VORSPRUNG DURCH SALES TECHNIQUE:
STEREOTYPES, STRATEGIES AND IDENTITIES
IN A "GLOBAL" CITY

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While many studies have been done which explore the symbolic construction of identity, and a growing number on the specific case of transnational actors, few have considered the role of stereotypes in such constructions. Those studies which have been done seem to consider stereotypes either as a means by which transnational actors construct a "social map," or by which minorities – including, presumably, transnational ones--resist the dominant group. A study of the use of stereotypes in the City of London during fieldwork at the UK branch of a German bank suggests, not only that both theories are valid, but that both roles are aspects of the same process: the negotiation of multiple identities in a transnational environment.

I. THE GOOD OTHER: THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF STEREOTYPING

Discussions of stereotyping are rare in anthropology. Rapport notes that most anthropologists tend to consider stereotypes only as the result of ignorance and lack of curiosity about other groups, and/or as malicious or damaging caricatures which impede social relations (1995:270). However, if one considers stereotypes as a specific case of symbolisation, one might suggest that they play a greater role in social identity. Cohen (1985) discusses how groups symbolically develop a collective identity by constructing semi-permeable boundaries through internal and external symbolic discourses. Cohen, like Sperber (1979), sees symbols as characterized by their multivalency – that is, their ability to simultaneously evoke multiple, even contradictory, associations, instead of denoting a single meaning as earlier anthropologists thought (cf. Hannerz 1992, 74-5); symbols thus have both an individual and collective dimension, and their "meaning" can be creatively manipulated and altered to allow for changes in the group over time. While Cohen does not directly refer to stereotypes per se, he does discuss the use of symbols of a particular Other – presumably including stereotypes thereof--in the construction of the image of the Self (1982). Other studies have suggested that this sort of skill is especially important for transnationals, that is, actors with "multiple ties and/or interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation states," and, presumably, across other boundaries as well (Vertovec 1999: 447; Moore 1999; Castells 1996, 1997). Following Cohen's theory, then, stereotypes should play at least some role in the identity construction of transnational actors.

Rapport's recent article on stereotypes builds on this notion of stereotypes as identity markers for transnationals. Taking as an example his own experiences of stereotyping North Americans in order to define himself as a Welshman living in Canada and the USA (Rapport 1995: 279), Rapport argues that individuals and groups which operate transnationally exist in an environment without fixed and obvious boundaries of the Cohenesque sort. Consequently, they use such stereotypes as a sort of "shorthand" (1995:271) by which to locate themselves in relation to others, and to impose some sort of order on the fragmented world which they navigate, constructing a "social map" (S. Ardener 1993) out of ethnic stereotypes. However, Rapport's analysis considers the stereotyping process mainly from the perspective of one individual, and his analysis largely ignores the question of power relations in the mapping process. Furthermore, Rapport does not extensively consider the notion that stereotypes, like other such symbols, are evolved, changed, and played with in daily practice (Strecker 1988). Rapport's analysis of stereotypes, therefore, may not in fact deal with the most important areas thereof in transnationality.

An alternative perspective may be found in two earlier studies of stereotypes among non-transnational groups, by Alan Dundes and Keith Basso respectively, which view stereotypes as a means of negotiating power relations in a situation of inequality. Dundes' (1983) study of folklore and identity explores the use of ethnic jokes in the construction of Afro- and Jewish-American identity, through which both groups take the stereotypes imposed upon them by the dominant WASP Americans and either reinterpret these in a positive light, as in the half-humourous slogans of the Black Is Beautiful movement (253), or turn them around and use them to covertly mock the WASPS as too stupid to perceive the reality behind the stereotype, as in the apparently self-deprecatory genre of "Jewish jokes" (253-7). In a similar vein, Basso's classic study Portraits of "the Whiteman" (1979) rejects the notion of stereotypes as unchanging templates (ch. 5) and describes

how his Western Apache informants creatively play with stereotypes of Euro-Americans. The dramatic "portraits" created by the Apache not only reinforce the notion of what it is to be "Apache" through imaging the Other (64) and provide a subtle revenge against the oppressive Whiteman, but also allow for creative reinterpretation of power relations, through holding up Whiteman values to ridicule and celebrating those Apache traits which dismay the Whiteman (eg. pp. 85-6). However, both ethnographies consider stereotypes mainly in the context of the internal construction of group similarity, largely ignoring their role in wider interactions; furthermore, their boundary-focused approach makes it questionable how applicable their analyses are to a transnational setting (Hannerz 1992, 1996; cf. also Harvey 1989). Finally, neither Basso nor Dundes are dealing exclusively with stereotypes in the way that Rapport does, being more interested in humour and performance. It is thus uncertain how well the stereotypes-as-resistance theory applies to transnational actors.

In order to explore whether stereotypes are more of a navigational aid or a form of resistance for transnational actors, I will briefly discuss here some of my experiences investigating the construction of identity in a small German merchant bank in the City of London, and the forms taken by stereotyping both in the bank and its wider environment. In the interests of brevity, I will confine my examination to ethnic stereotypes, although I encountered a host of others involving gender, education, occupation and division within the bank. Given that the English feel highly ambivalent about the German presence, that, as a minority group with an interest in maintaining their hosts' goodwill (Mann 1993), their resistance options are limited, and that banks are transnational actors par excellence, Germans in the City would seem to face a complex situation in which stereotyping plays a role. It remains to be seen, however, whether this role is more a means of constructing, and locating themselves upon, a social map, or of negotiating power relations with their English hosts.

II. TALES OF THE CITY: GLOBALIZATION AND LOCATION IN LONDON

The German bank which I studied for five months in 1998 and 1999, which I will here call "DKF London," is situated in the heart of London's financial district, which is colloquially known as "The City." London, and the City in particular, has long been recognised as a "Global City," and, as such, as a social centre for transnational corporate networks (Beaverstock and Smith 1996: 79; Sassen 1991). The City is full of signs of multiple identities: the visible diversity of its workers and institutions aside, advertisements for non-English businesses are everywhere – among many examples, my favourite is a taxi advert for a Middle-Eastern airline which was almost entirely in Arabic – and informants of all ethnic groups often ate Italian, Japanese or Thai food; one of the most popular sandwich shops was a Pret-à-Manger outlet, part of a chain which prominently advertises its globalist ethos (cf. Sklair 1998). One German remarked to me, in English, that, in London, being a "foreigner" was "nothing special." In the City, then, diverse identities are expressed in an explicitly "global" space.

However, rather than the multicultural utopia envisioned by Kenichi Ohmae (1990), in which diverse groups unite into a single, business-focused culture, the City is, in practice, constructed through images of specific national identities and these seem, furthermore to be decidedly slanted towards the stereotypical. City "folklore" (cf. Dundes 1983), including humour, anecdotes and mythology as well as managerial and business literature, leans heavily on ethnic stereotypes. Such managerial texts as Randlesome (1993), for instance, describe sets of "traits" that German businesses allegedly exhibit, which, as Millar (1979) notes, are more a generalized stereotype than an in-depth portrait; bank staff continually traded amusing, faintly caricatured anecdotes about encounters with people from other ethnic groups; the dealing room of DKF had an entire wall of cartoons lampooning "German" characteristics (see also Hickson and Pugh 1995, illustration p. 179). As Rapport's theory suggests, then, stereotypes seem to be one of the main forms of expressing identity in the City.

As Rapport suggested, furthermore, these stereotypes are frequently used to construct a "social map," as S. Ardener put it (1993), the use of which enables City people to place some sort of order on their world. To take a single example, one popular literary genre in the City is the "guide to national business characteristics," which apparently originated in Hofstede's (1980) work on the impact of national cultures on

corporate culture, and which is now made up mainly of books which classify the business world according to the "character traits" of various nationalities. Many such guides are organized by language or geography--a typical example, Hickson and Pugh's Management Worldwide, groups as units England and its colonies, all Northern European countries, all "Latin" countries, et cetera (1995: chs. 3,5,4), and correlates these with stereotypical national/ethnic traits: "Anglo-Saxons" are liberal, value individualism, and demand quick results; "Northern Europeans" value slow growth and bureaucracy and are perfectionists (49, 93). DKF employees were often thus "located" by means of character traits--often with little regard for an individual's actual ethnicity, as when a German employee was pointed out to me as exhibiting "typically English" behaviour. The collection of caricatures of Germans on the wall of a mixed-ethnicity dealing room also seems likely to have been more a statement of the bank's connection with Germany than an expression of prejudice or ignorance. City folklore thus confirms Rapport's hypothesis that transnationals use stereotypes to construct social maps, and from these, develop rules of precedence and guides for proper behaviour.

However, what Rapport's theory does not cover is that these stereotypes are not simply more or less positively valued flags on a map, but their placement, and nature, follows a particular structure of power and control. Within the City, the dominant group was very much the "native" one, and, unsurprisingly, English stereotypes seem to be the ones that dominate the mix. One Australian informant related how he had been told by an Englishman that he would be unable to find work in the City due to the English impressions of "colonials" as uncultured; significantly, he did find work, but for a German bank. Another informant remarked that, although ethnic food is enjoyed in the City, it is as an exotic "other"; when I pointed out that curry is often seen as an English dish, I was asked why, in that case, English people talk about "going for an Indian." Another said that, while she felt at home in the City, this might not be the case for members of other ethnic groups, noting that she didn't "look foreign" to an English person. These images are used to "locate" individuals--Australians are "cultured" enough for German, but not English, banks; curry is a "foreign" food--but those which ultimately do the locating are the English, not the Australians or Indians. While stereotypes may be points on a social map, then, their location is controlled by a particular power structure.

Furthermore, this power structure could potentially prove detrimental to German businesses in particular (Ashton 1996). Germans are regularly stereotyped in even the "respectable" English media as Nazis (Roth 1979: 115-8; Hughes 1994; Beevor 1999): "Wartime" dramas and comedies such as Colditz and 'Allo 'Allo continue to be popular (Hughes 1994: 17), and football chants commemorate the English World Cup victory over Germany in terms recalling WWI and II (Punch 1997). Even *The Economist* runs articles entitled "Deutschland Über Alles" and cartoons depicting German politicians giving Nazi salutes (1998b; 1998c). This image occurs even in academia: an article by Hinton in Anthropology Today critiques a book by Goldhagen which attributes the Holocaust to the Germans' "nature," not, as Hinton suggests, to a combination of fear, propaganda and desensitisation which are not unique to Germany (1998; see also Mikes 1953, Alter 1992). In English culture, negative stereotypes of Germans could prove to be an obstacle to their obtaining a favourable place on the City map.

At DKF, these negative stereotypes were seldom used in even humorous interactions between English and Germans, but people were visibly not unaware of them: when a client turned out to have the same name as a character in a popular "wartime" comedy, catchphrases from it were bandied about, and imitations of "wartime" stock film characters periodically surfaced during joking sessions. Significantly, though, these occurred only in mixed environments, never in one-on-one interactions, and were never explicitly linked with Germanness, or used in reference to German colleagues. Also, the fact that such jokes seemed to be more of a "no-go area" than other stereotypes suggests an awareness of their existence. One might also note that, when I asked my German informants whether they had encountered any preconceived notions about Germans in England, most took me to mean prejudices (Vorurteile), even though I used the more neutral phrase "preconceptions" (vorgefaßte Meinungen). All but two spoke of seeing these in the wider culture, although all added that they personally had never encountered any. Even in non-hostile situations, then, people are aware of, and affected by, negative stereotypes of Germans, suggesting that the mapping process takes place in a context in which people are always aware of the power structure underlying it.

That aside, however, positive stereotypes of Germans are also seen in British culture, popular and otherwise. In Victorian Britain, "there was a strand of admiration... for German economic and social organisation," and

this continues today, with Germans being seen as hard-working and efficient (Holmes 1988: 62; Lawrence 1980: 13; Binney 1993: 2; Weidenfeld and Korte 1991: 41). A recent article in *The Economist* says that opinion polls in England "find little dislike of Germany," especially as compared to France (1999: 29). The image of the German as efficient businessperson is as pervasive as that of the German as fascist (cf. *The Economist* 1998a, b). Head discusses ways in which the Vorsprung durch Technik advertising campaign was assimilated into English popular culture, citing, among many examples, a cartoon depicting a German family riding a pig with springs attached to its legs, travelling by "Four Sprung Pork Technik" (1992: 112). However, Head notes that the same symbols could equally evoke the German-as-Nazi discourse, citing a Spitting Image sketch which depicts Hitler conquering Europe accompanied by a voiceover parodying Audi's television adverts (112-113). It was also interesting to contrast the reactions of English and German informants to the slogan: while the latter responded with faintly amused pride, the former, even if they were otherwise sympathetic to Germans, generally reacted with hostility, most saying that it seemed to them an arrogant assertion of superiority, a few going so far as to say that it recalled to them Nazi slogans. Similarly, Warner and Campbell's jocular description of German business style as "Technik über Alles" may evoke English fears of German "takeovers" (1993: 101). Positive images of Germans thus abound in English culture but, due to the multivalency of symbols, the positive and negative images blend into each other, so that the connotations of a given stereotype can change with startling rapidity; as Basso's Apache informants remark, stereotypes are at once "funny" and "dangerous" (1979:37-8). German stereotypes, rather than being simply location points, are the site of a symbolic power struggle.

While these observations of City culture seem to confirm Rapport's theory of stereotypes being used by transnationals as a sort of "shorthand" through which they can order their social universes in a world without fixed geographical and social boundaries, it seems that there is more to them than simply their uses as navigational and cartographic aids. Given that the values assigned to the stereotypes by the host society dominate the mix, the navigational explanation alone does not explain how German businesses have managed to succeed so well in the City environment, given that their place on the map is at best an ambiguous one. While Rapport's theory of stereotyping as social mapping does apply to the City, then, it does not explain how Germans have managed to resist the existing power structure.

III. PORTRAITS OF THE GERMAN: STEREOTYPES, IDENTITY AND POWER

It may be, therefore, that Basso and Dundes' analyses are more useful in the case of German transnational businesses. Herman notes that the idea of groups using stereotypes for strategic negotiation of power relations is nothing new in anthropology (1979: 71); Herzfeld describes transnationals using outsiders' stereotypes of their ethnic group to achieve their ends, for instance by playing the "dumb American" in order to get a clearer explanation. The appropriation and/or transformation of stereotypes is thus well-known as a strategic resource, especially in transnational contexts, suggesting that they are, as well as navigational aids, a means of engaging in a sort of Goffmanian strategic image manipulation in transnational minorities' attempts to resist the dominant group (Goffman 1956).

While DKF's German employees did not engage in the sort of elaborate performances that Basso describes, stereotyping of the English did occur in humourous banter about the office. Its primary role, furthermore, appeared to be one of easing tension in situations of potential ethnic conflict (cf. Goffman 1961: 50, 122-124): a German employee, frustrated by the English disregard for procedure, might cry out "Typical English!" or another might imitate the accent of her English cubicle-mate. While there was an element of solidarity-building and, possibly, mild revenge, in certain contexts, the main role of these performances seemed to be to defuse tension in a situation in which the Germans were the dominant power group within the bank, but in which the English had the advantage of numbers and of being members of the dominant culture outside the bank. Stereotyping in daily practice at DKF thus confirmed Basso and Dundes' theory of stereotypes as means of negotiating power relations.

More interesting, however, was the tendency towards the appropriation and strategic use of English stereotypes of Germans. Several of my informants saw the image of the German as successful businessperson as a resource that could be actively used to promote their bank. While I was not able to

observe how, if at all, this was deployed in interactions with clients, one of my upper-management informants told me that Germanness was one of the bank's main selling-points. Asked in what way it could be an asset, he spoke of the English image of German speed, quality and diligence; German banks, he said, have a certain prestige value (cf. Carr et al. 1994: 83, 110). This was also reflected in DKF's promotional brochures' emphasis on its German roots and focus. Furthermore, this strategy was less a denotation of the actual Germanness of the bank as it was a strategic deployment of English symbols of Germanness; note also Warner and Campbell's remark that German business style has achieved "symbolic status" as the antithesis of the "Anglo-Saxon" style (1993: 92). DKF's promotional strategies thus actively involved the appropriation of positive stereotypes of Germans.

Moreover, the way in which the bank expressed its Germanness could be used to forestall negative stereotypes, much as Dundes' Afro-American informants employed the "Black is Beautiful" slogan for similar ends (1983: 253). Bloch suggests that the illogical, inexplicable nature of the symbols used in rituals restricts the possible responses to those permissible within the ritual's discourse: as he puts it, "you cannot argue with a song" (1974: 66, 71). Bloch further argues that political figures make use of this property of symbolic discourses in their rhetoric; by using more and more ritualised, symbol-heavy forms of speech, he says, they restrict the possible responses to their words, thus quelling potential dissent before it begins (58-71). One might thus suggest that actors can forestall the use of negative stereotypes by controlling the symbols involved in the discourse through introducing their own sets of symbols first, as when Lawrence suggests that the association of Germans with business arose because, after WWII, Germans could not use military or political symbols to define their identity, and thus focussed on economic ones (1980: 26). Head cites a Lufthansa advertisement which reads "Lufthansa is as German as I'd hoped [thorough, practical, reliable] but Lufthansa is not as German as I'd feared [impersonal, reserved, stiff]," evoking positive images of Germanness through anticipating the reader's negative images thereof (1992: 98; square brackets author's own). Two separate German informants, finally, told me the story of the "Made in Germany" trademark being instituted in the 1880s by the English to identify German goods as being of poor quality, the irony being that the mark became a sign that the goods were of better quality than English ones (Head 1992). This suggests that my informants were aware that potentially negative images could be transformed into more positive ones. As Basso and others have suggested, then, the creative use of stereotypes enables a minority group to resist oppression by the dominant one, with varying degrees of success.

However, as Hannerz noted recently, to consider the actions of transnational actors simply as "heroic" resistance is to overly simplify the picture. Due to the multivalent quality of stereotypes, as of all symbols, the Germans often used them to provide a means of changing identity, and thus social location, when, as in Head's Vorsprung durch Technik example, even an arguably neutral discourse of Germanness has been given a negative spin (1992: 112-113). One informant gave me a report which suggested that many companies are finding it advantageous to emphasise corporate over German identity, describing a current trend for German MNCs to replace the trademark "Made in Germany" with an in-house logo, such as "Made by Siemens" (Wolff Olins Identity Research 1995). However, one should note that Siemens also connotes Germanness; the company can thus be German when it is advantageous, and, when it is not, can emphasise its identity as an MNC, without altering the symbols used (cf. Head 1992: 23; Watson 1995: 164). In cases where, like some of the German companies profiled in the Arthur D. Little Ltd. survey, they might meet with "chauvinistic campaigns from local competitors," German companies can de-emphasise the company's Germanness if required, thus "relocating" themselves away from Germany (1979: 81). In a sense, then, City Germans can be said to make creative use of stereotypes as a resource for succeeding in an environment dominated by English symbols; however, they do so not only by allowing reappropriation of English symbols of Germanness, but by creative play with the company's location on the English social map.

While stereotypes can thus be said to follow the paradigm of being appropriated, transformed and used as a means of resistance, their effectiveness in the City setting appears to be tied up with the use of stereotypes for social mapping, and both appear to be linked with the multiplicity and shifting nature of identity in the City. By employing stereotypes of Germans that are familiar to the English, DKF is ensuring that its clients will "locate" it in a favourable place; furthermore, the multivalency of stereotypes allows this location to shift to other areas if desired. While Rapport's analysis alone does not explain all the uses of stereotypes in the City, neither can the earlier views of stereotypes as means of resistance; the two theories must thus be

considered together in order to obtain something approaching a picture of the full complexity of their usages in transnational environments.

IV. DEVELOPING RAPPORT: STEREOTYPING IN THE UNBOUNDED ZONE

The link between the two uses of stereotypes may well stem from the nature of the City itself. The City is closely associated with the processes known as "globalisation," that is, with the compression of space and time through advances in telecommunications and transportation technology (Waters 1995), which is widely said to have a deleterious effect on national and ethnic boundaries, and to foster the rise of transnational groups. While it is debatable whether an Ohmaesque "world without borders" (1990; Leonard and Nye 1983: 474) will ever develop from these trends, evidence exists that, for certain groups at least, borders and social boundaries are less significant than once they were. To take a single example, at a recent conference at the Goethe Institut, Stefan Herder observed that much of the emphasis on developing a distinctive, global "corporate culture" comes from American MNCs who, rather than hiring local managers for their branches, hire American-educated people originating from that area; in such a situation, one might well question whether these individuals are part of "local," American or corporate culture, if indeed any of the three are separable from the others. For employees of transnationally operating companies, then, boundaries are weak if not nonexistent, and identity is usually, if not inevitably, multiple.

In such situations, people commonly attempt to reimpose boundaries upon the social order. Harvey, in *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), notes that in such situations, collective anxiety ensues as a reaction to the mental displacement brought about by the compression of space and time and the dissipation of previously taken-for-granted boundaries (305). This loss of the paradigms which had previously been used to conceptualise the world in turn gives rise to certain coping mechanisms (E. Ardener 1989; Callinicos 1989; Harvey 1989). One such reaction, however, seems to take the form of an attempt to re-impose some form of order through symbolically redrawing boundaries: Rapport's "social map" hypothesis aside, Baumann's (1998) discussion of racism in Europe, as well as ethnographies of European Muslims, suggest that Judaeo-Christian Europeans are defining themselves by using particular sorts of foreigners as an Other through which to define social boundaries around Europe (Amiraux 1997; Morley and Robins 1995). In certain situations, then, including transnational ones, it is a common reaction to attempt to re-impose order through the symbolic construction of national and ethnic "social maps."

However, these boundaries cannot be entirely reimposed in a location as strongly globalized as the City. My informants virtually never described themselves in terms of single identities, preferring to identify as "German Europeans," "Europeans with German backgrounds," or refusing to define themselves at all. Others expressed themselves in terms which incorporated multiple identities within a single terms, such as "cosmopolitan" (cf. Hannerz 1990). This also applied to the bank: most informants were unsure whether to describe it as a German bank operating in England or an English bank in a German group, and the same people would describe it differently on different occasions. DKF's social location wavered dramatically; despite its physical separation from the head office, "internal" memos were circulated from the Frankfurt office to London, and one member of the London staff actually spent most of his time in Frankfurt, fulfilling his UK obligations over the telephone. While businesspeople may try to impose social boundaries, they seemingly cannot tie oneself down to a simple model of the world when operating in transnational business contexts, in which social location and identity are invariably multiple and shifting.

Consequently, in the City, it seemed to be crucial to present oneself in a way which, although it appeared to be simple and straightforward self-promotion, actually involved a fairly complex strategy of shifting identity in time with social trends in the City. One informant, who happened to be one of DKF's general managers, once explained to me that, in the City, corporate clients will choose the bank whose self-presentation is most compatible with their own; in this case, he said, their clients generally are those who prefer the "German style." However, I also observed that this "style" did not attract Germanophiles alone; DKF's promotional literature tacitly suggested that an investment in Germany could also be a way of breaking into the European market (cf. Forsythe 1989), and the very fact of the bank being a German institution in England could evoke

an image of cosmopolitanism and/or transnationalism (cf. Vertovec 1996). Institutional identities thus had to be presented in ways that referred, not to single, but to multiple identities, in order to attract the most clients. As well as a means of attracting more business, however, this flexible self-presentation also seemed to be a survival measure. In the City, the valuation of particular identities seems to vary sharply; at the time of my fieldwork, for instance, "European" was an unpopular image in the City, due to controversy over the introduction of the Euro (cf. Jones 1998); however, my informants all assured me that it had been popular earlier, at the time of Blair's election to Prime Minister, and would be popular again. A year later, furthermore, anti-European feeling seems to be subsiding, but Germanness seems to have become an unpopular image, due to certain ill-timed remarks by Chancellor Schroeder. Given the diversity and changeability of trends and opinions in the City, it seems that the ability to present oneself using symbols which evoke two or more identities is essential, allowing actors to change their own or their business' self-presentation to fit the changes in their environment, and thereby locate themselves in several places at once. The complex and unbounded nature of the City means that identities must be expressed in a way that allows for the multiplicity of identities; however, the need for transnational actors to order the world according to a simple map means that such images must be as succinct as possible.

Stereotypes thus take on a powerful role in the expression of identity in such contexts, because they are able to be simultaneously used as recognized social location markers and creatively manipulated by the stereotyped party. By making use of stereotypes, a transnational actor ensures that the image they are presenting is easily recognisable and refers to a known "location" on the "social map." Additionally, however, stereotypes possess the multivalent quality of all symbols; by evoking an image of themselves as German, the same company can evoke images of Europe, of transnationalism, even of particular skills, thus relocating itself almost at will if necessary (cf. Head 1992). Beyond this, however, the simple, "known" nature of stereotypes means that these multiple identities can be presented in a fashion which suggests that this is the opposite of what the actor is doing; by presenting a "simple" image, clients can be induced to swallow the "complexity" beneath it. While the English people with whom I spoke had negative reactions to the Vorsprung durch Technik ad campaign (cf. Head 1992:110-113), it continues to have near-legendary status in advertising circles (Davis 1998). Finally, the fact that similar playing with and appropriation of stereotypes seems to be a common practice among non-transnationals as well (cf. Dundes 1983, Basso 1979, Alexander 1996) suggests that this usage of stereotypes is not too great a leap for City workers to make. The common nature of stereotypes not only conceals complex constructions of identity under an apparently simple exterior, but their use as navigational aids ensures that they are able to be used strategically in the identity construction of transnational actors.

Stereotypes thus do not play a single role in transnational environments, but are part of a wider complex of activities involving the strategic expression of multiple identities (cf. Moore 1999). Not only do they enable the construction of a social map, or even allow the negotiation of inequalities in transnational locations, but both roles allow them to be used to convey impressions of multiple identities in a way which suggests that they are, in fact, simplifying these identities into a more palatable form. Stereotypes are thus not simply useful navigational aids for transnational actors or means of creatively negotiating the power structure of the City, but both roles are aspects of their role in the symbolic construction and expression of the multiplicity of identity inherent in transnational situations.

CONCLUSION

While both Rapport's notion of stereotypes as a means of constructing and navigating the vaguely-bounded environment of transnational actors and Basso and Dundes' view of stereotypes as a means of creative resistance would therefore seem to be borne out by the case of the Germans of DKF, it seems that both are aspects of a more important role. The vaguely-bounded nature of the City makes it necessary to express multiple identities in the simplest way possible, meaning that, rather than simply navigational aids or symbols of self-presentation, stereotypes are part of the complex of resources which transnational actors use in the creative negotiation between, and presentation of, their various identities in a complex, vaguely-bounded environment.

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