich glaube man muss aber auch immer im Hinterkopf haben, dass das Tempo dieser Entwicklungen so schnell ist, dass es nicht möglich ist, mit einem solchen Großevent darauf zu reagieren [...] Wir haben hier sicher keine Lösungsvorschläge für die rasant gestiegenen Flüchtlingszahlen, die jetzt Tagesordnung sind, das sind Dinge, die man hier auf einer Weltausstellung zur Kenntnis nehmen kann, aber es gibt keine Lösungen dafür hier, keine politischen“ (Schmitz, D., personal interview, September 7, 2015).

Offtopic would make a point that “the problem is that the whole idea of the Expo is an idea, [...] that supports a system in which goods must travel before people. [...] But there are precise reasons why goods travel and people cannot. Goods have rights that humans do not have”¹⁰⁶ (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

This *modus operandi* comes for a reason, as “a condition for any marketplace or fairground is peace, and traditional enemies must lay aside the inclination to fight if they wish to trade. Yet the process of trading itself engenders social tensions and disputes that must be contained” (Benedict 1983: 3). Indeed, without the exception of two, my associate of the Palestine Pavilion (cf. Tafecche 2015; Chapter 6.2.1.) and the Commissioner General of Iran, who’d hinted at the need to “terminating the domination of big powers” as well as “tyrannical sanctions” (Esfahbodi, H., email interview, September 15, 2015) having been imposed on the country, the positivity certainly prevailed amongst my interview-partners at EXPO. As they would choose to not comment on the current state of the world at all, if not related to the themes of the event. With regards to the EU pavilion, the message and the means to tell it, further showcased a fairy tale atmosphere and culture usually only associated with Disneyland (cf. Honisch 2017a: 16; Baudrillard 1994: 12ff). The reasoning behind the pavilion was evident though, as it focused predominantly on edutaining younger generations.

“They've got to get out of the pavilion feeling that the EU is about caring, you care about each other, the countries care about each other, we care about each other and if we manage to convey that very simple message - to my view - that would be the base to build Europe. You know Europe is not a rigid, cold process, it's not just about rules, it's very much about - the story is about love - but it's about meeting people. People like to meet, you know. This is Europe, this is what Europe is about” (Denigot, T., personal interview, September 17, 2015).

When I went back home for three weeks amidst my ethnography, to recharge my batteries and transcribe my interviews, the EC train would eventually stop at a small railway-station somewhere in between Verona and Trento due to a technical malfunction. As the passengers steadily got out on the platform to get some a fresh air, a diversity of national backgrounds would reveal itself, as strangers started talking to

¹⁰⁶ “Il problema è che tutta l’idea di Expo è un’idea, [...] che affianca un sistema in cui le merci devono viaggiare prima delle persone. [...] Ma ci sono delle ragioni precise per cui le merci viaggiano e le persone non possono. Le merci hanno dei diritti che gli umani non hanno” (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

each other, in Italian, French, German and English. It was a subtle yet memorable reminder of the European idea, being still alive and well.

6.3.1 Communicational means of (De)legitimizing the Mega-Event

If asked, the take of the participants at EXPO was that the exposition had been a success from start to finish. But how to define success? The visitors were appreciating the event, two said (cf. Döller 2015; Bondarenko 2015), others would point at the numbers of visitors to their exhibit as an indicator (cf. Prossen 2015; Kron 2015), as most referred to more idealistic though vague explanations, such as conveying their (cultural) values and ideas (cf. Tafèche 2015; Denigot 2015; Alessandra 2015; Schmitz 2015; Alessandra 2015; Esfahbodi 2015) or simply cuisine (cf. Le Ba 2015) to a broad audience. Asked about, if the EXPO might be considered a success Abo of Offtopic argued, that it depends on the criteria used to assess success, such as “the quality of the proposal, the number of visitors, the economic accounts”¹⁰⁷ (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015), arguably the EXPO had succeeded in many of these departments, having said that, it again depends on how to interpret the numbers.

21 million visitors, a third of which were foreigners, had been to the event during its six monthlong transaction, serving as an indication for the events ultimate success, at least according to its official report (Gatti et al. 2018: 18/87). According to Offtopic the math is not that simple, as: “Expo, in order not to be successful but in balance, needs 24 million visitors [...] for every visitor that is missing, its missing 22/23 euros of admissions. Multiplied by millions of people there is the risk that this exposure will bring millions of euros of debt”¹⁰⁸ (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015). In fact, the contrary would be the case as the EXPO closed its doors with an eventual “net profit of 23 million euros” (Basso & Di Vita 2018: 51). Having said that, reclamation costs of the hosting site would again account for a multiple of the profits (cf. Lana 2019; also see Chapter 6.1.2), not taking into account the money earned by local businesses due to indirect profitability (Wanted in Milan 2016).

¹⁰⁷ “I criteri sono la qualità della proposta, il numero di visitatori, i conti economici” (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

¹⁰⁸ “Expo, per andare non in successo ma in pareggio, ha bisogno di 24 milioni di visitatori [...] per ogni visitatore che manca, mancano 22/23 euro di ingressi. Moltiplicato per milioni di persone c'è il rischio che quest'esposizione porti milioni di euro di debiti” (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

Hence, depending on the messenger as well the message received, EXPO 2015 could and would eventually be labeled both, a huge success or a huge failure. In this discourse, much more opened – as compared to Shanghai 2010 (cf. Chapter 5.2.2) – to the public, the (social) media would play a decisive part in what discourse-strands as well as social actors (Keller 2011: 94f; Knoblauch 1995) would assert themselves and their position, to eventually garner local recognition and support. Following in Assmann's tracks the discourse on the events legitimacy would further become the foundation of its legacy (cf. Assmann 1999: 137f). The organization of the EXPO certainly did their part in promoting the event, first and foremost emphasizing its international appeal, as Danna writes:

“Another cultural element creating local support was the idea that Milan won an international competition to host the event, and gained the prestige associated with BIE approval. This was used as a boost to Italian national identity, and Milanese identity in particular [...] These cultural elements were supposed to legitimate the enormous public expenditure argued to be necessary for Milan to be ‘in good standing’ and visited ‘by the world.’ Newspapers used entirely exaggerated headlines such as ‘Milano this year is the center of the world.’”
(Danna 2017: 912).

For sure, it wasn't a coincidence that the reports on EXPO during its conduct were predominantly affirmatory, but rather the result of strategic planning to put forth sophisticatedly crafted PR-messages. The social media campaign to promote the event, had already started in January 2014 with a team about 20, amongst them visual designers, communications- as well as Digital PR-strategists, and project managers (cf. Social Media Team 2014a:1). Their predefined goals were to engage “different communities active on a local and global scale generating and multiplying hype” by the help of an “integrated strategy of visual storytelling, designed to generate empathy and strengthen its reach, optimizing results in terms of visibility and engagement” (ibid.: 6), while the main platforms chosen to communicate the event were Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, a web-aggregator was used “to enforce the overall narratives and stories” (ibid.). Furthermore the strategy entailed to channel and interweave the contents produces by participants and visitors alike into the whole EXPO feed (ibid.: 8). For that reason the social media team issued a “Social Media Guide for the Countries participating in EXPO 2015” (Social Media Team 2014b) to

synch all communicational efforts, while the corporate partners of EXPO would also spread the word by branding their products with EXPO advertisements (cf. Gatti et.al 2018: 281). The PR strategies would also include B2B roadshows, mascots, pictograms, worklogs, influencers, referred to as “Ambassadors”¹⁰⁹ and a call to action to the visitors to respectively become “Social Media Ambassadors” for EXPO in their own right, to further disseminated its messages across the internet (cf. Social Media Team 2014a: 17ff). Messages that were ultimately well received (cf. Ventura et. al. 2016). Having said that, the promotional efforts in the uprun to the event, wouldn’t just be limited to the online sphere, as along the streets of downtown Milan and on board of busses and trams, the slogan “Milano 2015 la città di Expo”(engl.: “Milan 2015 the city of Expo”) would travel through the physical realms of the city as well, eventually expanding to the whole of Italy, to remind citizens and tourists of the great event that the Lombard capital was preparing to host (Gatti et al. 2018: 259/262).

Milan 2015 was arguably¹¹⁰ the first World EXPO to make use of the entirety of Social Media¹¹¹. Furthermore, the press office of EXPO 2015 would reach out to Italian and foreign journalists, schedule interviews in major newspapers, as well as radio and television, invite them to do tours around the site as well as prepare press releases and send out weekly newsletters, literally approaching the media by 360° (Gatti et.al. 2018: 266). Lastly a Media Center had been established on-site for journalists and researchers like me to follow and document the event.

Given the sophisticated PR, the subsequent statistics at the end of the Mega event indicated 678.000 followers on Twitter, 287.000 on Instagram, 18.000 on Youtube as well as 1.8 million Facebook Likes (ibid: 275), which also explains, why the event would ultimately draw as many visitors as it did. 300 Million people had supposedly been reached on the web throughout the semester (Social Media Team 2015: 3).

It goes without saying that the NOEXPO movement was less well equipped, to reach out to a broad audience, but not necessarily less prepared (cf. Chapter 6.1.2).

¹⁰⁹ Amongst the 90 “Ambassadors” one could find prominent names, such as sport stars Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan captain) and Gianluigi Buffon (Italian national goalkeeper), actors such as Ornella Muti and even philosopher Salvatore Veca (cf. Gatti et al. 2018: 264).

¹¹⁰ EXPO 2012 in Yeosu, Korea, was a specialized EXPO, as classified by the BIE (cf. BIE 2019c).

¹¹¹ Since the Chinese government had domestically blocked all notable western social media such as Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, prior to the 20th anniversary of Tiananmen one year ahead of EXPO 2010 (cf. Reporters without Borders 2009), still effective today, it had inevitably deprived the Shanghai fair to reach out to an international audience via these platforms. Fittingly in this regard, Brownell (2013: 79) would later term the event a “No Story”.

The grassroots movement borne and carried by cultural, political and scientific institutions as well as activists (cf. Macao 2015; Offtopic 2015a/b/c) predominantly operating from and within Milan, would put the social media reach of EXPO to its own use, opposing the event. The main platform the network would use was Twitter via its own channel “@NoExpo2015” and Hashtag “#noexpo”. Like the social media strategists of EXPO, it eventually also built upon local and international support, to make use of its hashtag. Especially nearing the events opening, it would be deployed e.g. to spread illustrations (cf. No Expo 2015a; Constantini 2015; Barozzi 2015), promote upcoming demonstrations or inform about past ones (cf. No Expo 2015b; eatps 2015), share and comment the news (cf. Winter Oak 2015; Hobo 2015) or simply protest (cf. Corti 2015; Adil 2015) and would continue to do so after the event’s conclusion as well (cf. Abo 2018; Gambit 2016; Rouge 2016)¹¹². Thereby the network would often make use of the event’s own hashtags, most prominently “#expo2015”, to join the public Twitter discourse during its transaction. The initial outlook was promising. As the number of total Tweets posted would later indicate its peak in May (cf. Ventura et.al. 2016: 401), especially on opening-day (cf. fig.33).

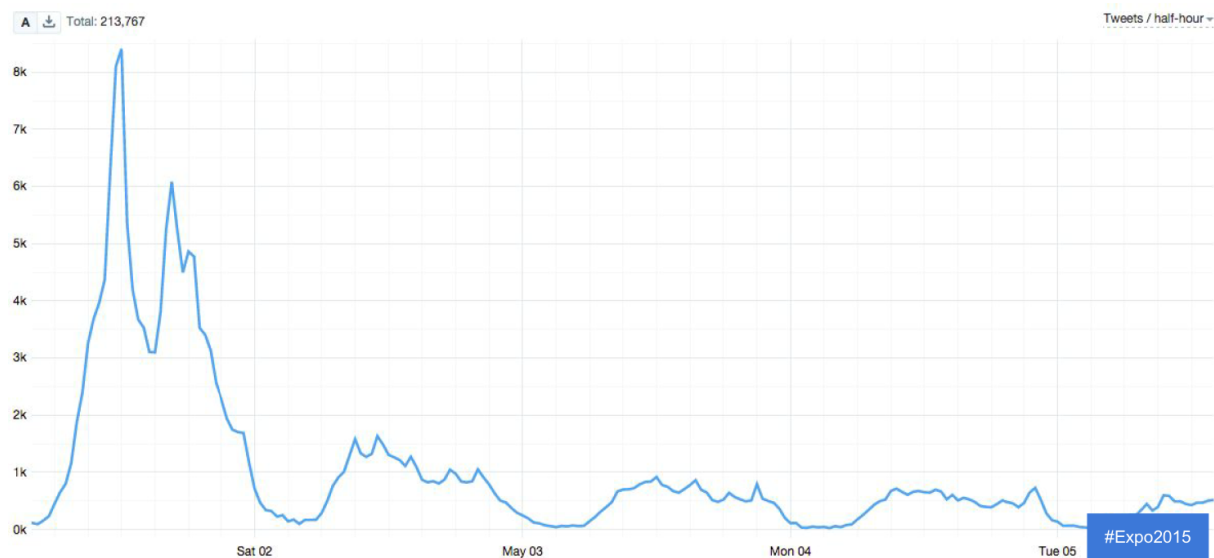


FIGURE 33 Use of #Expo2015 hashtag within the first five days. Adapted from “*Expo 2015 Semester report on social activities May - October 2015*”, by EXPO Social Media Team, 2015, p. 19.

¹¹² These tweets are just exemplary and don’t illustrate the whole discourse-coalition of the NOEXPO movement, as the majority of tweets within the Twitter feed is searchable for 6-9 days after being posted and only retrievable by separately referring to each users Twitter-ID (cf. Pfaffenberger 2016: 115). Unfortunately this project had neither the means nor the time to realize such a proceeding.

Three years after the closing ceremony of the event, the official report would state: “Every day for six months the show of Expo Milano 2015 has been repeated for millions of people without a moment of real criticality”¹¹³ (Gatti et. al. [transl.] 2018: 83). This statement, however, only holds truth if referring to the site, not the event itself, as already the first day foreshadowed a huge challenge to the event and its organization, in terms of public approval. In 2015 the 1st of May, also known as International Worker’s Day organized by the labor-movements around the world and often accompanied by demonstrations of their likes, would synchronize its traditional concerns with those of #Noexpo protestors (as e.g. neoliberal transformation of Milan, unpaid labor and waste of tax-money), who would march together through the streets of Milan to showcase their refusal of the event.

As “tens of thousands gathered and marched” (Danna 2017: 908), the peaceful demonstration would, however, soon turmoil into a violent and destructive outing of a few hundred members of the Black Block, who’d set fires and destroyed windows in the inner city (cf. Chapter 6.1.2). The fast moving press would quickly associate the whole NOEXPO movement with the incident (cf. Guardian 2015), who’d spend the next few days deflecting negative commentary and public dissent. All of a sudden the #noexpo hashtag was trending internationally on Twitter (cf. Trendsmap London 2015), but arguably for the wrong reasons. Ironically the public anger and criticism now turned against the opposition itself, as the following extract of tweets illustrates.

“Violence is never the answer and yet it’s the only thing people are capable of #noexpo” (Marta 2015), “Milan International Exposition of human stupidity is currently taking place. Chiaritemi l’efficacia dell’autodistruzione, #noexpo” (Nunziata 2015), “#NoExpo shame, violence never works!” (Vespa 2015), “Vandals in Milan, today. #NoExpo? No, #NoBrain” (Goria 2015), “Welcome to #Italy, where everything is allowed #noexpo #milano #alfanodimettiti #Shame” (Fracassi 2015).

In the following weeks the network would try to distance itself from the black bloc and the havoc caused within Milan (cf. Biani 2015; Abo 2015), but the initial damage done to its public image, was hardly rehabilitated. Students of the DensityDesign Research Lab of the Polytechnique University of Milan, would later analyze 200.000 tweets

¹¹³ “Ogni giorno per sei mesi lo spettacolo di Expo Milano 2015 si è ripetuto per milioni di persone senza un momento di vera criticità” (Gatti [et al] 2018: 83).

concerned with the 1st May protests and the EXPO opening ceremony, especially focusing on images that were posted during that day featuring the hashtags #noexpo, #expo2015 as well as related ones, such as #expogate, #maiconexpo, #alterexpo (cf. Azzi and Colombo 2016a). In their analysis they found out that most of these retweeted pictures featured flames, with one being shared 607 times but actually originating from a different protest in Turkey happening the same day, also using the respective hashtags (cf. Azzi and Colombo 2016b). Amongst the totality of assessed tweets two other “visual tropes” stuck out, a girl posing aside a burnout car, as well as memes of a protestor, who gave “a very unfortunate interview during the demonstration after the riots” (ibid), both would subsequently become unintended metaphors for the movement (cf. Mediaset 2015). When asked about the 1st of May, Abo of Offtopic would put his emphasis on the work done, predominantly before and after the incident self-confidently stating:

“The protests were born in 2008 so we are not interested in a speech related to May 1st because on May 1st there were 50,000 people present. [...] the media have told the story of 500 people and we have not commented on the actions of others on previous dates [...] This thing has obviously created problems too, but frankly, on May 2nd we were present, with bicycles we occupied a ring road, the Zara Expo, and arrived at the Expo site. [...] we are not commentators. Journalists comment on the news. We make the news”¹¹⁴ (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

However, the Milanese officials would initially condemn the protestors, as the mayor of Milan called on “all citizens to give a signal of civilization and democracy, collaborating with us to repair the damage caused by subjects that can only be defined as idiots, as well as criminals¹¹⁵” (Pisapia [transl.] 2015; as cited in Panorama 2015). The EXPO organization on the other hand, wouldn’t engage at all with the issues raised by the protestors, instead they would express their gratitude to the 20.000 volunteers that

¹¹⁴ “Le proteste nacquero nel 2008 quindi a noi non interessa un discorso legato al primo maggio perché il primo maggio c'erano in piazza 50.000 persone. [...] i media hanno raccontato l'agire di 500 persone e noi non abbiamo commentato l'agire degli altri nelle date precedenti [...] Questa cosa ha creato, evidentemente, anche dei problemi però francamente noi il 2 maggio eravamo in piazza, con le biciclette abbiamo occupato una tangenziale, la Zara Expo, siamo arrivati al sito di Expo. [...] noi non siamo commentatori. I giornalisti commentano la notizia. Noi facciamo le notizie” (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

¹¹⁵ “tutti i cittadini a dare un segnale di civiltà e democrazia, collaborando con noi per riparare i danni provocati da soggetti che possono essere definiti solo idioti, oltre che criminali” (Pisapia 2015; as cited in Panorama 2015).

helped cleanup Milan in the aftermath of May 1st and display their optimism regarding the months ahead (cf. Ansa 2015; Clark 2015). During the semester the social media personal would then predominantly focus on its own themes and inhouse content, following and spreading the word on the daily conduct and not engage as much with the outside world (cf. Chapter 6.3). After the EXPOs closing “the number of tweets regarding the exposition rapidly decreased [...] Afterwards, the daily share of Expo-related tweets remained pretty stable until the end of December, always beneath the 5k tweets/day” (Ventura et al. 2016: 401).

Still, the NOEXPO network would engage in informational campaigns on twitter, organize workshops, and publish articles (cf. Macao 2015; Offtopic 2015) even after the conclusion of the event, having said that, it wouldn’t reach as big of an audience as it did in the aftermath of 1st May 2015.

6.4 Revisiting Milan – an Approach towards the Legacy of EXPO 2015

“Expo Milano 2015 sarà ricordata come un Evento fatto di persone per le persone” (engl.: “Expo Milano 2015 will be remembered as an event made by people for people”) (Gatti et al. 2018: 51).

The above statement from the report on EXPO 2015, though optimistic, certainly doesn’t speak for all people. As e.g. Danna argues “From the point of view of the state, Expo was not so much a potlatch celebrating prosperity as a waste in a time of economic crisis” (Danna 2017: 911). She is one of the voices, who would still engage in the discourse on the EXPOs legitimacy and subsequent legacy for better or for worse.

As the prior chapters leading up to this one have indicated, the legacy of EXPO 2015 isn’t yet in the books. Since its legitimacy has been in question during the planning phase, well into the event-phase and is still being negotiated by its contemporary witnesses, the communicative memory on EXPO 2015, according to Assmanns (1999: 137f/15) notions, has yet to be transitioned into a cultural memory. Having said that, the EXPO organization, has certainly paid its dues in this regard. Aside from the report cited above, indicating a multifold legacy (ital.: “eredità”) in terms of economy, culture, cuisine, urbanity, morality, digitalization and so forth (Gatti et al. 2018: 17/19/80/87/210), it arguably laid the ground work for a positive future impact and thus remembrance already prior to its transaction, with the induction of scientific panels and programs (ibid.: 31). Their ultimate pride and joy today is the Carta di

Milano (engl.: “Milan Charta”), a manifesto comparable to the Shanghai Manual of EXPO 2010 (cf. Chapter 5.2.2), it symbolizes an implicit call for action. It is envisioned to carry on the main themes of the event, most notably raising awareness on issues like “Nutrition, World Hunger and Sustainability”, seeing to be signed by everyone that would support its cause (Milan Charta 2015). So far the outlook is promising. A 2016 twitter analysis suggested that “general sentiment toward the Milan Charter is mostly positive (86%) or at least neutral (14%)” (Ventura et al. 2016: 401).

The ground work for the carta had been laid by the Laboratorio EXPO, a scientific association that was initiated and subsequently institutionalized by the Milan bound Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation in cooperation with the Expo Milano 2015 S.p.A. in 2012 (Veca 2015). Dedicated to the themes of EXPO 2015 it would organize conferences, lectures and workshops as well as produce publications with the subjects “Sustainable Development, Anthropology, Agriculture and Food and Urban Sociology” (Fondazione Feltrinelli 2019) starting two years prior to and continuing during the event. The scientific legacy of EXPO thus is evident, however the topics that arguably interested the public, at least on Twitter, the most “are about environmental issues, sustainability in particular” (Ventura et al. 2016: 404).

Within this discussion issues of the repurposing of the EXPO site eventually arise. This is arguably also the domain of urban activists the likes of Offtopic, who still oppose the neoliberal transformation of Milan today. A transformation that the EXPO supposedly furthered. In fact, the same might be said about the idea to start the collective. Situated in an occupied space called “Piano Terra” in Isola, one of Milan’s fast developing districts, just a few 100 meters from the UniCredit headquarters, the name “Offtopic” shall indicate a project “fuori luogo” (engl.: “out of place”) (Offtopiclab 2019). The meaning is twofold. On the one hand it refers to a physical being out of place, formerly offsite the EXPO, now being a skeptical footnote to an otherwise gentrified district. On the other hand it points to a public discourse on EXPO as well as post-EXPO Milan, and issues that haven’t been addressed therein, while maybe even implicitly criticizing the neglect of the outside world during the event-phase (cf. Chapter 6.3). In 2015 my interview-partner from Offtopic would voice his concerns with regards, to refurbishment of the EXPO site, saying:

“10 months have passed since the date on which the projects were presented on what is done in that area after Expo. 300 days have passed and there is still no clear proposal. This means that, in all likelihood, the works will start late [...]”

*This means another public debt. Debt is not a problem with accounts already in the red. It is precisely a problem of money taken from life, mobility and politics*¹¹⁶ (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

When revisiting Milan in 2018 he would reaffirm his statements, during those three years the site already accounted for 98million Euro in reclamation costs (cf. Lana 2019). Even though the site had occasionally been hosting concerts and other events (cf. Rho Fiera 2019), not least my visit in 2018 would reveal that many pavilions still remained on site, as it was still transitioning to a new Research campus that again would cut in the billions of public money (cf. Piemontese 2019; MIND 2019; also see Chapter 6.1.2). Circumstances that Danna (2017: 914) would call a “delusion of sustainability fostered by the promise of recycling the temporary pavilions”. Another fact that my former interview-partner would criticize, was that former EXPO S.p.A CEO Giuseppe Sala had in the meantime been elected the current mayor of Milan (cf. Monaci 2016), arguably being the single most greatest beneficiary of the event. Asked on the effects the EXPO had on its city and citizens another associate of Offtopic would state:

*“It has accelerated the narration of a touristic and international Milan. Today Milan is attracting companies, capital, builders and tourists like never before. This will increase the cost of living and many Milanese will no longer be able to afford to live in Milan”*¹¹⁷ (Maggioni, R., email interview, June 18, 2019).

Having said that, the main focus of Offtopic had in the meantime shifted away from the event to new urban projects, like the construction of an urban canal project, that was initially dismissed after being met by public opposition (cf. Danna 2017: 910ff), or the privatization and eventual repurposing of 35 hectares green-space at Piazza d’Armi (cf. Offtopiclab 2018). To make matters worse, with regards to the group’s objectives, Milan is yet again bidding for a Mega Event, trying to host the 2026 Winter Olympics,

¹¹⁶ “sono passati 10 mesi dalla data in cui andavano presentati i progetti su cosa si fa in quell’area, finito Expo. 300 giorni sono passati e non c’è ancora una proposta chiara. Questo vuol dire che, con ogni probabilità, i lavori partiranno in ritardo e se entro [...] Questo significa altro debito pubblico. Il debito non è un problema di conti in rosso. E’ proprio un problema di soldi sottratti alla vita, alla mobilità, alle politiche” (Abo, personal interview, September 20, 2015).

¹¹⁷ „Ha accelerato la narrazione di Milano turistica e internazionale. Oggi Milano è attrae società, finanza, costruttori e turisti come mai prima d’ora. Questo aumenterà il costo della vita e molti milanesi non potranno più permettersi di vivere a Milano” (Maggioni, R., email interview, June 18, 2019).

ironically applying the slogan “We dream Together. Sustainability. Future. Legacy.”¹¹⁸ (Milano Cortina 2019).

When I got the chance to revisit Milan through a PhD exchange at Bicocca University, on May 1st, exactly three years after the event was inaugurated, the annual Milano Food Week would be held, in the wake of the third edition of the Milano Food City, a festival to raise awareness on a new food culture, attentive to combating waste, courtesy of EXPO 2015 also scientifically accompanied by the Feltrinelli Foundation (cf. Mentelocale 2018). On the one hand this occurrence indicated a positive, since engaged, approach to the themes the EXPO applied, but also showcased the need to do more in these respects, especially since food-waste was a topic that drew predominantly negative commentary during and after the event, supposedly due to “the big amount of resources invested and food waste created during the exposition period” (Ventura et al. 2016: 403). Also in terms of sustainability, another prominent EXPO theme, the EXPO and the Milan municipal government had arguably belied their own objectives, with disproportionate investments prior and after the event in the event site and other urban projects, which also lacked public consent (Danna 2017). Having said that, the Milan Charta 2015, having supposedly 1,5 million signatures (Gatti et.al. 2018: 17), at least hypothetically, indicates a positive future commitment to the themes of the event. Asked about, what he would add to his book, now that the event is a thing of the past, the author of Expopolis would reply:

*“I would add that Expo was a popular event, we thought of it as a failure in that sense. The communication machine instead worked very well in attracting 21 million visitors. I would also add a reflection on the liberal/privatized city, which in part exists, but it would now be useful to say that these processes were galvanized thanks to Expo. The EXPO CEO, [Beppe] Sala, is today mayor of Milan and is the representative of this international and open Milan, but which is at risk to become ever more exclusive”*¹¹⁹ (Maggioni, R., email interview, June 18, 2019).

¹¹⁸ To add insult to injury, it shall be added here, that by the time of doing the last corrections on this thesis, Milan had eventually won the bid to host the games (cf. Warner 2019).

¹¹⁹ “Aggiungerei che Expo è stato un evento popolare, noi pensavamo in un suo flop anche in quel senso. La macchina comunicativa invece è stato molto brava a portare 21milioni di vistatori. Aggiungerei anche una riflessione sulle città liberiste/privatizzate, che in parte c'è, ma servirebbe ora raccontare che questi processi sono stati pesantemente accelerati grazie ad Expo. Il manager di Expo, Bebbe Sala, è oggi sindaco di Milano ed è il rappresentante di questa Milano internazionale e aperta, ma che rischia di diventare esclusiva ed escludente” (Maggioni, R., email interview, June 18, 2019).

The legacy of this EXPO thus needs to be considered ambiguous. Its story already started in 2007, when local opposition first emerged, continuously developing a movement to delegitimize the Mega Event. What is interesting to add to the equation is that this opposition, in and of itself an eventual product of the event, is still active today in protesting against contemporary urban projects and engaging in political activism of various sorts (cf. Offtopiclab 2018; 2019). An immaterial legacy of the event is certainly present within scientific publications and programs that still exist, while the material legacy will rely on the successes of current repurposing efforts with regards to the former EXPO site and its subsequent use (cf. MIND 2019; Ventura et al. 2016). It's eventually up to the events contemporary witnesses to tell its story, as Danna writes: "The 2015 Milan Expo had its gates open for only six months, and although it is now over, its cultural importance is certainly not restricted to that period, not least because of its 20 million attendees and its media presence" (Danna 2017: 903). Maggioni (2015) would add: "The Milanese - old and new - love changes and always look forward: Expo is a distant memory of something that kept them closer to the city for a summer. But there is also some disappointment in noting that the post-Expo is still at a standstill" ¹²⁰.

As the previous Chapter has shown, the discourse on EXPO 2015's legitimacy and legacy, though open to the public, had been characterized by unequally distributed budgets and thus speaking positions. The Social Media Team arguably had all the necessary means to reach a broad audiences throughout the six months, the event lasted. The opposition on the other hand embodied by a well-organized and sophisticated grassroots movement, would initially manage to gain international attention, but at the cost of being publicly criticized for the events on May 1st. Having said that, both these dialectic discourse positions have managed to raise awareness on their behalf on their central objectives and have established dispositives (cf. Foucault 1988: 48ff) the likes of the Laboratorio Expo or Piano Terra, to reproduce their takes on the event. Hence, the legacy of EXPO 2015 is in part still negotiated and has not yet transitioned from a communicative to a cultural memory (Assmann 1999: 15ff).

¹²⁰ "I milanesi -vecchi e nuovi- amano i cambiamenti e guardano sempre avanti: Expo è un ricordo lontano di qualcosa che per una estate li ha tenuti più vicini alla città. Ma c'è anche una certa delusione nel constatare che il post Expo è ancora fermo" (Maggioni, R., email interview, June 18, 2019).

7. Conclusion

When looking back to the Sevilla EXPO of 1992, the last World's Fair before the turn of the 21st century, most of my interview partners, who had been there, would tell me that it had been the best one they'd ever experienced. Unfortunately, I was only four years of age, when it was held, thus, even if I'd gotten the chance to pay Spain a visit that year, my reminiscence of the event would have probably been diminished in the meantime. Sevilla 1992 marked a milestone in history, not only because mankind had turned a page on a century of struggle and international tension, but also because it showcased a series of former Soviet vassals three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall that had just turned nations in their own rights, making this event at this point in time, one that, though real, must inevitably felt utopian.

Having said that, it wasn't a given that it would bear the title of being the last EXPO of the closing 20th century. In fact, this title was eventually reserved for the World's Fair of 1995, which however would only exist on paper and would never be realized. Austria and Hungary, once a proud monarchy until the first World War, and eventual appendages to respectively the Third Reich and the USSR during the WW2 and Cold War area, had planned to join forces to host EXPO 1995 in Budapest and Vienna. Given their joint history, these neighbor sates had arguably an even better story to go along with the event, than what Sevilla had in 1992, if it wasn't for a public opinion poll in Vienna that eventually would bring the project to a hold (Schimak 1993).

To ask the public about their consent to conduct a mega event is arguably the exception (Danna 2017: 905) and even though the government had adhered to the wish of its people, looking back the question certainly arises, if it might have been better to transact the event instead. Given that the initial position for the mega event seemed promising and could've entailed a positive and global identity for two countries arguably still trying to define their place on an international scale. It also could've symbolized the European cohesion and solidarity that was already on the rise then. Yet it would be Sevilla that eventually received the praise exhibiting a range of new nation states that were about to celebrate their new found freedom and national autonomy.

The next EXPO would then be held in Germany, which much like Austria and Hungary, had just overcome its own political divide and thus reasons to celebrate with the nations of the world. Being in line to inaugurate the new century with ideas of the future and sentiments of an international community to go along with it, it would,

however, fail with regards to its domestic public and media perception, and atop of that turn out to be a financial disaster, due to less than half of expected visitors coming (cf. Sirleschtov and Grimm 2000). The plans it had and the questions it raised were arguably too big to be solved with only one event, while the problems it endured signified a concern for arguably every EXPO. Without a question, the public perception is the lifeline to every mega event, as it is also defining its eventual legacy.

Henceforth, the communicational and mediatory means of EXPOs have become ever more important to the transaction of these mega events, as their initial starting position is often one that sees these ventures criticized by the media and the public alike. Bolstering exorbitant budgets, comprised of private and public funds, they are inevitably forced to live up to the hype eventually to be able to earn the trust of the people, they initially lack. Looking back at the history of World's Fairs showcases their ambivalent nature, as already the first Great Exhibition in London 1851 had its advocates (cf. Prince Albert 1849: 201ff) and critics (Marx 1850: 431). The same goes for Osaka 1970, arguably one of the most impressing and publicly acclaimed EXPO's ever held and – until Shanghai 2010 – also the one that hosted the largest number of visitors, was met by protests. In fact, it was only a single person that managed to climb the "Tower of the Sun" and holding out there, eventually became a media sensation (Lockyer 2007: 577). Sometimes it takes just one act of political activism to gain media attention. On the other hand, it took 30.000 marching demonstrators that opposed EXPO 2015 in Milan on opening day, to make their presence and objectives felt, who might – however – be remembered in the wake of the eventual havoc that occurred within the city's streets, caused by a mere 500 hundred black bloc activists that joined the protests arguably for the wrong reasons.

As the prior Chapters have indicated, the many ways EXPOs are ultimately remembered are often attributable to the communicational means that are applied to speak either in favor or against them, with another important variable being the ways they are able to physically manifest their legacy, both of which have been objects of discussion within this thesis. Therein the notions of Aleida Assmann (1999) have proven to be a necessary tool to comprehend how the communicative memory on a given phenomenon like the EXPO is continuously renegotiated by its contemporary witnesses and stakeholders, before eventually being translated to a cultural memory, meaning normative history. Following in the tracks of Foucault (1988), he further directed us towards the key-elements of discourse, which helped this empirical

enterprise to dissect the stories that were told on behalf of EXPO 2010 and 2015, elicit different speaking position and search for dispositives, to carry-on and reproduce certain discourse strands that shape these ventures in the public eye and thus ultimately define their legacy. Epistemologically binding these authors together then begs the question of how and if the means of participating within these discourses are equally distributed, so that the communicative memory is also able to unfold to the fullest. Arguably everyone, who has an opinion, needs to have a voice and the possibility to be heard. Unfortunately, this ideal doesn't necessarily mirror the fieldwork experience of the given case studies.

Given the political atmosphere in mainland China, the Shanghai EXPO 2010, was certainly an interesting venture to engage with. Having said that, it also turned out to be disillusioning in many regards. Even though, 18.000 households were displaced from the EXPO site during its planning and eventual construction phase (Zhang 2015), their voices proved to be inaccessible. Furthermore public opinion on the transaction of the event as well as its legacy was seldom voiced and likewise difficult to retrieve during interviews. The move to a prolonged literature review was thus inevitable. Therein domestic and foreign takes on the event would unsurprisingly differ, as also often would my interview data and the outcome of my discourse-ethnographical observations. More often than not, my interview requests were turned down or not responded to, especially with regards to museums and public offices, while I would sometimes be sent readymade documents to work with. Instead I was able to gather opinions and accounts on the EXPO's transaction and its legacy predominantly in informal conversations or even in public, in parks and on the streets of Shanghai, where the ethnographer and his recording device seemed less frightening and the anonymity of the interviewee more certain.

Having said that, the imminent threat of saying something wrong, seemed to have made for a society, which tends to rather say nothing and at times even seemed to have lost its general interest in the domestic political domain and everything related to it. You never know, who might be listening or reading, as nowadays' privacy is not least in question, within an age of ever-evolving social media technologies. Having been in Shanghai for a year, to conduct my research on the legacy of World EXPO 2010, put me in a tough spot for these reasons. Thus I tried to address the question, of how to deal with eventual shortcomings in my findings given the lack of opinionated

interview-partners in more detail within the Methodological Sections of this thesis (cf. Chapter 4.2.3). By doing so, I illustrated how the linkage of Foucauldian discourse theory (1988) and multisited fieldwork practice (1995) helped me to work with, instead of around or against the forces at play during the course of my urban ethnography. Besides it has been proven to me on several occasions that to learn and speak a country's language as sufficient as possible is an absolute necessity for any anthropologist, wanting to engage in such a venture. In turn, I hope, that my remarks will eventually help other anthropologists, who intend to, or are currently conducting fieldwork in (urban) China, to account for these or similar problems.

The discourse on EXPO 2015 was arguably the easier one to follow, access and assess. Even prior to the events inauguration, preliminary research had already unveiled a sophisticated public movement to delegitimize the event. Even though the critique it faced, had been articulate and grounded, the communicational possibilities, were unevenly distributed in favor of the EXPO and its advocates, which might have attributed to it hosting slightly more visitors than expected and ultimately being considered a success in a range of ensuing reports. The communicational platform and strategies the EXPO deployed, comprising scientific panels and publications as well as a PR campaign that featured daily informational feeds on behalf of its social media team, as well as participants and partners, while also involving visitors and influencers to promote the event through their channels, certainly paid its due in getting the "EXPO message" across.

The NOEXPO movement on the other hand, would try to make its presence felt, by hosting symposia, organizing demonstrations, publishing books and leaflets, as well as actively partaking in the Twitter discourse on the EXPO. It did so to raise awareness on a series of issues that surrounded the event, e.g. supposed mafia involvement in its construction, the push-through of a range publicly opposed urban projects, an overall financial mismanagement, unpaid labor and the ensuing neoliberal transformation of Milan. Indeed, in the wake of growing public critique and concern about the events conduct, the initial outlook for the EXPO looked grim, as it figured to be an uphill battle for the municipal government as well as the EXPO S.p.A. to gain positive media coverage on its prestigious project. The inauguration of EXPO 2015 – however – would turn the tide in terms of public perception of the event. As the NOEXPO protests would result in burning cars and smoke screens, the mayor of Milan

and EXPO organizers would condemn the incident, but also call upon the locals for their solidarity. In the months that followed until its closure, the first World's Fair to make sufficient use of social media, would effectively manage to communicate its mission and objectives to a large domestic and international public. Given that the Milanese municipality under its new mayor and former EXPO S.p.A CEO Giuseppe Sala would go on to base its next candidature, for the Winter Olympics 2026, on public polls, that then turned out in favor of it, arguably displays both a learning effect on behalf of the government, as well as the domestic appreciation of the EXPO conduct. In the Milan case the critical voices arguably still persist, maybe even more so in the future, since the city has in the meantime won the bid to host the Olympics and thus its next mega event (cf. Warner 2019).

If compared with each other, these two case studies couldn't be more different. Asking about the EXPO as an object of discourse within its local context, the Milan case illustrated two conflicting sides, with the intention of (de)legitimizing the event. However, their ways and means to partake in this discourse, were different. While protestors chose to actively criticize the event, its representatives would choose to not engage at all, neither with the issues raised by protestors nor by criticizing them on their behalf, but would rather promote their inhouse content and daily conduct. Also in ensuing interviews with EXPO personnel, they'd pursue this communicational agenda. As also the participants predictably seemed eager to frame the event and thus their being at the occasion in a positive light, even though participant observation would sometimes unveil inherent misdemeanors, e.g. with regards to the clustering and display of third world participants and multinationals sponsoring these clusters, or the inability of my interviewees to comment on contemporary European crises at a World's Fair held in Milan, when people were demonstrating on the streets (fig. 34). The efforts to get the own narratives across, were sophisticated on both sides, though inarguably imbalanced in terms of budgets and subsequent reach. Thereby the discourse on EXPO wouldn't just be limited to the physical realms of its hosting city, but also and even more effectively spread to the internet, most notably Twitter.



FIGURE 34 People marching alongside Milan's famous Navigli during a "Refugees Welcome" demonstration that year (photo by the author, September 2015)

The Shanghai case on the other hand, would prove to be much different not least due to its EXPO having taken place six years prior. Herein my discourse ethnography would subsequently be focused on the legacy of EXPO 2010 and the question of how it had manifested itself in terms of its post-event site use, as well as its cultural heritage. As the domestic media and scientific discourse suggested a positive legacy, so did my interviews. Illustrating a more openminded and international Shanghai, due to the event's transaction. Also the material legacy was evident and would favorably be mentioned on many occasions, as prior planning to repurpose the area alongside the Huangpu river had allegedly played into the choice and reasoning behind hosting an EXPO in Shanghai, to begin with. Compared to the supposed mismanagement of the Milanese site (cf. Chapter 6.1.2), the material legacy of EXPO 2010 thus might ultimately work in favor of retrospectively legitimating its conduct. Having said that some 18.000 voices, of people displaced from the area, are missing from this equation, in return showcasing the recurring problem of free speech in the PRC (cf. Zhang 2015). The subsequent tracing of discourse strands on this EXPO, now implemented in the narrative structures of state-run museums and publications, would also indicate that their stories are neither heard nor shall be remembered. Instead, institutions like the China Art Museum, the former Chinese national pavilion of the World's Fair, the Shanghai Urban Exhibition Hall or the newly built World EXPO Museum, now relive

the fair with heavy imagery and narratives of an imperial and utilitarian nature, that seek to draw it not only as a success-story, but also a manmade endeavor, a present on behalf of the government to its people, who were joining forces as organizers, workers, volunteers and visitors to make the event the greatest and most glorious mankind had ever seen. It's a telltale of superlatives without any flaws, and with that ultimately caricaturing itself.

As the empirical parts of this thesis have shown, it is arguably easier to assess an event, as long as you can actively partake in it and follow its daily conduct by the means of participant observations. To assess the legacy of an ephemeral event like a World's Fair, after its conclusion, appeared to be the more difficult task, as also the Shanghai case in particular, surfaced problems of access to information and interview partners, or the reluctance on behalf of the latter to contribute to research with arguably political implications. The application of Assmanns (1999: 137f) models of "Funktionen-" and "Speichergedächtnis" seem fit to help comparing and contrasting these two case studies and the comprised data, to subsequently answer the questions this thesis raised (cf. Chapter 1.2 and 4.2).

Therein the results of my discourse ethnography within Shanghai rather pointed towards the establishment of a "Funktionsgedächtnis", meaning a censored yet partially augmented history. The information domestically available on EXPO 2015, has a prescribed structure of recounting the event not only positively, but as "the greatest of all time" (cf. Chapter 5.4.2), inarguably deprived of all accounts that would suggest otherwise, thus legitimating not only the event's conduct but also the leadership that made it happen. Having said that, the "Speichergedächtnis", the generally available yet not curated pool of historical information, exceeds the domestic boundaries, at least hypothetically offering the chance to renegotiate the legacy of this World's Fair, especially considering that every World's Fair is also a matter of global history.

Furthermore the Foucauldian (1988; 1978; also see Keller 2011: 95) premise of dispositives that guided both ethnographies, unveiled the existence and establishment of discourse-reproducing publications and institutions, often even literally suggesting a certain "legacy" to the respective EXPO (cf. Gatti [et al.] 2018). While the post-event site use to repurpose pavilions and parks, as well as to further the urban infrastructure

might ultimately suggest a positive material legacy of the Shanghai EXPO, quite the contrary might be expected from the one held in Milan.

Having said that, the current construction of a scientific campus on the site of EXPO 2015 still entails the chance to gain ground in these regards. Subsequent publications and the establishment of an EXPO Laboratorio (cf. Veca 2015) – however – already indicate a positive intellectual legacy to the event, as they showcase a sophisticated contention with the themes and missions of EXPO 2015 (cf. Ventura et. al. 2016). On the other hand, and in contrast to the Shanghai case, the critical discourse strands on the Milanese event also partially manifested, as the collective that formed in opposition to the World's Fair has demonstrated its will to stay and subsequently further engage in the critique of other urban and public projects.

As the introductory Chapters have indicated, the historiography of World's Fairs is all but superficial, even though its monumental characteristics tend to distract us from their inherent narratives, they are and always have been interesting ventures to engage with scientifically and journalistically, as the accounts of their contemporary witnesses have shown. Hence, as some authors have suggested, they might even be considered a "mass medium" in their own right (Roche 1998). Furthermore they are also visual and cultural epitomes of a global history of mankind and its continuous transition, which not least the two case studies have shown.

In case of EXPO 2010, the numbers of visitors would work in favor of it being remembered as a great spectacle – however – as most of them had been domestic visitors and a general uninterest to engage with the event on behalf of the foreign media prevailed for varying reasons (cf. Brownell 2013), would mean that its political messages were confined to the locale. In case of EXPO 2015, the event made use of the latest social media advancements to reach out and communicate its mission to a large international public, while its transaction and the effects it had on the locale, were initially criticized and opposed. This thesis aimed to assess and contribute to these discourses, with ethnographical means, while trying to answer the question of, how the 'legacy' of a World's Fair is constituted within the local context of its hosting city. Thereby, it illustrated a range of speakers, stories and objectives that factor into this debate, but would also encounter subsequent shortcomings in these regards. Thus, it leaves a range of possible gaps for future researchers to address, while arguably representing just a mere footnote to the already existing and rich scientific literature on the history of World's Fairs.

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9. List of Interviews

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Xu, K. (2017, April 20th). Personal interview.

Some of these interviews, have been made publicly available on <http://pascalhonisch.com>

10. List of Figures

Fig. 1 Saudi pavilion of EXPO 2010	78
Fig. 2 Former EXPO- meanwhile construction-site	78
Fig. 3 Discourse field for ethnographical assessment	80
Fig. 4 Discourse field of EXPO 2015 in Milan	80
Fig. 5 EXPO 2010 Map	101
Fig. 6 Disneyland Shanghai Map	101
Fig. 7 EXPO 2010 China Pavilion	107
Fig. 8 National exhibit sizes at the Shanghai World Exposition	109
Fig. 9 Inside the Metro Station “China Art Museum”	115
Fig. 10 Street signs on the grounds of the former EXPO site	115
Fig. 11 “Hakuna Matata”, former EXPO pavilion	116
Fig. 12 A repurposed EXPO pavilion now sports park	116
Fig. 13 The Huangpu Riverfronts Trilogy	119
Fig. 14 The ‘Big4’ flagships	119
Fig. 15 “Better City, Bitter Life” slogan	125
Fig. 16 HaiBao – EXPO Mascot	125
Fig. 17 Bronze Insignia in memory of the BIE Inquiry Mission	125
Fig. 18 3D Replica of EXPO site	125
Fig. 19 Outside of the World EXPO Museum	131
Fig. 20 Depiction of EXPO workers	131
Fig. 21 China Art Museum at Night	134
Fig. 22 Houtan EXPO Park	134
Fig. 23 “NO EXPO” graffiti	144
Fig. 24 EXPOPOLI(S) Boardgame	144
Fig. 25 Photograph of Soviet Pavilion at Montreal EXPO ’76	151
Fig. 26 Russian Pavilion, EXPO 2015	151
Fig. 27 Advertisement urging visitors to “Eat Belgian Fries”	151
Fig. 28 “ <i>Discover our Revolution</i> ” - Slogan	151
Fig. 29 Mauritanian Pavilion, EXPO 2015	157
Fig. 30 Cereals and Tubers Cluster, EXPO 2015	167
Fig. 31 The “Baci Perugina Pavilion”, EXPO 2015	163
Fig. 32 The Poster at the entrance of EXPO 2015	163
Fig. 33 Use of #Expo2015 hashtag within the first five days	173
Fig. 34 “Refugees Welcome” demonstration in Milan	186

11. List of Abbreviations

BIE	Bureau International des Expositions
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPC	Communist Party of China
EC	“Eurocity” Train
EU	European Union
EXPO	Abbreviation for Exposition (World’s Fair)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IGO	International Governmental Organization
LB & SCR	London, Brighton and South Coast Railway
MIND	Milano Innovation District
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOEXPO	Name of the EXPO opposing Milanese movement
PR	Public Relations
PRC	People’s Republic of China
SKADE	Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse Ethnography
SUPEH	Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall
SYRIZA	Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás (Greek Political Party)
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WEM	World EXPO Museum

13. Abstract

13.1 English

Communicating the World – Ethnographic and Discursive Takes on World EXPO

Anthropology is and always has been a discipline in constant transition. With current research foci trending towards questions of Globalization and the Transnational (Hannerz 2002; Appadurai 1996) this notion still holds truth today, maybe more than ever, but also confronts Anthropology and its' main methodological asset, the Ethnography, with the problem of redefining their character and core values, both in epistemological as well as methodological terms. Anthropology's emphasis on the local, with its confined cultural knowledge (Geertz 1987), seems not more, but a foregone conclusion of the past. Anthropologists nowadays tend to think in broader terms of the spatial and historical dynamics of their fields, to account for the flux of people, things and ideas, their research is focused on (Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Marcus 1995).

This monography figures to contribute to these current debates, by asking about the local legacy of World's Fairs (or EXPOs), hence, the means of legitimating and subsequently narrating them (Assmann 1999). Under the methodological and theoretical premise of Multi-Sited Ethnography (Marcus 1995) joined by Foucauldian Discourse-Theory (Foucault 1988), two case-studies have been conducted: one on the grounds of World EXPO 2015, in Milan, one within the former EXPO 2010 host-city Shanghai, in 2016. Focusing on these sites, distinctively different in nature, but linked through common research practice of discourse-theoretical mappings of the field and the subsequent ethnographical engagement therein, this project touches on the traditional Foucauldian question of power and knowledge-regimes within discourse (1974), but also contemporary questions of Anthropology. Doing so, it eventually elaborates on a practice that might best be labeled "Discourse-Ethnography" (Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017). Ultimately this disquisition asks the question of how an EXPO becomes an object of history and how the local discourse contributes to this transaction.

13.2 German

Communicating the World – Ethnographic and Discursive Takes on World EXPO

Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie war und ist eine Disziplin, die sich laufend verändert und weiterentwickelt. Gerade in Anbetracht ihrer zeitgenössischen Forschungsschwerpunkte, die sich immer häufiger auch Fragen der Globalisierung und des Transnationalen annehmen (Hannerz 2002; Appadurai 1996), beweist sich dieser Umstand. Er konfrontiert die Disziplin und ihr wichtigstes methodologisches Instrument, die Ethnografie, aber auch mit dem Problem, die eigenen Charakteristika und Grundideen neu zu definieren, sowohl in methodologischer wie epistemologischer Hinsicht. Der anthropologische Fokus auf das Lokale, unter der Annahme eines beschreib- wie lokalisierbaren kulturellen Wissens (Geertz 1987), scheint längst überholt. Heutzutage tendieren AnthropologInnen bereits dazu in breiteren Kategorien zu denken und dabei nicht zuletzt die räumlichen und zeitlichen Dynamiken ihrer Felder in Betracht zu ziehen, um der Fluktuation von Menschen, Dingen und Ideen im Zuge ihrer Forschung Rechnung zu tragen (Gupta und Ferguson 1997; Marcus 1995).

Diese Monografie möchte zu diesen aktuellen Debatten einen Beitrag leisten, indem sie nach dem lokalen Vermächtnis von Weltausstellungen (oder EXPOs) fragt, und im Zuge dessen, nach den Mitteln und Wegen sie zu legitimieren und weiterzuerzählen. Den methodologischen Ansätzen der Multi-Sited Ethnography (Marcus 1995), sowie der Foucaultschen Diskurs-Theorie (Foucault 1988) folgend, wurden zwei Feldstudien durchgeführt: eine im Zuge der EXPO 2015 in Mailand, die andere 2016 in Shanghai, am ehemaligen Veranstaltungsort der EXPO 2010. Die vorliegende Arbeit möchte versuchen diese zwei grundsätzlich verschiedenen Fallstudien mittels eines gemeinsamen Forschungsprogramms zu verbinden, das in beiden Fällen versucht eine Diskurs-Kartografie des Feldes zu entwerfen, um sich diesem im Anschluss mit ethnografischen Erhebungen zu nähern. Durch dieses Vorgehen entstanden neben Anknüpfungspunkten zu klassischen Foucaultschen Fragen nach Macht und Wissensregimen in Diskursen (1974), auch zwangsläufig solche zur zeitgenössischen anthropologischen Überlegungen. Dieser Ansatz ist entsprechend am ehesten als „Diskurs Ethnografie“ (Elliker, Wundrak, Maeder 2017) zu bezeichnen. Schlussendlich versucht diese Arbeit der Frage nachzugehen, wie eine Weltausstellung, nach ihrer Austragung zu Geschichte wird und inwiefern der lokale Diskurs dazu beiträgt.