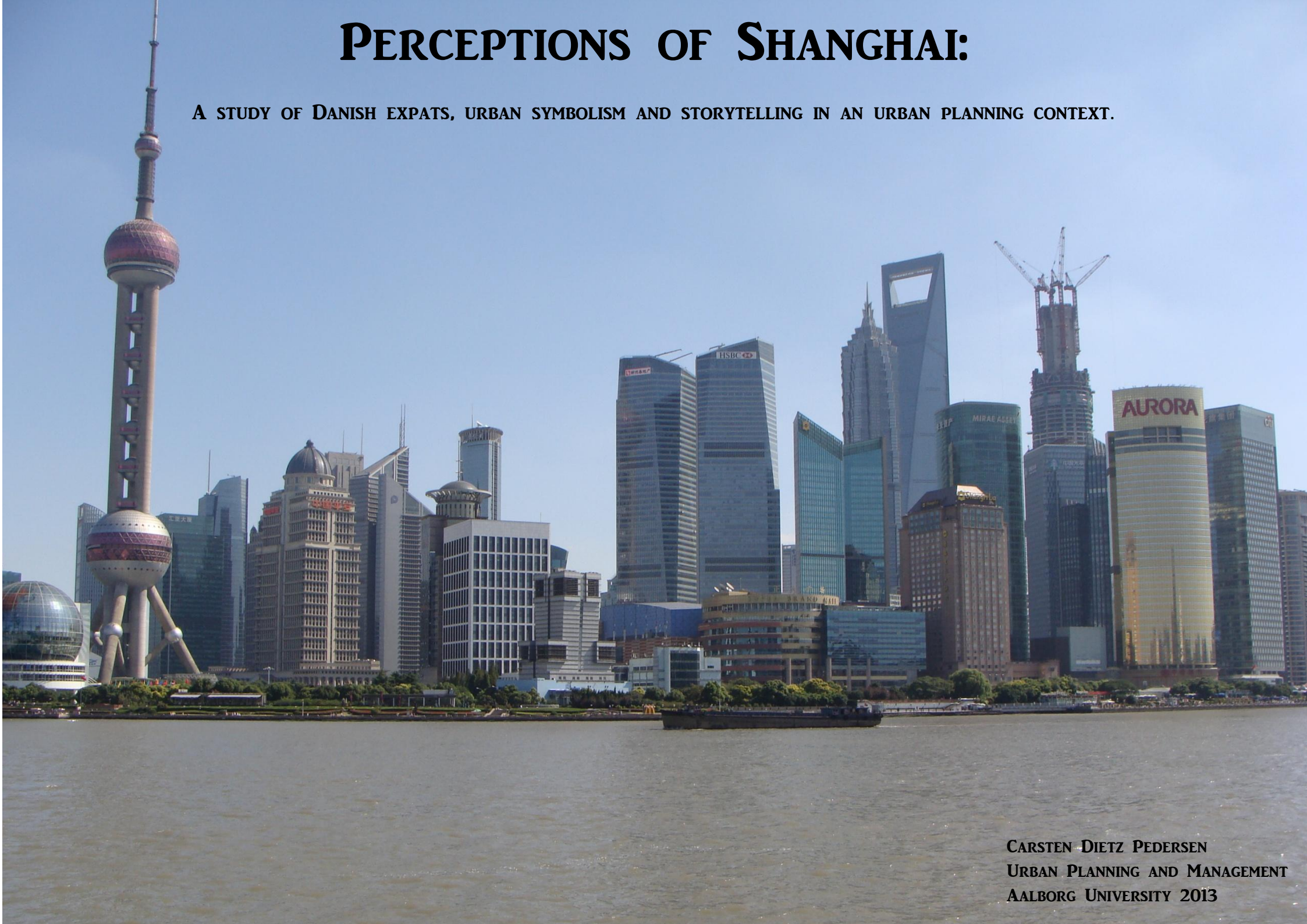


# PERCEPTIONS OF SHANGHAI:

A STUDY OF DANISH EXPATS, URBAN SYMBOLISM AND STORYTELLING IN AN URBAN PLANNING CONTEXT.



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URBAN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT  
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*"I don't believe in learning from other peoples pictures.  
I think you should learn from your own interior vision of things and discover, as I say,  
innocently, as though there had never been anybody."<sup>1</sup>*  
— Orson Welles

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<sup>1</sup> (Goodreads.com 2013)



# TITLE PAGE

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The main aim for this project has been to investigate how Shanghai is representing itself internationally through storytelling and urban symbolism and how this representation is perceived by Danish expats living in the city. The project therefore looks into how the Danish expats interpret these representations and how the representations influence the Danish expats' perception of the city. Firstly a theoretical frame for understanding the concepts of both storytelling and urban symbolism is established and the method of single case study is chosen to investigate the representation in Shanghai. The first part of the analysis is focusing on the "official" representation in Shanghai namely representation formulated and mediated by various actors in Shanghai that each share an interest in representing the city. The second part of the analysis is focusing on the perceptions of representation of Danish expats living in Shanghai. From these two points of view a discussion regarding significance and interpretation is initiated from which it is concluded that Shanghai has been successful in creating a uniform and persuasive representation of the city. This consequently influences the perceptions of the Danish expats that end up sharing the "official" view on representation of Shanghai.



# PREFACE

This report is my master's thesis in the study program of Urban Planning and Management at Aalborg University. The inspiration for this thesis was build up during my entire master's program where a general interest in globalisation, migration, tourism and discourses lead to me wanting to know more about how cities are portraying themselves and how this portrait looks through the eyes of an expat.

Throughout the process of writing I have become confirmed in my believes that urban planning is an excellent way of understanding societal concerns and has furthermore made me able to see new ways of how urban planning can become relevant when wanting to shape and plan a city.

I would like to thank all the people who have been helpful in any way during my writing. Think appreciation is especially addressed to my wife who has been supportive of me during the whole time. Another huge thank you is given to my supervisor Helen Carter for all her constructive help and her believe in me and my ideas about the project. Furthermore I would like to thank the Danish expats in Shanghai who have been willing to offer me their time and knowledge.

*Carsten Dietz Pedersen*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

*This report aims to set focus on how the global cities<sup>2</sup> within a globalised world are trying to portray themselves through various types of activities, events and memorable structures – a representation of a city. This aspect will furthermore be juxtaposed with the many citizens that move around in search of new possibilities such as jobs, recreational, business, etc. More specifically is this report going to look at the Chinese city of Shanghai; how its representation helps to attract the many expats living in the city and moreover how this representation is perceived in the minds of the group of Danish expats living in Shanghai. This chapter will therefore, in relation to the above, consist of the main reasons for embarking on this project – a description of the motivations that lies behind creating representation in a city like and an insight into the effect this can have on the perceptions of other people*

## 1.1. Globalisation

Globalisation is a term that embraces almost everything we do in our everyday lives – a new “era” of our lives. From the products

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<sup>2</sup> Global or world cities are now believed to be key sites from which the global economy will derive its ingenuity and energy (Goldman & Longhofer 2009).

we buy and the way we manage our time to the way we do business and the way we educate ourselves. For instance is this report: a report containing a case study, partly produced in the Chinese city of Shanghai; written by a Danish author on an international educational programme in Denmark and supervised by a fellow European. All this without anyone would consider it to be something extraordinary. As this example shows is globalisation a concept that we “own” – a habitus over time and space which touches many lives and some more than others. “*It is the most important change in human history*” (Ritzer 2011, p. 2). A definition of this concept can however vary from whom is defining it but a simple and straightforward way of narrowing it down is through a well known and general accepted dictionary like Merriam-Webster. They define globalisation as:

*“Process by which the experience of everyday life, marked by the diffusion of commodities and ideas, is becoming standardized around the world. Factors that have contributed to globalization include increasingly sophisticated communications and transportation technologies and services, mass migration and*

*the movement of peoples, a level of economic activity that has outgrown national markets through industrial combinations and commercial groupings that cross national frontiers, and international agreements that reduce the cost of doing business in foreign countries. Globalization offers huge potential profits to companies and nations but has been complicated by widely differing expectations, standards of living, cultures and values, and legal systems as well as unexpected global cause-and-effect linkages.”* (Merriam-Webster 2012)

As the above quote implies do business and economics play a big part in triggering this new “era” with capitalism as the main driving force. This change in our world order – a new social culture – is very much visible through a compression of time and space causing the world to shrink (Zehra et al. 2005). This increased mobility of the finance sector the Merriam-Webster quote talks about is also bringing about changes in the way the world society is organizing itself along with the geographical dispersion of industrial production which is altering the division of labour into a more trans-national kind of division (Broudehoux

2004). Globalisation is therefore about how deindustrialization and tartarisation are triggering massive social changes all over the world (Broudehoux 2004). Globalisation causes an “*intensification of flows of commodities, money, images, information and technology*” (Broudehoux 2004, p. 3) which very much is enabled by the many transnational corporations making their way into new markets and territories. But when corporations become internationals, “local” people tend to follow. Like for instance if Microsoft would open a new filial in Japan then some Americans are almost certain to follow to ensure the correct start-up process and management of the filial and maybe spouses and children are following these people as well. Globalisation is therefore also about cross-boundary movement of people whether they are tourists, businessmen or migrant workers (Short 2004). These conditions affect the way we perceive the world. Distant and exotic places are no longer futuristic, strange and inaccessible but are becoming increasingly familiar to us. This familiarity is an expression of the new social culture which can be “*characterized as saturated with reproduced images and information, dominated by simulation and hyper-reality, and obsessed with mass-consumerism*” (Broudehoux 2004, p. 4). The movement of people is a market in itself thus forcing the different countries and cities to compete in how to “get” or attract these

people in order to get a piece of the cake. This process is becoming increasingly about how to make ones city etc. look good – about how sell the city as any other product. Sometimes, at least in the case of tourism, the difference between “bought or sold” is the immediate appearance of the places – the aesthetics of the place – that determines the outcome of where the tourists will go or what they will see and how they will spend their money. One main purpose of this beautification process is to help legitimize consumerism, capitalism and all its commodities sold on the international markets (Broudehoux 2004). This commodification of images, cultures and places consequently result in a [re]shaping of our globalised lives due to fact that the immediate appearance and representation of cities is dominating our perception of reality (Short 2004; Broudehoux 2004).

### 1.1.2. Globalisation and the city

We have just seen how globalisation causes the major cities to become a commodity through the use of images, cultures and places that in the end is all about how a given city appears at first glance and how it represent itself – a hallmark way of selling the city. Cities compete to position themselves in this market for commodities through various campaign and strategies (Short 2004). An example of this can be found between the two cities of Shanghai and Hong Kong. Shanghai has historically (pre-

communism) been a city of trade and was the world business city of China until the communist party decided otherwise (Ma 2002). During the time between 1949 and 1990 Hong Kong was the absolute economic power centre of the mid-east Asia.



Picture 1 - The new Hong Kong logo (Brand New 2010)

But resent development in Shanghai has made this competition a tie forcing the Hong Kong to act in order to keep its position. In 2001 the city introduced a new logo (Picture 1) and punch line: “*Asia’s World City*” and the logo was a dragon figure composed of two figures that represent the east meets the west (Short 2004). This is one minor initiative that can help to brand a city and thereby alter the perception of it.

This competition is also bound to have consequences for the (physical) planning of the city and it is not hard to find symbols of this when thinking about what we know of the global cities

around the world. Many, if not all, of the global cities have some kind of all physical symbol of what the city is about – a trademark that is the essence of their city – and a symbol that has become familiarised globally. Some cities do of course have more than others to choose from. Take an example like the Eiffel tower, the Arch of Triumph or the Champs-Élysées.



Picture 2 - Symbolism in Paris (Towne 2011)

They all ring a bell and are connected to a specific geographical location, even if you ask a person in Australia, South Africa or Brazil they would think Paris in an instance. To add on this example has Paris succeeded in creating a story about their city

that reads: “Paris; the city of love”! This storyline has helped in branding the city of Paris into a great global metropolis with thousands of tourists visiting every year to experience the romantic atmosphere of this global city as Picture 2 clearly illustrates. If I say London; many people would get mental images of the royal family at Buckingham Palace, the River Thames, Saint Paul Cathedral, etc. These images are the result of many things that over a period of many years have transformed cities into a series of well known images and storylines that can either match or not match reality upon real life encounter.

But what is a major city more specifically? Again many different definitions of this term can be applied but for this project major cities are global cities that are “*control centers of the global economy, with a concentration of producer services, housing a highly mobile, transnational elite and the site of massive economic, social and physical restructuring*” (Short 2004, p. 9). Global cities are furthermore places where urban extravaganza takes place like major cultural events such as the Olympic Games but also signature architecture. “*Global cities are enacted, performed and spectacularized*” (Short 2004, p. 12). In relation to the global city being an economic hub we find that global cities tends to attract the “knowledge elite” that are recognised as being crucial to the economic success. This elite group of people can



come from all over the world and therefore ends up as a transnational community where a mix of different ethnicities and income groups can be located. However in this transnational community where the global city is trying to represent and spectacularize themselves to the world is it visible that the local communities often tend to be pushed in the background in terms of locality and social status (Short 2004).

Different cities of course choose different strategies depending on what label to put on them. Some cities like to think of them self as a tourist-hotspot where other cities are selecting to attract a more permanent group of people like expats that often move a new place either to work or as the spouse to a worker. It is especially through the mass-media we can see how cities use or are trying to keep up with globalisation. Images and narratives are being presented to the globe on the internet and in television where ads directed towards tourists are running, in trade or industry magazines promoting business parks or websites intended for possible new residents or investors (Short 2004). As an effect of this migration culture is being introduced and mobilised in elements. These elements are being circulated around the world are being re-expressed in their new local settings and context. This means that the cities competing for expats are experiencing a necessity to develop their culture in a

way that *“satisfies both business, investment and high-tech professionals and that convince their own residents and entrepreneurs to remain”* (Short 2004, p. 26).

## **1.2. Expatriating to Shanghai**

Shanghai is very much in the process of becoming a global city (Goldman & Longhofer 2009) if it has not happened already. Recent development in Shanghai and the region around it has pushed the doors of globalisation wide open thereby attracting many international companies, investors (Goldman & Longhofer 2009; Broudehoux 2004) and thereby expats. The economy is booming and thriving and this development is creating an excellent platform for attracting expats in search of new opportunities and jobs. Shanghai is indeed an international city when looking at the actual number of foreign expats residing in the city (unofficial number is around 150.000 - 200.000) and the presence of Danish representation is no exception estimated (unofficially) to be close to 500 (Boutrup 2005).

Many different circumstances can cause the expatriating of people to other parts of the world. We have established how global cities are the hubs of economic business and where economic business resides people resides. Other effects can cause people to move into cities but expatriate is another matter that

often can be explained by the search or opportunity of work. But how do they choose which part of the world to establish themselves in? One way to decide which city to set up shop in is by first-hand narratives from friends etc. and the immediate representation and reputation of the given city one can find in the media. As soon as people experience these representations i.e. images and narratives they build up some kind of expectation of what this city is about. But are the people's expectations about a given city or a thing in fact been twisted by this immediate representation, narratives and beautiful (close to non-real) images the global cities are producing compared to reality? We can see how positive first hand representatives like the painting of Mona-Lisa and the splendour of Hollywood have been idolised through time and many narratives. But sometimes real encounters do not match with our mental pictures which have been established over time. People may find Mona-Lisa to be a small, dull painting and Hollywood may very well be perceived as being dirty, artificial and blown way out of proportion in regards to doing sight-seeing there. These pictures are of course subjective and the product of our own minds and interpretations but nevertheless are things and cities being portrayed in a certain way through the use of representation that do not always correspond with the actual experience of the place or thing.

Shanghai is no exception when it comes to the city wanting to represent itself. Recent development in the Pudong area in Shanghai (see section 2.1 for map) has created an ideal representative skyline with many spectacular high-rise buildings that combined with the historical charm of the “old”, part of Shanghai – the Bund – that is the set of the international colonial period likewise represented with many splendid iconic and symbolic laden buildings filled with narratives and western accounts creates the “face” of Shanghai in terms of “selling” the city. This area of Shanghai is very symbolic laden in terms of: the old and the new Shanghai or the contemporary and the historical Shanghai. Tourists flock there to create their own evidence of representation; locals commute there to work at one of the many large companies. But how does the Danish expat experience the area? Does the representation have any real meaning when living in the city and are they fitting when describing their new city?

### **1.3. Research question**

There are many interesting approaches and questions that can aid me in the understanding of this topic but I find it relevant to look into how storytelling and urban symbolism can generate an alter-reality and alter-understanding in the minds of globalising Danes moving to Shanghai. How is this alter-reality being portrayed by Shanghai in terms of self-perception and how is this

representation being perceived by the Danish expats? This leads me towards presenting my research question:

***How is Shanghai representing itself internationally and how is this representation being perceived by Danish expats living in Shanghai?***

This research question is setting the stage for a research about representation and the Danish expat view on this. I want to look into how Shanghai is “selling” itself; what kind labels Shanghai has chosen to put on themselves in an attempt to promote the city and how this representation is understood by the Danish expats living in the city. Is there a shared perception of what Shanghai is about and where precisely does these perception matches and where don’t they match. I believe this question is important in understanding the “success” of both cities as well and travellers and expats in an increasingly globalising world. To do this research I have chosen to use theories from both traditional urban planning namely to draw upon the concept of storytelling and combine this with a theory from the anthropological world that is urban symbolism. To support my attempt in answering the research question I have chosen to establish a set of sub-question

that is meant to guide to process from now and towards my conclusion:

***Sub-question 1: What are the predominant representations in Shanghai and how are they being communicated?***

This sub-question will contribute in getting a better insight into what kind of stories and symbols that joins in the representation of Shanghai along with an insight into the medias used to do so. Through this sub-question it is furthermore desired to gain insight into what is important to Shanghai to tell and display in terms of the appearance towards the international community. Through analysis of events, geographical areas and physical and cultural entities is my desire that this sub-question will provide answers that is meant to support further analysis.

***Sub-question 2: Which perceptions do Danish expats living in Shanghai have of the representation in the city?***

This sub-question is meant to helping in gaining knowledge about how Danish expats living in Shanghai is thinking of the city – imagining and looking at the same value-laden representation researched in sub-question 1 now only through their Danish expat eyes. How are the stories and symbols in Shanghai perceived as a Danish expat and which interpretations resembles and differ from

the ones established in the previous sub-question? This sub-question furthermore aims at shedding light on what is important for a Danish expat in terms of representation which is going to be used and juxtaposed later in the analysis.

***Sub-question 3: How is the representation in Shanghai influencing the Danish expat's perceptions of the city?***

This final sub-question is suppose to link the previous sub-question into a more a combined entity that is aimed at gaining an insight into the similarities and differences of perception that exists between Shanghai and the Danish expats in Shanghai; how this is so and why it matters.

Before initiating anything else I will in the following chapter provide a clarification of some key element brought forth in this chapter firstly a specification of the geographical area in which my analysis is going to look at due to the fact that Shanghai is a city close to 23 million inhabitants why a full analysis of the city will be too time consuming and certain areas are irrelevant to research in terms of lack of stories and symbolic value. Secondly I am going to clarify whom I am precisely talking about when describing both Shanghai and the Danish expats. Thirdly I am going to provide an elaboration on the concepts of representation as a term around which my project will revolve.

## 2. CLARIFYING KEY ELEMENTS

*The following is meant as a conceptual clarification in terms of key concepts highlighted in the introduction. The outcome or the result of this chapter will therefore serve as necessary, basic information used to support and initiate further research concerning the answering of the research question of this paper just as elements put forth and described in this chapter will be supported later on in different chapters.*

### 2.1. The selection of a geographical boundary

The introduction implied that there are two areas in Shanghai, in particular, that are containing the most representations in terms of recognisability and what is being broadcasted to the world. These areas therefore contain qualified material to be used in my analysis as I find that representations are being given to us by the media and furthermore promoted in a touristic way. The selection criteria is consequently that an area suitable for further analysis should hold objects that are easily recognisable and are being used to promote the city in a touristic manor as well as containing historic/visionary material that often result in symbolic laden opinions. These areas as briefly described in the introduction are

the areas of “the Bund” and “Pudong”. The reason for choosing these sights as my case area can be found in the combined history and functionality of the areas.



**Picture 3 - Map of Downtown Shanghai (Virtual Shanghai, 2012) Edited by author**

The Bund has throughout history been the “western” centre of Shanghai – the place that westerners made their money and enjoyed their leisure time. An area for westerners whether lived

there or they simply come there as tourists. The Bund, today, is the number one “must see” place almost regardless of which travel book about Shanghai you have and holds many old colonial style buildings, waterfront scenery and local history that add to representativeness of the Bund

The Pudong area is situated on the opposite river bank from the Bund.

The area mainly consists of high-rise, iconic and spectacular buildings and other constructions that help to represent the area as the showcase of China’s financial and technological achievement and furthermore makes Shanghai recognisable to a large part of the world.

## **2.2. Defining a target group**

In connection to answering the research question two groups or entities are evident namely the Danish expats and Shanghai as a subject or notion.

*The Danish expats* are in this case to be looked upon as a single group of people. By this I mean that I will not differentiate gender, income, age, marital status etc. but instead view them as a group that has an interest and opinion about the city and have knowledge about the cultural and physical appearance of it. There will neither be set up a minimum limit for the length of stay

before they can be regarded as expats because they will be looked at as being expats who made a decision about moving to a foreign country and did so.

*Shanghai* should in this case not only be perceived as the “official” city that is to say the planned physical city, the municipalities and planning organs but here also organisations, local as well as national/international, who seek to present the city in any kind of manor - selling the city to an audience with an international interest. Shanghai should therefore be looked at as a commercially distributed commodity that is being presented in a certain manner especially through tourist based material and easily accessible places like books, newspapers and internet pages, videos. Shanghai can in this light be interpreted as an entity that has an interest in representing itself - the city. What is common for this “organization” is that it has an interest in how Shanghai should be presented to the world because good representation is business and a valuable commodity.

## **2.3. Elaboration on the concepts of representation**

*Representation* should in this case be thought of as a way of showing others, namely in an international perspectives, what qualities the city has to offer. The qualities are here the trademark

features that are significant in defining what the essence of the city is and this could be culturally speaking, politically speaking, architecturally speaking, geographically speaking and also in terms of landscapes. Representation as a concept in this report covers many different pseudonyms, some already mentioned in the previous chapter. Representation therefore covers: stories, narratives, images, symbols, campaigns directed towards promotion of a city, tourist videos, etc. For this specific project is representation to be understood as a broad term in which Shanghai seeks a commercial approach to showcase the preferable essence of the city and where multiple actors join in doing so independently and with different agendas. Throughout this report I will refer to the representation produced in Shanghai as either “official” or commercial.

I will now proceed with establishing a methodological approach for my work.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

*This chapter serves the purpose to clarify how the research question is going to be answered. Which approaches that throughout this report and my work have been used in order to get from problem to conclusions is going to be described. This chapter will therefore contain a presentation of the general structure, the methodological considerations as wells as reflections on the applied methods and data collection.*

#### 3.1. General structure of the report

The main aim of this report is to look at how “Shanghai” is representing itself internationally and how Danish expats living in Shanghai are experiencing the representation. The representation consists of event, architecture, promotion videos, articles and so on and this can and will be interpreted as acts of storytelling and urban symbolism created by the “city of Shanghai”. An explanation and elaboration of these terms just mentioned are described in the previous chapter (chapter 2). The insight into this area under discussion is sought done by first of all creating a theoretical insight into how storytelling and urban symbolism can be understood in an urban context and make it applicable to further analytical studies (chapter 4). Based on the theoretical understanding the chapters 5, 6 and 7 contains the analytical work

that in chapter 8 is going to be discussed thoroughly in order to comprehend the significance of my findings. This discussion is going to constitute the basis for my conclusion found in chapter 9. Finally I will offer my reflections on this topic and my work. To sum up the above I have compiled the structure of the report in Figure 1.

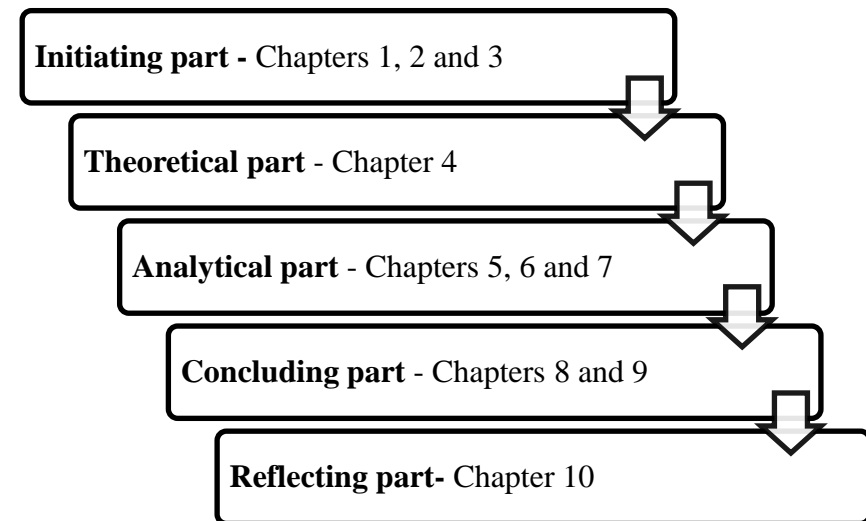


Figure 1 - General outline of the report

#### 3.2. The methodological approach

In order to answer the stated research question and sub-questions a table is created to account for the components needed to answering these questions and for the sake of comprehension.



<b>Main research question:</b> <i>How is Shanghai representing itself internationally and how is this representation being perceived by Danish expats living in Shanghai?</i>		
<b>Information needed to answer the question:</b>	<b>Method used to answer to question:</b>	<b>Main sources:</b>
Sub-question 1: <i>What are the predominant representations in Shanghai and how are they being communicated?</i>		
Information regarding Shanghai: as a place in general; geographical, historical and cultural information; as a possible tourist destination; or information that in any way is depicting Shanghai to an international audience in any way. Easy accessible medias are used to find this information namely: Google, YouTube, newspaper articles and books.	Review of easy accessible material retrieved from the most popular sources for instance the top most Google search results and the most viewed videos on YouTube etc. This method is chosen based on getting the most perception-shaping information available – to the broadest possible audience.	Tourist books like: “Lonely Planet”, “Turen Går Til” etc.  Internet and YouTube searches on: ”Shanghai”, ”The Bund”, “Pudong”, “Pudong Skyline”, “Shanghai Expo” etc.
Sub-question 2: <i>Which perceptions do Danish expats living in Shanghai have of the representation in the city?</i>		
This sub-question is partially built on the findings from the previous sub-question. Needed to answer this sub-question is information about Danish expats living in Shanghai and their everyday life in the city	Qualitative interview with Danish expats living in Shanghai.	Transcriptions based on interview with four Danish expats living in Shanghai.

and their perceptions of representation. How are they telling their version of the story and how are they interpreting the representation in Shanghai.		
Sub-question 3: <i>How is the representation in Shanghai influencing the Danish expat's perceptions of the city?</i>		
Information based on the previous two sub-questions. Information about the “official” side of representation in Shanghai and a Danish expat version of it.	Discussion with point of departure in the knowledge obtained about the “official” representation of Shanghai and the perceptions from the Danish expats.	Findings from my analysis found in chapters 6 and 7.

**Table 1 - Methodological approach for each sub-question and main data sources**

The above table show the intended way of approaching this research and the specific components needed to answer the questions. This way of approaching my research is important as I regard the inclusive understanding of the connection between the research question, what I need to answer them, where to look for this information and how to apply it to my research.

I have chosen to approach this topic by treating it like a single-case study since the case study method is often regarded as preferable when trying to retain holistic and significant characteristic of a real-life event (Yin 2009). This single-case study is therefore revolving around Shanghai and the different perceptions of representation in it. I chose Shanghai as my case as I regard the current economic development in China as generally interesting but also because Shanghai and China in this perspective offers some new planning issues to address and analyse. I find that economic development strongly affects globalisation patterns and therefore also the patterns of globalising Danes. This group of people are juxtaposed to the development in Shanghai because I find that an increased understanding of their perceptions of representation is relevant when trying to understand the motives of cities and the process that co-shapes the perceptions of a city.

### **3.3. Applied methods**

The methods applied for this project relies almost completely on a qualitative data collection method. This way of gathering data can again be divided into two categories namely primary and secondary data. This way categorising data explains the origin of the data and this implies that either the data is collected by you (primary data) or the data is retrieved from an external source (secondary data). To add on this is primary data collected in the field by for instance surveys or through interviews but also data obtained directly from the source like official documents is regarded as primary. Secondary data is processed by an outside source that can imply it may be biased. This way of classifying data is, however, not always transparent as some documents that is regarded as being primary data, like municipal plans, are based on political negotiations and decisions and are therefore not always unbiased. This duality is also evident the other way round as some documents that are regarded as secondary data can have a high level of integrity such as peer-reviewed research papers. An example of this double entendre can be found in the tourist books, like Lonely Planet, that can both be interpreted as primary and secondary data depending on which scope of analysis I choose. If my intensions are to analyse the basis of what is being described in the book then it should of course be regarded as

biased, secondary data, but since I am looking at representation and my intentions are to analyse this topic directly from the source then I regard it as primary data. This is just an example on how carefully and thought through I should assess every single piece of data obtained from an outside source in spite of its classification.

### **3.3.1. Observations**

As a part of my applied methods I made several observations in Shanghai about the general nature of the city; how the city looks, the different functions related to the selected areas and topic addressed in this project. I chose to conduct these observations as I regard it to be a vital part of understanding one's case and furthermore allow me to get an insight into the topics discussed in my analysis. I also find that first-hand observations are crucial when wanting to examine symbolism and storytelling as small details is not necessarily mentioned on writing or visible on pictures. These details, however, may very well have great significance to the total understanding of the case. The observations made will also be used to evaluate and validate the statements about the official representation in Shanghai.

### **3.3.2. Literature review**

The study of relevant literature is first and foremost done to gather background information, but also to select relevant and believable authors as well as to be critical for a potential bias in the literature from the author's subjective opinions. Literature is generally secondary data, and data in the literature processed by the author hence needs to be assessed for validity. In regards to this it is also relevant to look at how the case is perceived from different sources such as literature with background in different fields of research, official documents, archival records, newspaper articles, and reports to assess a larger scale of the case based on these different perceptions. To add on this is secondary data used to confirm and supplement evidence from other sources by verifying the authors and titles of others whom may have been mentioned elsewhere (Yin 2009).

I have throughout my project gathered different types of data. First of all, data from material available at public places like libraries and the internet where easy accessible information about Shanghai were gathered such as travel books and videos, online tourist agencies and on YouTube. I also gathered material, locally, in Shanghai such as flyers, maps, pictures and catalogues. These types of literature review were quite time demanding as no catalogue about available material is available. In relation to this I

did an extensive review of empirical data available in order to create an insight and understanding of the representation in Shanghai. Not all of this data is used in my analysis as they simply serve to create a basis of knowledge of the existing data for me. Finally, data from research papers, articles and books were collected often in dialogue with my supervisor.

### **3.3.3. Interviews**

The outcome of my interviews is essential for the project as the interviews are my primary source of information in regard to understanding the perceptions of the Danish expats. The main purpose of the interviews is to get a good, in depth, knowledge about the case at hand. One of the most important sources of case studies is the interviews (Yin 2009). This is because the interviews provide an essential source from which material to do perform the case study is gathered and here the persons interviewed serves as primary sources for obtaining this information. The interviews were guided conversations as well as structured queries making them open for straying beyond protocol and less rigid (Yin 2009) – a semi-structured interview.

### ***Choice of interviewees***

Choosing the interviewees was rather complicated as I did not know any Danish expats in Shanghai nor did I know about any official lists concerning Danish citizens living in Shanghai. I have managed to become a part of a Danish mailing list used by a Danish network in China to connect socially and through that list make an inquiry about Danes in Shanghai who could be interested in participating in these interviews. I therefore have no or very little control over the characteristics of the people wanting to participate hence no or little control over how broad a scope of respondents I was to end with. This way of selecting interviewees are perhaps not preferable as I have chosen to regard the Danish expats as a single group of people thereby not differentiating between classic parameters such as gender, age, income or marital status. The selection of respondents could therefore make it difficult to make a perfect generalisation concerning the perception of Danish expats. I can, however provide good indicators of the tendencies amongst them.

### ***Performing the interviews***

The interviews are conducted conversationally by way of one respondent at a time. The interviews are furthermore carried out by the use of video conference over Skype. The dialogue revolves around the topics in my interview guide but also digs

into other unforeseen issues that are deemed relevant and useful. I will try before and during my interview to clearly define the topic and questions for the interviewee in a language and manner that is comfortable for the interviewee to understand and answer and in that way helping the interviewee to understand what it is I am trying to do and thereby avoid getting the “wrong” answers which again is beneficial to me.

With the methodological stands being clear I will now proceed with establishing a theoretical frame from I can initiate my analysis.

## **4. PLANNING WITH STORIES AND SYMBOLS**

*The issues sketched out in the introduction – issues about how Shanghai is representing and selling itself to the rest of the world in the attempt to compete in a globalised world and attracting expats - already suggested a link between storytelling and urban symbolism as a way to understand and analyse urban planning and development. The following chapter will firstly contain an argumentation as to why I believe these two concepts are worth tying together. Hereafter I will set out to describe the theory these concepts are based upon leading to a construction of my analytical framework.*

### **4.1. Why merge storytelling and urban symbolism**

Storytelling is a widely accepted concept used in many different areas but one that is also used in connection with urban planning where use of storytelling can aid planners to achieve desired goals. The second concept of urban symbolism is derived mainly from the world of anthropology where it seeks to offer an insight into the symbolic meaning of objects and practices on both micro level as well as macro levels of the city.

The use of storytelling can be found to be quite relevant when it comes to describing planning process and practising planning (Sandercock 2003b; O. B. Jensen 2007; Throgmorton 2003; van Hulst 2012). But what about the cases where no process are found and no planning are needed? What about the cases where we only know something about a certain city or place which we have heard or read from the media? How can storytelling be a useful in this perspective? It can be very difficult to describe something well enough if one does not have all the details from all the different actors. It is hard to apply an analytical framework based on storytelling to a case if one does not know what was intended or stated by the local planners/government/residents to begin with. In these cases it is much easier to look at what has been done or how an area turned out to be. I stated in the introduction, that many global cities have some kind of physical symbol of what the city is about – a trademark that is the essence of their city – and an iconic symbol that has become familiarised globally and these physical symbols are often accompanied by other representation such as stories. But my claim is now that these symbols and stories are the result of storytelling in a given city where the best or most convincing story won the right (through and as a product of a planning process) to be presented to world – it is very successful narratives that has been adopted by world as

being representative for that city. This is where urban symbolism has its strengths. Urban symbolism is looking at and understanding the things that are – it is about understanding the enactment or the product of the planning in a city. Therefore should urban symbolism in this case be understood as being connected with storytelling - a key component in understanding the realisations and products of storytelling.

I will now proceed with the description of the theory connected to storytelling.

## 4.2. Storytelling

Storytelling as an overall concept covers the distribution of memories, events etc and has through time been seen as a way of sharing selected knowledge from one person to another or simply to entertain through a narrative which often contains a chronological sequence as well as a relational plot that gives the narrative some personal values to it which people could relate to (O. B. Jensen 2007). More specifically are “[e]vents [...] structured into a narrative by the conventional means of time, place, actors and context” (Flyvbjerg 1998, p. 8). So when looking at these stories which are chronologically ordered and personalised through various plot it is important to note that these stories are not always an exact mirroring of the past – they are

reconstructions of it (Throgmorton 2003). A story is always real in the sense that it exists and represents something but whether it is accurate and in line with reality is another matter. Owing to this it is important to acknowledge that the content of a story depends on the ulterior motives behind it as well as recognising that different stories have different consequences in regards to the impacts a story can have on ourselves and on the future society we choose to live in (Throgmorton 2003).

Through the act of storytelling can the people involved in a contemporary case “*not only make sense of the past, but also prepare for the future.*” (van Hulst, 2012, p. 300). Stories are used to remind the recipients of what is important and does furthermore allow them to see new options and changes they otherwise would not have thought of. Leonie Sandercock describe how stories can be used “*in the service of change, as shapers of a new imagination of alternatives*” (Sandercock, 2003, p. 9). Another aspect of storytelling is the way it can be used to mend the wounds of an old and ongoing conflict or to recover from trauma caused at some point in history (Forester 1999). This way of using storytelling as something that is also directed towards the future through the use of our imagination is facilitated through stories and is therefore very relevant for practices such as planning (van Hulst 2012). Sandercock (2003), likewise,



advocates for storytelling as being explicitly a way to be doing planning describing stories as something that can be a catalysts for change.

#### **4.2.1. What is storytelling in a planning context**

The creation of stories in planning are needed in order to fully describe reality because some world views can only fully be expressed in a way that is more complex, illusive and considerate to certain people or groups and that way is through stories (Throgmorton 1996). These people and groups who live in the same city may also very well be inhabiting completely different worlds both due to the fact that the city consists of various physical and social setting within its boundaries but also due to the people within the city and their perception of what the city really is about and how to interact in these settings thus causing these different perception to vary a lot (Throgmorton 1996). Planning must therefore be thought of as a “metatext “ in which both planners and other people influential to planning seek to interpret, describe and construct the city through plans, forecasts etc (Throgmorton 1996). These texts are then read by others who again interpret the meaning within it and from this they will try to piece together a suitable story e.g. the future development of the city based on what they have read in the various plans – they reshape the story of the city through their readings. This makes

planning a “*fragmented and heterogeneous mix of stories and storytellers in which no one rhetoric has a prima facie right to be privileged over others.*” (Throgmorton 1996, p. 38). Throgmorton further states that in order for planning to be successful it is at the concept of storytelling we ought to look at if we want to envisage a form of planning that is fitting for the fragmented, globalised and thereby multicultural world (Throgmorton 1996).

The telling in a story or the contents of a story if you will give an insight into what matters and what does not; an insight into a desired future or an “encyclopaedia” concerning what has happened in the past and further how we should relate and use this information for something useful. Throgmorton elaborates:

*“[...] good planning might include collecting and telling stories about both the past and the future [and] raises the possibility that good planning might, in itself, be a matter of persuasive storytelling about the future. . . . [It] also implies that more than one story can be told about the future of cities and regions, and hence that we must ask how one can compare differing stories and choose among them.”*  
(Throgmorton 2003, p. 126)

Persuasive stories, orientated towards the future, often show diverse and conflicting views on a subject thereby creating a situation where the interpretation of the story can differ depending on the interpreter and this caused the writer or teller to become persuasive when communicating the story. When stories are not persuasive enough but still get realised and materialised within a city the given projects i.e. the different spaces are likely to be submitted to ambiguity in use and interpretation (Throgmorton 2003)

Stories found in the process of planning will often include clear ideas about future events as well as the role of different actors (human and non-human) in the process. In retrospect of this planning process stories can offer an insight into what is wrong and needs to be fixed (van Hulst 2012). The buildings blocks i.e. the themes, problems, solutions and physical elements that planning stories are emerging from can be found in our everyday life – the life we live in our city and on our streets but the stories needs to be produced somehow and therefore needs to be transformed into narratives in order to be told (Throgmorton 2003). Van Hulst (2012) talks about how stories have the ability to talk about more than the actual situation at hand but also about what ought to be thus making storytelling a tool in which different people can speak out. As a result planning stories are

many times about “*powerful memories, deep fears, passionate hopes, intense angers, and visionary dreams, and it is these emotions that give good stories their power.*” (Throgmorton 2003, p. 128). This aids the stories in their persuasiveness; gives them volume; help shape the meaning in the story and furthermore tells the recipients what matters and what does not. A good result of this will consequently result in giving readers sense of the various new possibilities thereby enabling the recipients to envision a desirable transformation within a city (Throgmorton 2003). To sum up the above it is, according to Throgmorton, vital for a story to succeed that it is persuasive.

To add on this future-oriented storytelling it can be stated that it is not only persuasive – it is constitutive as well. People involved in a planning process, the people who write and tell the stories, have the ability to shape community, character, and culture (Throgmorton 2003). Throgmorton further describes that the constitutive play a part in how the writers and tellers “*choose to characterize (name and describe) the people who inhabit and activate their stories shapes how those characters are expected to act and relate to one another. And how planners write and talk shapes who ‘we’ are and can become.*” (Throgmorton 2003, p. 130)

Stories are often narratives with a plot (O. B. Jensen 2007) but what is important to look into here is what gives the narratives endurance through time – what allows a narrative in a urban planning context to become successful and stay that way as well as convincing people that this “way” is best, let alone allow the product of a narrative to become a worthy representative of a given city. There are many ways in which one can tell a story but there is also many ways it can be interpreted, so in other words: planning stories and the people who tell it live and communicate to each other in a interrelated web where no one single truth can be found and therefore it becomes essential to ask ourselves “*what makes one interpretation more persuasive than any other.*” (Throgmorton 1996, p. 38) and how should planning go about this?

A good planner should build conflict, crisis and resolution into their narrative thus causing different, conflicting stories to appear within the same story where one of these stories wins at the end (Throgmorton 1996; van Hulst 2012). Again this causes the readers to believe in the story; it makes the story matter to them. Secondly, good characters should be built into the narrative (believable and interesting) thus causing the readers to care about how the story turns out. Third we have the settings in which the different characters come alive and into conflict. Fourthly the

authors have to adopt an appropriate point of view by consulting both themselves as well as the different characters and stick to that point of view throughout the process. Last, authors should use “*imagery and rhythm of language to express a preferred attitude towards the situation and the characters.*” (Throgmorton 1996, p. 50) Within this last exercise it is clear that tropes are central elements when it comes to being persuasive in storytelling. Tropes derive from the literary and rhetorical world and consists of elements such as: metaphors, metonymy, irony etc. (Throgmorton 1996) Describing things or situations etc. by using words beyond their literal sense for instance by using figure of speeches or by appointing a part-element responsible for representing the entire entity (Throgmorton 1996; van Hulst 2012). This characteristic resembles the basic understanding of what urban symbolism is and will consequently be described more in depth later in this chapter.

#### **4.2.2. Adding space to storytelling**

It is hard to produce persuasive stories in regard to a transformation in a city without having a place to connect it to. It becomes clear in the attempt to describe a potential future and the place connected to it that “*story and imagined communities always have a spatial dimension and make a geographical claim.*” (Eckstein and Throgmorton 2003, p. 6). An urban space

will almost always have a history but it is also, relatively speaking, under constant change – changes that “*superimpose upon the visible surface an unseen layer of usage, memory, and significance.*” (Throgmorton 2003, p. 138). In other words do memories tend to stick to a place thus meaning that buildings, squares and other places are of significance and have many stories to tell as well as to give the city identity. This unseen layer consists of both historical and contemporary use and therefore are there always some people who are aware of the significance of the given area and the layers attached to it (Throgmorton 2003). To add on this it is further stated by Throgmorton (2003) that places not only contain local memories they also contain the residents accumulated memories of all the places that have been of importance to them during their lives. This aspect is quite important when discussing globalisation and expatriation due to the fact that all these people of different nationalities bring with them different associations of what the usage of a city so be like as well as appearance of the given areas. This means that places are under the influence of the social aspect but of course are the people living in an area also under the influence of the built environment. This link of social-spatial nature works by means of its intervening or enabling abilities within spatial practices (Richardson & Ole B Jensen 2003). This means that the relation

on the one hand gives possibilities and limitations to perform socially within a place i.e. a built environment and on the other hand there is the aspect of meaning and valuation that is constantly being bargained on the basis of our different cultural values (Richardson & Ole B Jensen 2003).

The spaces contains physical attributes such as buildings, statues, signs etc. and these attributes should be understood as the physical signs of what the story is really about (O. B. Jensen 2007). We need these attributes in order to fully understand how the narratives will turn out in the end, spatially speaking. This is a process where physical markers are needed to envisage full extent of the story. This means according to Sandercock that “*the way we narrate the city becomes constitutive of urban reality, affecting the choices we make, the ways we then may act*” (Sandercock 2003b, p. 182).

### **4.3. Urban symbolism**

Urban symbolism is a way to understand and explore cities by looking at visible attributes such as physical structures e.g. statues, buildings, and street names etc. or by looking at less obvious attributes in the form of e.g. events used to consolidate power or how people use a specific area (Nas 1993a). But what is a symbol, more specifically, in this context? Nas (1993a) defines a symbol in an urban symbolism context as such: “[...] a symbol

*can be considered something – an object, act or other form of expression – representing something else, generally an idea of rather abstract nature.”* (Nas 1993a, p. 3). Symbols are about the attachment of meaning to an object and therefore, for instance, is a painting of an unknown person is not a symbol in itself, it is an image due to the fact that no outside values are connected to it (Nas 1993b). Evers (1993) however, argues that every man-made physical structure is built for a specific purpose and should therefore be considered a symbol. Attached to symbols are therefore often found a complex series of emotional associations to which images are connected. Through these images we are seeing mental representation of something that is being deliberately created to show preferred attitudes towards something or to reveal a new direction like a strategy the city should undertake (Nas 1993a). This merging of urban symbols and images is known as urban imagery and the use of this concept will in the following sub-chapter be described because urban imagery is used to

*“depict or caricature a condition, a trend, a problem or an injustice. Furthermore, they can be deliberately used to legitimate local and national authorities or groups, and express*

*values that are upheld by the elite in power.”*

(Nas 1993a, p. 3)

As the above quote suggests urban imagery is used to show how things are but also what might be wrong. It is therefore possible by looking at the urban imagery to get an insight into how the physical appearance of Shanghai is seen through the eyes of the Danish expats which all leads back to stories told and created about the urban development in the city. By using the theory connected to urban imagery it is possible to describe the basic characteristics of symbolism in the urban arena (Nas 1993a).

As mentioned by Throgmorton (2003) in the former sub-chapter the physical settings in a city can contain memory. It is also in this urban symbolism context clear that the city can be considered as a vessel containing historically formed meaning that can be activated quite selectively and used strategically by various groups, institutions or individuals to support an objective a varying nature (Nas 1993a). In recognitions of this it can be stated that a city can hold as many symbolic faces as there is different groups to create these (Nas 1993b). Owing to this it becomes clear that urban symbolism and stories in cities are not fixed but are subject to a pluralisation whereas former domains (rural, feudal, more or less isolated societies) where stabilized through generally accepted meta-narratives. But in most cities there is

always competition concerning the creation of stories (Evers 1993).

#### **4.3.1. The use of symbols within an urban context**

Symbols can be used to promote different aspects whether it a specific thing such as the remembrance of a prominent city-character or if it about promoting the good life or even promoting national identity. Large cities, and especially capital cities, are often portrayed as the national face to the outside world – a city worthy of representing the country is thus “forced” to become the carrier of the capability of the country (Nas 1993b; Leclerc 1993). These cities can of course also be subject to internal competitions within a country as it is the case in many countries where cities compete to attract skilled labour or firms to settle down. A major city can thus become a flagship of economic development and architectural achievement etc and this will naturally show in the inner symbols and urban environment.

It is now visible that urban symbolism can be used to endorse change in a city and more specifically it can be noted that changes in style within a city can be seen as a change in era’s for instance from colonial to post-colonial (Nas 1993b; Leclerc 1993) and this change is in many cases accompanied by character buildings that is used to recover or built national identity. Another example is the journey towards a modern city that is often symbolised by

modern economical institutions and the construction of new, grand building connected to those (Evers 1993). It can therefore be stated that modern symbols, just like storytelling, can be a way to envisage a desirable future through the use of architectural representation (Colombijn 1993). So in other words is a change in the political scene is on many occasions followed by a change in the urban symbolism.

It is again this aspect of representation that I would like to highlight. But what does it mean to represent; how are cities using this concept. Many of the well known symbols we see around the world are constructed on the behalf of the given city’s administration making them public or semi-public and in many cases connected to an institution. Evers (1993) states that it is a common strategy to create grand public buildings that represents the city due to *“their utilitarian property and their “use value” they enable the urban population to interact with them and thus force a reproduction of their “symbolic value”.*” (Evers 1993, p. 81). This means that many of the urban symbols produced by the city become constitutive, just like the case with storytelling. This is also the case when describing privately “made” structures such as financial headquarters in a city, here we find that the symbolism, express the presence or dominance of a firm; an ideology etc – hence the symbols reveals the balance of power in

the city (Colombijn 1993; Nas 1993b) or the preferred, future development. However, the construction of buildings can also be about “simple” competition cities in-between as well as firms (Evers 1993). This may be manifested in a global competition to have e.g. the tallest building or the longest bridge and the (temporary) winner will get attention and respect and maybe most importantly it will reveal the future direction the city or firm is taking or at least show the persistence it took to achieve their goal. Achieving a “win” in a longest or highest competition can furthermore have the capability to become a metaphor for something else such as: “*we’re the best*” or “*nothing is unachievable*” (Leclerc 1993). This can yet again be seen as symbol of the city making an afford to represent strong leadership both internally in the city but also externally towards other cities and countries (Leclerc 1993). In connection this it is seen that national or state symbolism in oppressive countries has very little or no room for counter-symbolism (Nas 1993b). Through these pre-mentioned symbols of achievement cities are experiencing the necessity to do the same as other cities or something similar in order to “keep up” (Evers 1993) thus will global/regional/local trends, in terms of architecture and other physical entities, become constitutive for the urban reality found in many cities. One potential pitfall of creating these symbols is the possibility

that the symbols may become subject to ambiguous interpretation (Colombijn 1993; Evers 1993; Nas 1993b). The ambiguous interpretation means that the symbolic meaning becomes irrelevant and easy forgotten – a less important symbol both socially as well as spatially (Evers 1993). This may occur in cases where the people get saturated with symbols thus causing the meaning of the symbols to wash away thereby creating a decrease in the symbolic value (Colombijn 1993; Nas 1993b).

Another way of representing a city is through events – major event especially where the given event offers the host city an opportunity to “sell” the city to the outside world (Leclerc 1993). Events such as the Olympic Games and other major sports events, political summits, world expo’s are variations of ways in which a city or country can represent. To these events are often connected a series of spectacular building and other facilities that offers the host city/nation to a change to show the other nations the capabilities and splendour.

#### **4.3.2. Reality, citizens and urban symbolism**

Symbols can be found in many places in the city and as I mentioned before a city can hold as many symbolic faces as there is different groups to create these, but what does symbols mean to these people within a city. The different groups have different kinds of symbols in which they find some kind of community – a

geographical location or a building in which they can find cohesion. These symbols “belonging” to different groups can sometimes be the one and same symbol, only interpreted differently by the different groups thus causing the boundaries of the symbolic order to blur or overlap each other (Evers 1993). These vague boundaries can thereby also become subject to “stealing”. Stealing in the sense that dominant groups of people or even authorities can take the meaning or appearance of established symbols found amongst “rival” groups and make them into their own in an attempt to win the other group over and legitimizing the dominant group even further (Evers 1993). This may cause groups without any real power or groups stripped of power to find meaning and expression in informal or unofficial symbols (Colombijn 1993). It can be stated that urban symbolism provides a field where competition between different interest group can flourish – for better or for worse (Colombijn 1993). Examples where religious places and buildings have been subject to fighting and terrorism are numerous; the 9/11 tragedy in New York City where a prominent western-world symbol was destroyed is another way of showing how symbols are the centre of conflict between different groups of people. But competition in the cases where urban symbolism is used to separate people is not always the case as urban symbolism also has the effect of

bringing different people together in a joint effort to achieve a goal (Colombijn 1993). This is frequently utilized in cases concerning a newly found freedom like post-colonialism where national pride and identity is on the agenda; utilized through the use of images and campaigns where the idea is to familiarise the meaning of symbols to the wide public thereby creating a common understanding of what the city or country represents (Leclerc 1993).

We can now ask ourselves what is important, in terms of symbolic relevance, to us as citizens and not addressed to the city or country per say. Symbols should be considered relevant when aiding us in constructing a socio-spatial image of the city (Evers 1993). Here buildings becomes symbolic and acts as signs or identity markers in the production of urban images and it is argued that “[t]he culture and social structure of a society are reflected in the shape of its cities.” (Evers 1993, p. 81). Evers also state that this, in empirical terms, means that

*“an “image of the city” determines which symbolic structures are noticed, remembered and declared important by various groups of city dwellers or sojourners. In turn, symbols stabilize or even determine the urban mental map. Only those who have internalized the*



*“socio-spatial image of the city” are able to orientate themselves within it. Those with diverging views and images of the city “get lost” socially as well as spatially.”* (Evers 1993, p. 81)

As the above depicts is a unified understanding of what the various structures should symbolise quite important for a city to have. Especially global cities may struggle with achieving a cohesive understanding of this due to the many nationalities it hosts. Cities and the urban symbolism found within is not a uniform entity. It is a place filled with contradictory perceptions of reality: there are rich and poor people understanding the city differently; there are beautiful buildings and parks but also decaying districts. However, not all images of a city is derived directly from the physical structures but may just as well be derived from associations made in relation to the official representation constructed and communicated through various media (Nas 1993b). The images of cities mediated around the world are biased (Nas 1993b); biased in the sense that the images of cities that are being portrayed are artificial, studio-like images of cities, no way near of depicting the actual city - a media twist of realities. Nas (1993b) further argues that cities will, naturally, try to present their city as a beautiful, attractive and modern city.

A city for the elitist with many touristic qualities and all these systematically disseminated positive images are bound to affect on perception of the city in the minds of both the residents and the rest of world (Nas 1993b).

#### **4.4. Analytical framework**

This section is intended to conceptualise the above theory concerning both storytelling and urban symbolism in a way that ties the two concepts together and makes them operational for further analysis. It has throughout this chapter become clear that the unifications of the two concepts storytelling and urban symbolism can provide a good contribution when doing urban planning in terms of understanding what the stories are really about and how they matter in real life. I believe that a merging of the two concepts can offer a more practically orientated way to look at how the representations of Shanghai are seen through the eyes of Danish expats.

## Shanghai

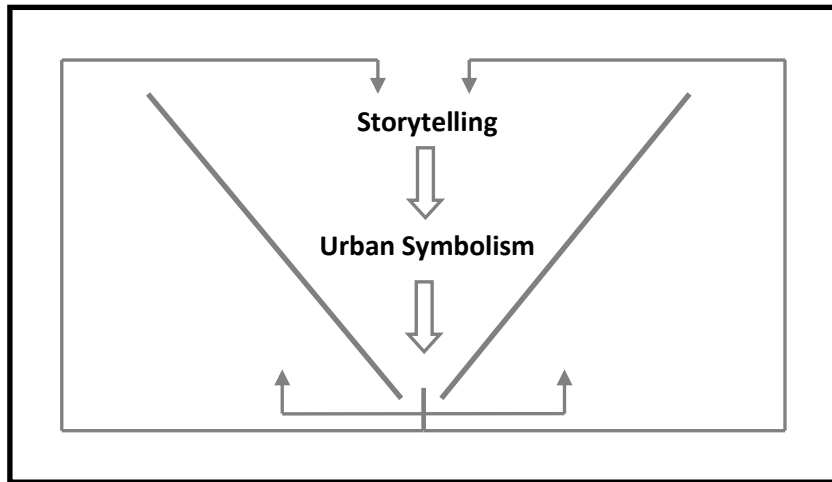


Figure 2 – Perception model of the two theories merged. Own figure

Figure 2 shows how storytelling and urban symbolism are ordered in a hierarchy like approach. Storytelling, in the above model, represents a discursive reality. Discursive in the sense that written words are very lightly to subject to plural interpretation and can easily be twisted, misinterpreted and misused but at the same time real in the sense that stories itself has a power and ability to shape the way we conceive the city and the way the physical city is planned – it can be constitutive to our lives. Urban symbolism, however, offers a more “specialised” way of looking

this as it should be conceived as the physical expression of a given story. The stories have become materialised into a concrete entity that can be discussed and analysed more specifically. This is depicted in the figure by the v-shaped funnel that shows how “measurable” I find the two concepts when doing analysis. The outcome in the figure (represented by the arrowed lines) is the interpretation or the experienced reality of stories and physical symbols seen through the eyes of different groups or citizens. Each arrowed line leading away from the bottom of the funnel should be conceived as an individual interpretation made by a group or the like; some interpretations are the official ones where another is seen through the eyes of the Danish expats. As the figure shows are some the arrows leading back up to the top of the funnel in a cycle-like manor where other arrows are not being recycled. This process of recycling is contributing in adding inputs to new stories and helps to justify the use of storytelling in this context. So what is needed to analyse representation in Shanghai seen through the eyes of Danish expats? The above theory revealed key-element that each can offer a piece of understanding when made operational for further analysis. The theory revealed that:

- Different actors construct the images of the city
- A city holds many different symbolic faces that each interprets reality differently thereby creating plural stories.
- Planning stories and urban symbolism are constitutive thus affecting the choices we make and the way we act and shapes our reality.
- Stories are built upon a geographical claim (the physical city)
- Memory and old practices tend to stick to a geographical claim and gives identity to that specific area
- Spaces contains physical signs of what the story is really about
- A difference between official media-promoted representation and local perception of representation can exist
- Urban symbols and stories holds elements of time: past and/or future (shaping reality in a bid to mend old wounds or in a attempt to shape the future)

The group of people which this project revolves are, as mentioned, Danish expats living in Shanghai and therefore I find it relevant to investigate how they interpret the representation found in- and created by the “official” Shanghai. How do the

Danish expats interpret representation juxtaposed to the interpretation found in the “official” representation in Shanghai? My analytical approach in answering this question will consists of three steps:

- 1) **Official representation in Shanghai:** identifying and establishing an understanding of the “official” representation in Shanghai.
- 2) **Interviews with Danish expats:** gain insight into the interpretation made by the Danish expats living in Shanghai
- 3) **Overall Interpretation:** Identify the meaning of the gathered data and discussion of the significance of findings.

Before initiating these three steps I will present some information about the Shanghai case in terms of basis knowledge concerning the city, the demography, the history and the present status of development as well as relevant future plans.

## 5. THE CASE OF SHANGHAI

*This chapter offers a brief insight into the history and development of Shanghai. This is done to create a platform for further analysis in line with approach described in the theory chapter.*

### 5.1. The Overall History of Shanghai

The history of Shanghai can be traced back to around 500 B.C. where it was established as a small fishing village (Appendix F). The strategically good positioning in the Yangtze River Delta and at the coastline of China meant that the city of Shanghai had developed into a thriving city of commerce by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (Y. Chen 2007). This development also caused an outside influence on Chinese culture bringing along foreign merchants and products that ultimately resulted in a corruption of the Chinese way of life though the opium trade that estimated had left 10 % of the total Chinese population opium addicts. This resulted in a conflict where the Chinese officials seized and destroyed approximately 20,000 chests of opium from British merchants. This was the initiating factor in what is known as the Opium Wars that ended in a Chinese defeat and the signing of the Treaty

of Nanking in 1842 (Henriot 2007) and the Treaty of Humen in 1843 where China was forced to open several cities for foreign settlements thus creating concession areas in Shanghai and other cities (Whitehand & Kai 2006).



**Picture 4 - Map of China** (China Connection Tours 2012) **Edited by author**

Shanghai was divided into three concession areas or separate zones: the International Settlement consisting of a British/American Settlement, The French Concession and the Chinese Settlement each carrying special characteristics thus creating a city with different functional districts (Shanghai People's fine arts publishing House 2010) with the center of the city being concentrated around the area "the Bund", containing banks and other financial institutions, commercial compounds,

consulates and various clubs, as the showcase of western architecture and lifestyle (Henriot 2010).

This “open port” city was under high if not total influence and management of the foreign settlers which influenced and opened the city to the world to an extent that branded Shanghai “the Paris of the east” for its glamour and tree-lined avenues, “the whore of the east” for housing the western decadence in terms of brothels and other “sinful” activities or the “the New York of the west” as the city became full international banks and trade firms (Henriot 2010; Shanghai People’s fine arts publishing House 2010) – Shanghai had become a global city. All these nicknames are elements of the stories concerning the activities that Shanghai was host to during the period from 1843 and until the Second World War and 1949 where communist revolution took back the cities as they established the People’s Republic of China (Shanghai People’s fine arts publishing House 2010). This pre-communistic episode in the Chinese and especially Shanghai history has had a great influence in both the mentality as well as the physical appearance of Shanghai – the city still displays a western influence visible in the zoning, architecture and way of life (Wu 2004) and many of the people that moved to Shanghai in this period brought with them many sorts of individual living

habits that gradually has merged into a characteristic Shanghai mentality (Shanghai People’s fine arts publishing House 2010).

## **5.2. Shanghai Post Communism**

In the time around the Second World War Shanghai was occupied by the Japanese including the international settlements and many foreigners were interned. After the war negotiations concerning a handover of many of the Treaty Port Cities were initiated leading to a decline in western settlements and influence in Shanghai. Consequently, in 1949, the China Communist Party took over management of China and Shanghai and took on a more isolated strategy more or less cut off from the global scene (Y. Chen 2007) meaning that over the following 30 years Shanghai experienced infrastructural neglect and disinvestment (Wu 2004). Shanghai although remained the largest contributor of China’s revenue and acted as a major pillar of the planned economy and during that time experienced a growth in population (Wu 2004). In 1978 China initiated a set of reforms – an open-door policy - that during the 1980’s resulted in Shanghai amongst other cities began embarking on a rapid journey towards modernisation (Y. Chen 2007; Wu 2004) with the establishment of new zones, including the “Pudong” area as a flagship of economic development, that was planned to function as economic growth

centres. From the late 1980's to today the Pudong area has risen from a swampy, green field to one of largest economic centres in the world housing numerous Chinese and international trading business, R&D firms, and the Stock Exchange (Y. Chen 2007).

When this development began it was named the largest construction site in the world and was aided by the establishment of a new metro-line in 1995 that today has developed into one of the world's longest and busiest metro systems. Today Shanghai still holds a lot of "colonial" appearance in terms of physical attributes, landmarks and streetscapes and combined with the initiatives initiated with the open-door policy Shanghai has undertaken a modernisation path to recreate a sense of place in order to put the Shanghai back in the company with other global cities through the use of culture and prosperity (Wu 2004). Shanghai has experienced tremendous prosperity in terms of the economy and in terms of population. From 1979 to 2010 Shanghai experienced population boom as shown on Figure 4 - an increase in population at around 390 % (Appendix F).

This brief insight into the history of Shanghai revealed that the city hold a lot of history and the functionality contemporary usage of it implies a potential rewriting of that history as it is a city on the move. The question is now how this is expressed and enacted.

The following chapter will set out to describe the representation found in Shanghai.

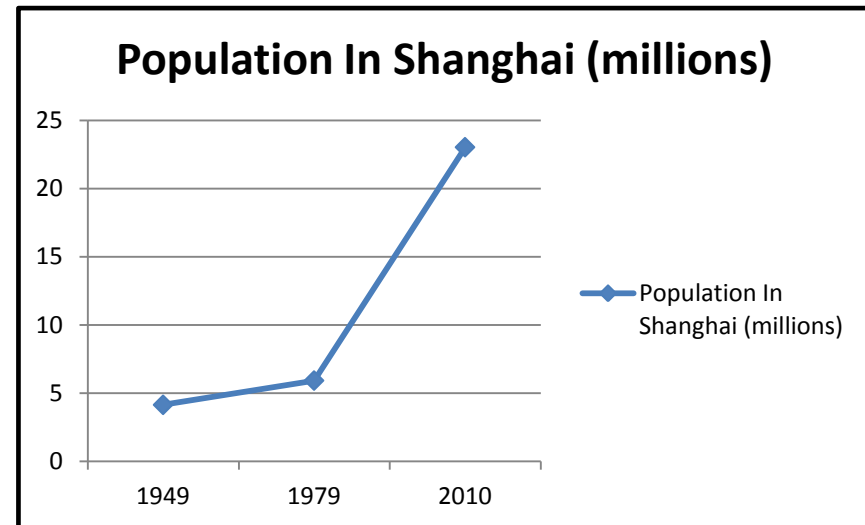


Figure 3 - Population in Shanghai (Appendix F)

## 6. REPRESENTATIONS IN SHANGHAI

*This chapter is going to provide a “base-line” of understanding concerning “official” representations found in Shanghai i.e. the selected areas of Pudong and the Bund along with key representations which does not necessarily limit itself to a certain geographical area but has a broader span. In these cases the relevance of each of the representations will be argued. This is done in order to present the necessary and relevant information concerning official representation in Shanghai; to give insight into how the city of Shanghai is representing itself and is being represented to the outside world by others. This exercise will consequently reveal the view the city has on itself and the view that is being distributed to others - what is important to the city - thereby exposing the symbolic faces constructed by and for the city in the attempt to represent itself. This preliminary part of the analysis is both meant to give insight into the representation found in Shanghai as well as act as the centre of discussion from which the further analysis concerning Danish expats will revolve. The following part will however set out to create a limitation of the different actors and media in which the official representation*

*can be found. This limitation is done to align the focus of the analysis to match the theory described in Chapter 4.*

### 6.1. Limiting representation

When setting out to analyse the representation of a city that is directed towards other parts of the world I find it relevant to look at the actors, agencies and media that join in the distribution of the representations and how they communicate and perceive the city as product that is meant to be commercialised and sold. The representations in Shanghai should therefore, in this context, be conceived as commercialised stories and symbols. By selecting this type of platform I am choosing not to look at the actual decision makers and urban planners in Shanghai and their work as the people who essentially decide the planning and appearance of the city. I am selecting this approach as I find that it is the interpretations of reality made by different people or organisations that is important – the different stories and symbolic meanings given to the city by, in this case, the Danish expats juxtaposed to the more commercial stories and symbols produced and mediated by a group of actors that aim at “selling” Shanghai. Another argument for choosing this approach is the debate on the constitutive element laid out in the theory chapter where it was made clear that both storytelling and urban symbolism are constitutive to our reality when presented to us.

Therefore, a look at the representation that is distributed and mediated to tourists (and thus also current and future expats), Chinese migrants or people interested in the city through various agencies is more relevant in this case than looking at the process of deciding on- and planning the appearance of the city. More specifically is the limitation going to be confined to looking at material concerning the commercial representations of Shanghai as a city and possible destination. These materials will found in places such as web-based (including TV created) platforms as well as looking at materials found in physical versions (see Table 2).

Platforms	
Web-based	Physical-based
- Tourist agencies	- International guidebooks
- News paper articles	- Locally produced tourist material
- Viral marketing	- Films

**Table 2 - Platforms for analysing official representation in Shanghai**

When selecting material for both the web-based and the physical based platform I have limited the selection to contain only the most popular carriers which includes: the most visited WebPages, the most viewed video clips and the most well known and

recognised books and films. In other words is the limitation confined to the material that is easy accessed and right at our fingertips as easy access often means distributing to content on a wider scale. This way of selecting material to analyse allows me to get an insight and understanding of the material that is actually being presented to the broad public whether they live in Shanghai or are situated in Denmark or any other country. It furthermore aids me to understand the reconstruction of reality that is going on in Shanghai in this case referring to concepts mentioned in the theory chapter. This way Shanghai is thinking about “Shanghai” as a city and destination can consequently shed light on a reality that the city may have built up in terms of self-promotion or in the attempt to attract expats and tourists. This motive or self-perception does not necessarily correlate with the perceptions made by the Danish expats as these perceptions of reality between both the city of Shanghai and the Danish expats can vary a lot.

The following parts will set out to analyse the official representations in Shanghai based on the above frame as well as own experiences made during a 2 month stay in Shanghai where observations regarding the above mentioned themes were made. These personal experiences will be used to add or discard information through personal reasoning built upon my observations and insight gained during the stay.



## **6.2. Shanghai towards the outside world – representing the city**

Most guidebooks tend to narrow the most important sightseeing of a city down to a manageable 10 step tour program or so. Go see items 1-10 and then you know what is worth seeing and experiencing in that city. The official representations of Shanghai in this kind of setting are also quite uniform and describing the characteristics of it would be straightforward. Take any international guidebook about Shanghai and in it you will find a top 10 list of thing to do and see while there. Two days of sightseeing and you are done – goodbye Shanghai. It is perhaps not that impressive for a city of close to 25 million inhabitants and a label calling it the *Paris of the east*. However, to be fair one should bear in mind that Shanghai may want to represent itself through other ways than a traditional European style of old, impressive buildings and cultural history dating back to before the birth of Christ. A city like Shanghai may very well want to represent the modernity of the city or through other flagships elements such as simple, vibrant street life that cannot be captured, scheduled or made available on the day the tour bus arrives.

The following sub-chapters will set out to analyse which stories and symbols that is being highlighted as the “official” face of

Shanghai; what is important to show when commercialising Shanghai. The analysis will divided up into a section concerning the Bund area, a section concerning the Pudong area and a section concerning miscellaneous representation found in Shanghai that do not necessarily have a geographical boundary but still has significance to the understanding and coherence of the analysis. The three sections will all be analysed according to the build-up found in Table 1 starting with the miscellaneous, non-geographical representations.

### **6.2.1. “Non-geographical” representations**

In terms of representations that are not always limited to a given geographical location or have relevance to the understanding of the official representation, I find it important to look at incidents, actors and acts of behaviour that help in the understanding of how Shanghai is portraying itself – the general nature of the way of thinking about themselves or how they are being looked upon by others. This sub-chapter will consequently be divided up into smaller sections that each describes a “case” of relevance to this understanding.

#### **6.2.1.1. *The Shanghai World Expo***

A world exposition is an excellent opportunity for any city to show the world what their city and country is about. The

symbolic meaning that may be stored in this kind of representation can be potentially massive. Since the first world exposition some 150 years ago in London opened the aim or purpose of the fair was primarily “to display the fruits and achievements“ (Minter 2010) of the given city. The 2010 exposition in Shanghai is no exception as the city and country of China saw this event as a way of promoting tourism and especially improving the urban image of Shanghai (Jing & Rong 2010).



**Figure 4 - Merging of the official emblem (left) and the official theme (right) (Shanghai 2010)**

The official slogan of the event was “Better City – Better Life” and the theme of the expo that this slogan supports is also very much connected to a focus on a prosperous city as a way to

enhance many facets of life and this is where Shanghai serves as an brilliant example.

The official emblem, as shown on Figure 4, depicts an image of three people holding hands. The people, you, me and him/her, symbolises a one big family and is furthermore inspired by the Chinese character “世” that means “the world” (Shanghai 2010). This emblem therefore has a dual symbolic meaning that is supposed, as stated by the organizers of the expo, to bring the diverse urban cultures of the world closer together and to live in cities of harmony (Shanghai 2010). A city of harmony is also what the response to theme “Better City, Better Life” where a city of harmony should be about *“harmonious co-existence of diverse cultures, harmonious economic development, harmonious living in the age of science and technology, harmonious functioning of communities [...]”* (Shanghai 2010). This makes the Expo very much about presenting Shanghai (and China) as a place that demonstrates openness and furthermore shows the ability to unite economic progress with the good life. This again can be said to hold a dual symbolic meaning as it reveals a desire in Shanghai (and China) to welcome the world, or perhaps wanting to be welcomed by the world especially in terms of economy as wells as presenting a new way of thinking and living to the inhabitants of China. As one of the major financial centres of Asia the city of

Shanghai is in the process of building an international city where international status and image really matters and one way to gain a lot of awareness and influence is through the Shanghai Expo (Xue et al. 2012; Jing & Rong 2010). This becomes quite clear in thoughts about the event made by the organizers of the Shanghai World Expo as they view “*the six month event as nothing less than Shanghai's coronation as the next great world city*” (Minter 2010). The expo is therefore a good way to improve the national image through the symbolism that can be found in both the pavilions of the different countries and especially through the act of hosting the expositions; it builds a world-wide reputation through marketing (Xue et al. 2012). Through this marketing the world should form a picture of Shanghai as a city that is a “*contemporary symbol of all that is new [and] vibrant*” (Minter 2010) – the future is an obsession in Shanghai and the Shanghai Expo serves as an elaborate nation and city branding tool (Xue et al. 2012). The expo in Shanghai symbolises the step Shanghai is taking to become and be accepted as a key factor in the global market – both financially and cultural. In connection to this I find it important to highlight the desire Shanghai has to achieve worldwide recognition through massive exposure that is rooted in symbolic gestures – being the best by breaking the records. The Shanghai World Expo managed to achieve new records in the

number of participants, the number of visitors, the size of the exposition site and the money the event cost (Guanqun 2010; Na 2011). I find this a clear indicator of what the tendency in Shanghai is currently about – a great push forward in the desire to become a world city and an economic power factor.

The above described section show how an event can be used to paint a picture of a city. The expo in Shanghai symbolises a desire to show both the inhabitants within Shanghai but especially the outside world that Shanghai is a capable city on the way forward and a city that is ready to embrace the rest of the world and be embraced as a vital character in the international arena. The expo is a story about the development of Shanghai from a historic Chinese city, through oblivion, and into the flagship of modern China as a world city and this story can be found in other parts of Shanghai as well namely Pudong which will be describe later on in this chapter.

#### **6.2.1.2. Fashion, shopping and dining**

Shanghai has though history been regarded as one of the most hip places in Asia. The city has a reputation as being the place to be when talking about shopping and dining due to a huge variety of department stores, super sized malls and gourmet restaurants. It has become an integrated part in the city as the Shanghai

Municipal Government (2010) writes: “A great many commercial streets, business zones and business towns form areas which integrate business, tourism and culture together [...]”. This statement indicates a connection between the everyday life and what the importance or preferred choices are in terms of tourism and business from a municipal point of view – an indication that gives reasons to believe that Shanghai are trying to unite the prosperous business life with the more commercial aspect; all in all an indication that Shanghai has a desire to be a modern more western orientated city. This is however not a new thing as described:

*Shanghai owes its reputation as the most fashionable city in China to the calendar posters, whose print runs once numbered in the tens of millions and whose distribution reached from China's interior to Southeast Asia. The basic idea behind the poster – associating a product with an attractive woman to encourage subconscious desire and consumption [...] (D. et. al. Harper 2011, p. 174)*

These mentioned calendar poster was manufactured during the early 1920's and onwards and did furthermore introduce new

fashion ideals and ways of social behaviour to the many women in China (D. et. al. Harper 2011).



**Picture 5 - Calendar poster (1920's) from Shanghai portraying a beautiful woman wearing makeup and smoking (Nan Yang Tobacco Company 1930)**

This is a strong type of symbolic gesture that is meant to communicate the preferred lifestyle in Shanghai to other places and thereby validating the modern area and presence of the foreign concessions in Shanghai throughout China and Asia. This

is of course not an urban planning issue as such but still it lies in the periphery of what is, or at least somewhat connected to what would be considered as a way of branding a city today. Today in a stronger connection to actual urban planning we find architecture, visions and strategies as stories and symbols that are aimed at the same as the above calendar poster but are utilized more physically. Shanghai did however lose some of its fashion reputation during the period from World War 2 and until the opening to outside world around the late 1980's but has since tried to reclaim the status and are self proclaiming that *"Whether you are here for business or pleasure [...] Shanghai is one of the top destinations for dining [...] Offering some of the best nightlife scene in all of Asia as Shanghai truly comes alive after dark [...] Shanghai is fast becoming the fashion centre of Asia [...]"* (Tourist TV Asia 2013). Shanghai is a city that likes to show a modern atmosphere which can said to true in most of its aspects but especially in terms of wining and dining, Shanghai is a city where things are unfolding as many of the tourist agencies describes. *"Shanghai has the most colorful and elegant nightlife in China. Here you can find China's funkiest and most fashionable crowd, leading the tastes and trends of entertainment fashion"* (ChinaTourOnline.com 2013a) or the restaurants in Shanghai today is a *"reflection of the city's craving for foreign*

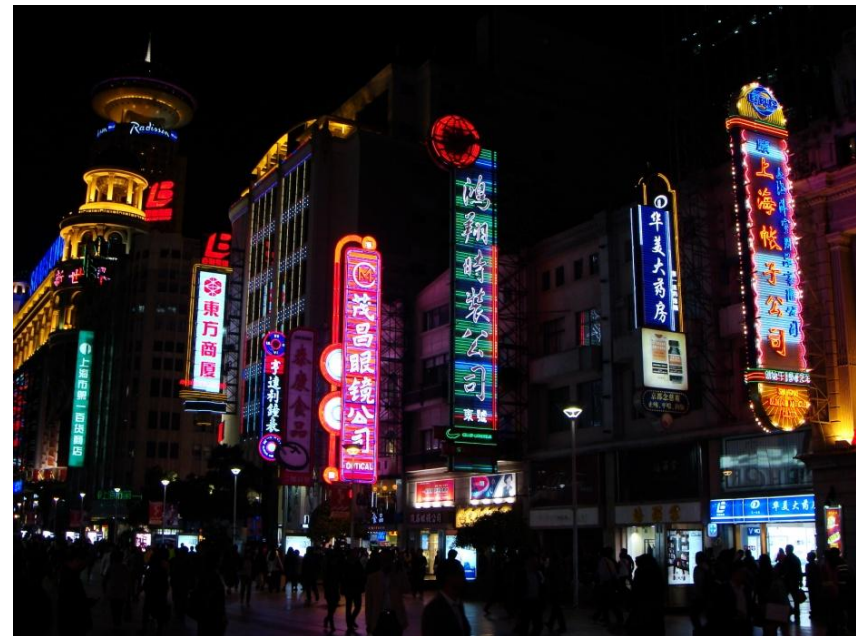
*trends and tastes"* (D. et. al. Harper 2011, p. 189); *"A few years from now people are going to talk about "the new Shanghai kitchen" due to the present experimental nature of the art of cooking that seems to get its inspiration from all over China and the world"* (Hansen, 2010, p. 87) (translated by author). This modern lifestyle seems to capture the spirit of Shanghai and the modernity is a symbol of the city is seeking either to influence western ideals in a Shanghai-way or perhaps more likely that the city is seeking a more western like appearance. The expats in Shanghai can be said to be an expression of this desire and the expats seems to be adopting or adding to this lifestyle as one guidebook describes:

*Without its bars, this city would have a social and emotional wasteland. Well-financed, hard-working and homesick expats see Shanghai's drinking culture as an indispensable ally, so watering holes occupy the very hub of expat social life* (D. Harper, 2008, p. 120).

Just like the case with wining and dining and in tune with the fashion aspect we find shopping. This aspect is huge part of the identity of the city as it boasts of being the number 1 shopping venue in Asia and Shanghai is actively using this quality to attract

tourists and furthermore western expats in terms of having a cultural climate that is suiting to their lifestyle and preferences when residing there. One tourist agency writes that a “[p]art of Shanghai’s appeal lies in its extensively vibrant shopping environment” (ChinaTourAdvisors.com 2013b). This is backed up by other agencies that look upon Shanghai as “a shopping paradise. Here you can enjoy the most intimate and reassuring of commercial pleasures. The bustling Nanjing Road enjoys the reputation of “No.1 Commercial Street in China” (ChinaTourOnline.com 2013b). This, just mentioned, catchphrase about Nanjing Road is repeated throughout every single piece of data I researched thus underlining the resolve Shanghai is applying in their representation and in the effort to become what they are stating. Nanjing Road therefore stands as symbol of this resolve and as a symbol of Shanghai as being a posh, modern place that the rest of China and soon, if not now, the rest of the world should admire. The fact, however, remains that *Nanjing Road is still one of the busiest streets in Asia, and the predominant shopping venues of Shanghai* (Warr, 2007, p. 171). Nanjing Road is home to some 2 million shoppers every day (Shanghai Municipal People’s Government. 2010; Warr 2007) and Nanjing Road recently kicked the traffic out of the street to make for a new modern pedestrian street and “[n]ow small

*tourist-trains run up and down the street to show the Chinese tourists the modern spending-paradise where the airspace has been conquered by colorful neon-adds”* (Hansen, 2010, p. 80) (translated by author).



**Picture 6 - Nanjing Road at night (Picture by author)**

This shopping spot is claimed by many to be a must-go destination for travellers and the road offers an integrated shopping, dining, drinking, entertainment and sightseeing



experience (ChinaTourAdvisors.com 2013a) that provides a commercially holistic picture of what Shanghai is all about which the following quote highlights:

*“Nanjing Road was where the first department stores in China where opened in the 1920s, and where the modern era – with its new products and the promise of a radically different lifestyle – was ushered in” (D. et. al. Harper 2011, p. 165)*

I have throughout this section described how Shanghai through its historic past and present is trying to display itself as a modern city that likes a head in terms of fashion and new culture. These tendencies can also be found in other more specific places which I am going to take a closer analytical look at in the following sections. The two places – the Bund and Pudong – as the predominant carriers of culture and modernity.

### **6.2.2. The Bund**

An online Google search on “Shanghai” will immediately guide you towards either Wikipedia or one of the online tourist agencies providing information about Shanghai when selecting one of the top most hits. Close to all of these tourist agencies have this pre-mentioned top 10 lists and most of these lists is going to pick out



**Picture 7 - The Bund from above** (Forbes.com 2011)

the Bund area as the number one place to see when in Shanghai. “[The Bund has been] the symbol of Shanghai for hundreds of years.” (TravelChinaGuide.com 2013)<sup>3</sup> as one of the tourist agencies writes in their description of the Bund and this claim is

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<sup>3</sup> TravelChinaGuide.com is one of the oldest travel agencies in China and is the largest online travel agency in China.

backed up by many of the fellow agencies; “*The Bund is one of the symbols of Shanghai*” (ChinaTourAdvisors.com 2013c)<sup>4</sup>, “*The Bund is a symbol of Shanghai.*” (Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration 2013)<sup>5</sup> and also regarded by the mayor’s office as “[a] *symbol of Shanghai*” (Shanghai Municipal People’s Government. 2010).

This stretch of promenade is being presented as one of the most important pieces in the history of Shanghai not only for its immediate appearance and recreational qualities but also in the terms of its architecture that is giving it its unique looks and history attached to it and as one of the tourist agencies writes “*The Shanghai Bund is one of the renowned landmarks in Shanghai with its noted architectural complex [and is] [r]egarded as the Gallery of Worldwide Architecture*” (ChinaTourOnline.com 2009)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> ChinaTourAdvisors.com is a China-based online travel agency and tour operator. The agency is affiliated to many well known Asian travel associations.

<sup>5</sup> The Official Shanghai China Travel Website, under the Shanghai Municipal Government.

<sup>6</sup> ChinaTourOnline.com is an online operation of Xi'an ANZ International Travel Service Co., certified by China National Tourism Administration.



**Picture 8 - The Bund (Picture by author)**

As Picture 7 and 8 depicts is the Bund area containing characteristic architecture – colonial, Art Deco architecture in different shapes and form. Most of these buildings were built by the British in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to consolidate superiority and to display the power of the British empire over the Chinese (Warr 2007). The Bund is often viewed by the Chinese as “*the colonial legacy of the British empire*” (Shapiro 2005) and therefore stands as a symbol of the old Shanghai – the past – that is often remembered as a time of



oppression. Most of the buildings are covered in Chinese flags on the roof tops and on one encounter I counted over 35 flags visible from a single spot. This tendency is mutually backed up in various video clips on YouTube, both official and non-official clips, where the focus is on the Chinese flag while the clips simultaneously show the Pudong skyline blurred in the back (Dan Chung 2009; Travelflicks 2010; Tourist TV Asia 2013). It is not unusual anywhere in the world that a country is proud of their flag that symbolises their country, but it is the magnitude and sheer number of flags that makes them significant when either viewing video clips, reading books about Shanghai or simply being present there and I view this as a symbol of claiming lordship over the old colonial power – a win over the western world. Architecture is an important part of the identity of the city as the official tourist channel of Shanghai notes: *“Speaking of architecture. Shanghai is truly an amazing city where you can a look at the past but also a glimpse into the future.”* (Tourist TV Asia 2013) This quote, from a video clip available on YouTube, talks about the Bund as being the past of Shanghai where the view over to Pudong is a look into the future. The buildings on the Bund are the former symbol of money and power in Shanghai (Hansen 2010) as stated by a Danish guide book who at the same time highlight that, in fact, it is the view from the Bund that is the

real attraction – the view of Pudong’s glittering sky-scraper landscape is *“the symbol of the new China just as they [the Chinese] have seen it a thousand times before at home in front of their televisions.”* (Hansen 2010, p. 72) [translated by author].



**Picture 9 - Pudong seen from the Bund (Picture by author)**

This mesmerizing view over Pudong causes many people to neglect the sights on the Bund stretch and never even looking or caring about the qualities and history of the place which they are situated. Before coming to Shanghai I had read and heard a great

deal about the history of Shanghai, especially the Bund, but on my first trip to the Bund promenade the old colonial buildings and leisure details never became more than a footnote to me – I was too dazzled by the strangely attracting, futuristic scenery of Pudong that caught my eye immediately and after having taken the mandatory pictures I left and moved on. This way of using the Bund seems to be very common amongst visitors and adding to this I later on, on other visits, observed that most people do not face the colonial part of the Bund unless they face a camera taking their picture with the Pudong skyline in the back. This seems to be the natural thing to do which also becomes quite evident when looking at material available on YouTube where most of the video clips show how people on the Bund are using the promenade as an observation deck to take their pictures of Pudong. The case whether you search for “the Bund”, “Pudong” or “Shanghai” is that close to all of the videos are concentrated on presenting the Pudong skyline (Dan Chung 2009; Johnny Jet 2008; TravelChinaGuide.com 2012; Travelflicks 2010; Zinger1111 2009). These videos are also more or less a “picture perfect” display of the respective places they set out to describe in the sense that the videos are depicting a Shanghai with no or hardly any traffic, noise or overcrowded places; no rainy days or people walking in front of the lens – a polished symbol that is

meant to display the city in the best possible way but has a potential pitfall that this polished representation do correlate with the perceptions of tourists and expats thus causing disappointment and a later on ambiguity in the interpretation of the symbols which leads to a decrease in symbolic value. There are some exceptions from this polished display tendency that show a more nuanced picture of the city with traffic and crowds of people (Jason Yap 2011).



**Picture 10 - Pudong at night seen from the Bund (Picture by author)**

The Bund seems to be an observation deck to view Pudong rather than an attraction in itself. The renowned guide book Lonely Planet also writes that nowhere else in Shanghai are the contrast between the fading symbols of western hegemony and China's growing power contrasted to such an extent than at this exact spot (D. Harper 2008).

The Bund, however, remains a favourite spot amongst both internationals as well as Chinese travellers to spend leisure time. “*Lovers’ lane*” (Shanghai People’s fine arts publishing House 2010) or “*the most romantic corner in Shanghai*” (TravelChinaGuide.com 2013) are alternative labels to put on this tourist mecca where massive physical improvements ending in 2010 have tried to maintain and improve the setting used to consolidate both the story about romance on the Bund (TravelChinaGuide.com 2013), as well as creating a place used to enjoy Shanghai at a calmer pace or just to be amazed. As Lonely Planet China writes “[t]he optimum activity here is to simply stroll, contrasting the bones of the past with the futuristic geometry of Pudong’s skyline.” (D. et. al. Harper 2011). The latter part just mentioned about the Bund being a place to enjoy the city is also very visible in the many video clips I examined. Close to all of them show the Bund being a recreational place used by especially families with children; used to relax and spend

quality time with the loved ones in an otherwise hectic lifestyle and city (Dan Chung 2009; Johnny Jet 2008; Tourist TV Asia 2013). I also found this trend to be visible when spending time on the Bund. Many Chinese families and couples used the promenade to unwind and actually spend a lot of time there just gazing at the Pudong side or enjoying the present.

The Bund area remains an important part of the history in Shanghai and is viewed by the official Shanghai as a key symbol in their story of the city. The strong symbolic meaning of the area is displayed both through the way it is presented but also very much in the way it perceived and used by both tourists and the local Chinese inhabitants. It is an important area, if not the most important and is claimed by the official Shanghai to be the cultural centre of Shanghai and as ChinaTourAdvisor.com (2013) writes: “*If you have never been to the Bund, you have never been to Shanghai.*”.

### **6.2.3. Pudong**

On the opposite side of the Huangpu River from the Bund we find the Pudong area. It is a newly constructed district from which the essence can be shown in a single photo – the skyline as seen from the Bund side and in fact are the most viewed video clips on YouTube are pieces of film that only or predominantly depicts the skyline and nothing else (Johnny Jet 2008; Zinger1111 2009).

Pudong is impressive, but at a distance as a Danish guidebook describes (Hansen 2010). It goes on to tell [translated by author] that: *“moving around in landscape of skyscrapers with the wide boulevards and newly constructed parks makes you feel as if you are in a cold science-fiction world.”* (Hansen 2010, p. 74).



**Picture 11 - Pudong (Picture by author)**

This is not quite the idyllic description that seemed to be the case with the Bund area but it not supposed to be. Pudong is new and without any significant history and furthermore it is an area for

doing business. As Picture 11 and 12 shows is Pudong a clean-cut place that has been planned this way. The aim of developing the area in the beginning of the 1990's was to *“turn Pudong into a multifunctional, export-oriented and cosmopolitan new urban area of Shanghai and to meet the physical, functional, cultural and ecological criteria of a modern metropolis’.*” (Warr, 2007, p. 203). However, what several guidebook and internet sites are noticing is a lack of humanness or a lack of spirit in the area. This is a matter that is on the agenda within the future planning of Pudong; informal street life of service and restaurants is rising as planners are looking at ways to remedy the “Pudong moon-scape” and thereby humanize the area (Warr 2007). Some video clips are on the other hand trying to display a more human side of Pudong by mixing the futuristic with the idyllic. These videos are attempting to do the same as was has been successfully carried out in the Bund case by showing family fun and street life although in a smaller scale than the Bund (Johnny Jet 2008; Travelflicks 2010).





**Picture 12 - Downtown Pudong (Temporarily Lost 2012)**

The “official face” of Pudong is focusing on the story of Pudong as a representative for the “new Shanghai” with many iconic buildings to symbolise this development - buildings that more or less constitutes the Pudong skyline. The tall buildings and especially the Oriental Pearl Tower, the Shanghai World Financial Centre (SWFC) and the Jin Mao Tower has become the symbols of the financial comeback of Shanghai as the Asian centre of economic achievement and development (Hansen 2010)

or put in other words is the dazzling skyline of Pudong something that symbolises an amazing economic boom in Shanghai (Shanghai People’s fine arts publishing House 2010).

Shanghai and especially Pudong is about the future. It is the Chinese dream and where “*the Chinese see the Bund as a symbol of the past [they see] Pudong as their future*”. (Shapiro 2005) Pudong represents the future China as an economic power and a place of growing prosperity for all. Pudong is a showcase of China’s achievements – achieving the label as the economic centre in Asia for the next century (Warr 2007). The chairman of China at the time Pudong was in the beginning of the planning process, Deng Xiaoping, called the future Shanghai “the head of the dragon” (Warr 2007) referring to the dragon as the historical symbol of China and Shanghai as the head or leader of this dragon thus making Shanghai (Pudong) a story about the future China – the capability of China or as a guidebook tells its readers: Pudong is China’s shop window to the world (D. Harper 2008). Shanghai, therefore, has become a symbol of the new China – a China where only their ambitions are the limit; where Shanghai is strong and modern and where economic world dominance is evident. Today Pudong holds many iconic buildings that complement this visionary story about Shanghai, and especially the three buildings mentioned earlier are the most exposed

representations of this development. The majority of literature researched also highlight these buildings as the manifestation of the vision as one describes the 468 meter tall Oriental Pearl Tower: “[it is a] poured-concrete shocker of a tripod TV tower [and] has become symbolic of the Shanghai renaissance.” (D. et. al. Harper 2011, p. 179).



**Picture 13 - The Oriental Pearl Tower (Picture by author)**

Besides being grand buildings representing prosperity and future hope they also serve a supplementing purpose in which competition and showcasing is on the agenda regarding the highest and fastest anything. Descriptions about the buildings or the Pudong area in general are full of these cases - cases containing record-breaking descriptions and the symbolism is unmistakable: we are the best!



**Picture 14 - SWFC, Jin Mao Tower and the Shanghai Tower under construction (Picture by author)**

Take for instance the Shanghai World Financial Centre (Picture 14) where the building is branded with labels about having the highest observation deck in the world (100<sup>th</sup> floor), the highest hotel in the world (floors 79 to 93), the highest swimming pool in the world (in 2008), the highest restaurant in the world and highest library in the world (D. et. al. Harper 2011; Johnny Jet 2008; Tourist TV Asia 2013) and besides that it is the highest building in China. This has strong symbolic meaning attached to it as it symbolises that nothing is unachievable and the future lies in Shanghai (China). These are labels that are often used when talking about Shanghai or Pudong in particular and are important elements in various descriptions about the city in guidebooks and online as well. It seems important to the official Shanghai to be a part of both national and international competition in terms of owning a record. Pudong is a symbolic battlefield of economic achievement and development using buildings and other engineering capabilities as their ammunition. The buildings in the Pudong skyline represent Pudong, the new Shanghai and China from an official point of view.

I will in the following section sum up the preceding analysis.

### **6.3. Findings**

This chapter has revealed a great deal about how Shanghai is being represented in a commercial way; all the stories and symbolic meanings that join in the display of the commercial perception of Shanghai that is being mediated and distributed to tourists, expats and other people interested in Shanghai.

I found that the “official representation in Shanghai displays:

- A dream about the future.
- A decrease in the display of traditional culture and history.
- A modern and international city with a western touch.
- The showcase of China's/Shanghai's achievement in Pudong and through the Shanghai Expo 2010.
- Many physical manifestations of these achievements.
- New ways of using old symbols.

Shanghai is a city on the move – a modern business city that is trying to sell the Chinese dream about a rich, glamorous future in the very centre of economic development and cultural happenings. This dream is being presented to the Chinese people and towards the outside world somewhat at the expense of the old, historic Shanghai. Everyone agrees in “theory” that the Bund is one of the main symbols of Shanghai but I find that this is not the actual reality as this old symbol of Shanghai is being erased

and forgotten and submitted to a decrease in symbolic value. The place now merely functions as a physical platform for Shanghai to display the preferred symbolic meaning, or in other words the right story to tell – the future story (manifested in Pudong) that does not star the Bund. The Bund, nonetheless, remains one of the most important tourist sites and does still symbolize and represent the commercial Shanghai that is ever-growing focusing on other aspects of representation than a traditional Chinese. The Bund is now more a version that is about showing everyone how the future Shanghai and China are going to look like – prosperous, fashionable, record-breaking and modern. Shanghai is determined to become and maintain an international, business and cultural name thereby showing the outside world that Shanghai is capable, and this is especially underlined by the many symbolic buildings found in Pudong and through the event of the Shanghai Expo in 2010. These are meant to be carriers of the achievements in Shanghai and China. This tendency is mutually backed up by the international touch Shanghai has earned through a western approach to cooking, nightlife, fashion and shopping where especially Nanjing Road stands out as a symbol of this tendency.

I find it interesting to juxtapose these findings to the point of view visible at the Danish expats; how is this group of people experiencing these representations and what has significance to

them compared to the above findings? The next chapter is going to shed a light on how the Danish expats are viewing the representations of Shanghai.



## **7. THE DANISH PERCEPTION OF REPRESENTATION**

*This chapter will in continuation of the preceding analysis going to look at how Danish expat experience and perceive storytelling and urban symbolism in Shanghai. The analysis is going to take departure in the mentioned preceding analysis of chapter 6 where findings of the commercial representation of Shanghai are put forth and examined. This is done in order to look at the juxtaposition between the more “official” or commercial layout counter the layout found amongst the Danish expats. This juxtaposition is aimed at shedding a light on how perceptions and interpretation can differ or even come to look alike. The built up of this analysis will take the point of departure in four interviews with Danish expats living in Shanghai where the first step of this part-analysis will look at the Danish expats view on the perceptions of identity Shanghai is presenting to a commercial audience – the representations of Shanghai in a Danish expat perspective. This step will hereafter lead to analysing the stories and symbolism in the two key geographical areas of the Bund and Pudong seen again from a Danish expat perspective.*

### **7.1. The expat view on the self-perception of Shanghai**

I have throughout chapter 6 analysed some key aspects in what I would call the self-perception of Shanghai or the commercial identity of the city in areas that include both the Bund and Pudong as geographical entities but also a more general look into aspects of the everyday life in the city. The following part will look at the view on the city made by the Danish expats from this more general perspective.

#### **7.1.1. The Chinese dream**

Shanghai is the Chinese city of the future! There is no doubt about that the “official” story of Shanghai is naming the city as the number one financial city in China and the flagship of prosperous economic and human development symbolised by numerous iconic and futuristic buildings, grand architecture, engineering and modern lifestyle – the model city for the future China. This story provides a very uniform basis for representation of Shanghai and leaves very little doubt about the vision for the city. This aspect is therefore also quite evident amongst the Danish expat who all see Shanghai nearly alike the “official” story. But this is actually not a universal Danish feature as all the interviewees did not know anything or very little about Shanghai before moving there. Through my interviews and observations

made in Shanghai I observed indicators of a link between the amounts of time spend in the city and how much Danish expats share the perception of representation with the “official” Shanghai. Danish expats having only spend a few months or so in Shanghai seems to have a more personal perception of the representation whereas the expats who have lived a longer period in the city seems to share more of the “official” perception. This is evident in the way they talk about their everyday life in the city and the way they experience things. The people who have lived there the longest talk about Shanghai pretty much as a guidebook would while the “new” expats still possess innocence in regards to having personal perceptions about the city intact. This could perhaps have something to with what they knew and expected of the city but when asking the interviewees about their pre-existing knowledge about the city, close to all of them answered word by word that they only knew that it was a business city:

*“I did not have a very strong impression of Shanghai before moving there. I remember I got in touch with my boss because I was applying for a job in Hongkong and Singapore because I wanted to go to a big, mega-city in Asia because I would like to go to Asia but still have the international atmosphere of other foreigners*

*so at that time that meant Beijing, Singapore and Hongkong so I did really think Shanghai at that time in that perspective but I got in touch with my boss and I Googled Shanghai and I saw pictures of the Bund and all the skyscrapers and I thought OK that is a really cool city.”*  
(Andersen, 2013, p. 1)

A thing that is common, which is also evident in the above quote, amongst the interviewed Danish expats is the sense of that Shanghai is containing a western like atmosphere which seems to appeal to all of them. The Danish expat seems to be experiencing a need or desire to live in a city where they can maintain a lifestyle that is similar to the one of a person in a Danish city. This desire of course requires some attributes that fit the different expats preferred lifestyle and many of the expats also tell about how they view Shanghai as *“a great city and I think there is a lot of opportunities for entertaining yourself...I mean Shanghai I very western orientated for a Chinese city and you can practically live any life you want to in Shanghai.”* (Christensen, 2013, p. 1). Another expat likewise states that Shanghai is: *“a nice city still because there are all these possibilities for shopping, going out and they all these parks. A city has plusses and minuses and the plusses for me is the things that can make me feel like I still am in*

*touch with Denmark like shopping western things and groceries.”* (Jakobsen, 2013, p. 1-2). Like the views from the two Danish expats I just mentioned it becomes clear from all the Danish expats that their views of what is important to them varies and I find this to be a natural thing. One expat explains how:

*“It is a city with a lot of different influences like when I look out of my window, I live very close to Yuyuan Garden, so I can see all these old traditional Chinese houses with the iconic types of roofs and behind that I can see the bottle opener [SWFC] and all the other skyscrapers in Pudong so it is just so many different impressions you get at the same time and I love that about Shanghai and I think that is one of the most interesting things about being here that you get all these different things in one package – both the past and the future.”* (Andersen, 2013, p. 2)

These views on Shanghai and the variation of them can be caused by many things but when asked about their expectations towards their stay before leaving one answered that:

*“It is far more chaotic and far noisier than I imagined that it could be I mean there were people everywhere and the traffic...so chaotic and even though I read about this in the books it came as a shock to me that it was to such a high degree. Also the thing about the Chinese not being good at English also came as a shock to me even though I had heard about it before I went. The whole thing was far more extreme when I got there than I imagined before going there.”* (Jakobsen, 2013, p. 2)

Another expats explain how his thoughts about Shanghai were build upon images of a typical Chinese city as he describes as images of a poor city with almost ghetto like areas – low budget – for poor people but when arriving in Shanghai he was totally surprised because there is *“a place like Pudong that is mind-blowing.”* (Prabakaran, 2013, p. 2). Interviewee Caroline Andersen (2013) also tell about how she found there to be a very big difference between what she expected and what she actually experienced when arriving in Shanghai and how her home research about the city did not live up to what she saw:

*“I think Shanghai has a lot more to offer than just the new buildings and the modern city so I do not think it is portraying itself in the best way. It could be better” [...] “I think it could be a lot better especially because I have my own experiences where I had really no idea of what of to expect when coming here and what is shown from the tourist agencies are often the Pudong side of the story and I think that the other side of the story and the other side of the river is much more interesting and that is also the impression I get when I have friend of family visiting me here they are so impressed because they had no idea that Shanghai also looks like that – like the old part.”* (Andersen, 2013, p. 3).

These examples clearly show how different perceptions of a city can be as some people like to do things that other may not so it become quite difficult to set up a homogeneous picture of what the Danish expat think about Shanghai. This could perhaps be amplified by the massive cultural and physical change Shanghai is undertaken - a change towards a modern city. This aspect has also been noticed by one of the interviewees Anders Christensen

– the expats interviewed that has lived there the longest – as he notices how *“Shanghai is very special because there is very little Chinese history in the city so Shanghai is a very modern city”* (Christensen, 2013, p. 2) and he further adds:

*“I think Shanghai is a metropol in the sense that if you were blindfolded and released in the middle of Pudong or a crowded area you would not know whether you where Shanghai, Singapore, Hongkong, New York or any other major city. It is not a good representative for China, it is a metropol.”* (Christensen, 2013, p. 5)

As analysed in the previous chapter it is apparent that this change towards a modern city is very deliberate and Pudong stands as a shining example of the change. The Danish expats when asked about how they see the “official” story in comparison to their own experiences and perceptions of the city – if the story matches their own view - they are mostly agreeing with the commercial story of Shanghai:

*“If they want to a big international and global city where they attract foreign companies and citizens then yes – they are doing what should*

*be doing but in terms of attracting tourists then it are maybe only the skyscrapers because there is not any genuine Chinese culture here. The city is not that authentic. So if they want to have this image of being a rich global city then it is the right image.”* (Jakobsen, 2013, p. 2)

Another expat explains how she thinks this story about the modern Shanghai over the historic Shanghai is evident due to *“that this is what China is proud of in the moment. Being a country a with great economic growth and all their modern buildings are symbols of wealth, innovation and things happening fast and I think that is what they are proud of and what they want other countries to see and not how China was a hundred years ago.”* (Andersen, 2013, p. 3). Charlotte Jakobsen (2013) elaborates further as she states that this is just how China is at the moment. *“They want to show the world how good they are it is not just Shanghai or another part of China. China wants to show the world that they are leading and moving forward and they want to appear innovative and financial strong” [...]* *“They want to show that they are superior.”* (Jakobsen, 2013, p. 4). It seems as though China and especially Shanghai are regarding a western, international type of development as a development that is signalling prosperity and power and one of the interviewees also

notice how deliberate this development really is planned as well as the effect of it:

*“Shanghai did something to create a setting for this type is development with an international scene, big buildings. When you walk around Shanghai you will see many internationals but I heard that only 15 years ago you would find very few of them. Something changed. And the Chinese people like that we are there so it feels like they are building a bigger city just for you. Come, we want your knowledge!”* (Prabakaran, 2013, p. 3)

A big part of this setting is the self-promotion (the type which the previous chapter is based upon) that is big part of modern Chinese culture as most Chinese cities want to compete not only with the outside world but also internally amongst themselves. This competition often results in various video clips that is aimed at endorsing a given city or municipality. These clips are often used in TV ads directed towards Chinese tourists but on many occasions find their way onto a broader market as they end up on YouTube or on the Websites of tourist agencies. Here is Shanghai no exception and Anders Christensen explains how he

encountered these videos on a half-day seminar about how to start up a company in China which was being held in one of the smaller Shanghai municipalities:

*“They actually started out by playing an official video for the local municipality. It was like a tourist video where they were telling the story of this small municipality and everything that was good and they had these architect movies that was about how is this waterfront of the municipality going to look 5 years from now. This seemed like a tourist video for a whole nation but was in fact just a small municipality so it is definitely a big thing here – they all do it here with the promotion videos where they try to position themselves as the place for investors to deposit their money, place their headquarter or branch in China. But Shanghai position themselves as a place where international companies can place their headquarters or branch office so they definitely targeting foreigners both companies and individuals to come to their city.” (Christensen, 2013, p. 3)*

Anders Christensen (2013) continues on by telling that he knows that these promotion videos are providing a positive image of things or places but it is of course painting a picture about how nice everything is and are making things sound better than they actually are. I think this is an issue about choosing a path to follow in terms of the development in Shanghai which of course leads to a debate about the kind of audience the city wants to attract and whom to attract. It can be boiled down to “how to sell the city and to whom”? As it looks now it is pretty clear that in the eyes of the Danes in Shanghai and the more commercial story there is a picture of Shanghai as a modern western city but the audience is perhaps a bit more uncertain. A Danish expat states that:

*“The communication to other people needs some adjustment because when I talk to my siblings they are like: China is all bad and they are really poor but because I went there and saw I experienced that it is really good. But they have to brand themselves more to other people than business people because every businessman knows that Shanghai is there and it is happening but if you ask a doctor or another group of people they would often think*

*that this is a poor city why should I go there.  
But it is a business city”* (Prabakaran, 2013, p. 3).

Kaleb Prabakaran (2013) further elaborates that he thinks this way of targeting is somewhat misleading as many people hearing about or seeing Shanghai for the first time miss out on a the diversity the city of Shanghai otherwise has to offer because they are mainly presented with tall buildings and fancy hotels he states.

## **7.2. The Bund**

This section is going to look at the Bund; the stories and symbolism connected to that geographical spot in Shanghai though the eyes of Danish expats. The previous analysis in chapter 6 revealed how Shanghai looks upon itself in terms of symbolic value and more or less “official” stories about the Bund but how does these look juxtaposed to the perceptions of the Danish expats.

### **7.2.1. History or steppingstone**

The Bund is claimed to be the number one attraction in Shanghai but perhaps not because of its “own” qualities as a live Art Deco exhibition gallery and historic conveyer but more due to the fact that it is the best display window to the new Shanghai namely

Pudong. The story about the Bund as Shanghai’s top most sight from an “official” point of view is uniform but the interpretations are not as they often display individual preferences in terms of what one regards as worth highlighting. It looks as though most of the Danes agree on the charm of this idyllic spot and in fact they all mention the Bund as a place of importance for the identity of the city. The Bund is a significant statement of a period in time with many 19th century buildings that has been restored to perfection as Anders Christensen (2013) notes while he continues on by stating that the Bund symbolizes how Shanghai rose to be an international trading city and owing to this fact he continues on by saying that:

*“Although the history is not always in the Chinese favor with the opium war and the British was there and the French was there everybody was there it is not necessarily a pleasant memory they have but it is important to them – an important part of Shanghai and I think it is important for them to keep the buildings as a statement of that period.”*  
(Christensen, 2013, p. 4)

Kaleb Prabakaran (2013) also points out that he is surprised about how many of the old stories from the old colonies are maintained and evident in the old buildings as he would have believed that they would have been torn down in the light of the transition towards a newer image. But the importance of the Bund is not only apparent in its historic feature but also very much in connection to the newer vision of the city observable on the other side of the Huangpu River that is the identity of new Shanghai as a modern and international city (Andersen 2013; Christensen 2013; Prabakaran 2013). One expat describes the Bund in connection to this as:

*“A very important part of the story of the city where you have both old and the new part – the mix – and that is probably the most important part to me because I like that old style like the Bund and the old banks and hotels. I like the way they look and it makes me think of Shanghai in a perspective that it has always been an international city because during the last 100 years there has been international influence from Europe.”* (Andersen, 2013, p. 2)

In the above quote it also becomes evident that the Bund symbolizes a duality between the new and the old – a duality where the Bund has a symbolic, historic meaning as well as representing the new, strong Shanghai and because of this duality the Bund is also subject a form of ambiguity in symbolic value. Just as some of the interviewed Danish expats view the Bund as one of the most important features in the understanding of the city other Danish expats view the Bund as a symbol of a declining respect for the history of the city or even view it as a place where other symbolic values are less obviously pushed upon the visitors as one expat describes:

*“The Bund is a symbol of their history – of a time in their history but again if you stand on the Bund you will both see the Bund but you will also see the other side – Pudong where all the growth is situated and the Bund sort of drowns in all this new history.”* [...] *“I think they are proud of it [the Bund] but the other side [Pudong] is more important – they are more proud of Pudong than the Bund because it is the story of their own success.”* (Jakobsen, 2013, p. 3)



I think this quote captures the essence of the Bund quite well as the main purpose of the place is leaning more towards becoming a supporting character when presenting Shanghai to the public. Although the Bund is claimed to be the symbol of Shanghai in most of the examined literature used in chapter 6 it seems as though most of the Danish expats regard the Bund as a nice recreational facility as well as an important part of their Shanghai but are still aware of the new “official” and intentional symbolic meaning of the Bund namely the purpose of gazing over to the new Shanghai in Pudong. This view is what now symbolizes Shanghai to the outside world or as Anders Christensen expresses: *“if you see a picture of that skyline anywhere you would know it is Shanghai cause that is how you know Shanghai that picture taken from the Bund towards Pudong.”* (Christensen, 2013, p. 4)

### **7.3. Pudong**

This section is going to look at Pudong in the same perspective as the previous part concerning the Bund namely the stories and symbolism connected to that geographical spot in Shanghai also seen through the eyes of Danish expats. The intention is again to uncover the perceptions of stories and symbolic meanings made by Danish expats in Shanghai and juxtapose these to the findings from chapter 6.

#### **7.3.1. The new Shanghai**

Pudong is considered by many, Chinese officials, tourists, expats and Chinese people, to be the crown jewel of economic and prosperous development in both Shanghai as well as China which is why the symbolic meaning attached to the place is potentially huge. I found in the previous chapter that there is a strong commercial emphasis on the notion and images of Pudong and a uniform idea of its symbolic meaning. The overall view of Pudong by the Danish expats is also alike the one just described as they all agree that the story of Pudong is about *“the development of China and they want to be best of the best” [...]* *“They just want to show that they can beat everybody and show that we are the best and I love that mentality about we were the underdogs but now we are the big dog and we can beat everybody if we want to.”* (Prabakaran, 2013, p. 4). Anders Christensen (2013) talks about how he chose to Pudong as the place to live due to the fact that his company was situated there and it was the only place he had heard about from his colleagues at work. Pudong was the first and only thing he knew about Shanghai before leaving from Denmark and he now regards Pudong as something that:

*“symbolizes the new Shanghai” [...]* *“it is where they have all the tall buildings in*

*Shanghai in that small area and that is like a statement of what you can do. It is a statement of the prosperity of the Shanghai economy from the early 1990's and to today.” (Christensen, 2013, p. 4)*

Tall buildings are an essential part of the identity of Pudong and they, in accordance to Charlotte Jakobsen (2013), represent a larger part of the image and story of Shanghai at the moment that the Bund. She further states: *“Even though the Bund is also a big part of the Shanghai history it sort of drowns or lies in the shadow of all the other things. It is like they would rather show the image of their economic growth rather than their historic past.”* (Jakobsen, 2013, p. 3). It seems like the city is highlighting the new Shanghai in the expense of the old and thereby devaluating the symbolic meaning of these parts

Other Danish expats also did research about Shanghai before leaving home like I mentioned before and Caroline Andersen here talks about how she focused much more about the thing that were funny, superficial and easily digestible like how tall the buildings were and how fast the train could go and as she states: *“I felt a little proud that I was going to live in that city but now when I live here it does not mean anything for me anymore. That is the*

*easy things to focus on before really getting here – the impressive numbers and that you can live in a city with 23 million people but I never think about that anymore.”* (Andersen, 2013, p. 4). This statement indicates that knowledge and choices are made on the basis on information that is easily obtained and with a low significance to an expat and this has potential consequences. The previous chapter talked about how Pudong can be seen as a place with little atmosphere in terms of living and spending time – a “moon-scape” or “science-fiction” world it was called. This stands in opposition to only presenting pretty pictures and glamorous places and is, as mentioned before, natural and no one can blame anyone for choosing to do this, but the things that are rarely highlighted in the information Caroline Andersen mentioned in the previous quote can cause expats to get a false image of the city and be sent off track. Anders Christensen also notes when asked about what the first things he noticed and if they were opposed to what he expected of Pudong:

*“Pollution! I spend most of my first week on the Pudong side because that was where my office was but what struck me the most about Shanghai was probably the pollution because I came at a time where it was very visible and secondly about the Pudong side was how the*

*streets was very deserted in the evening and therefore very quietly in the evening” [...] “It was a positive surprise for me.”* (Christensen, 2013, p. 4)

This quote highlights two issues namely a negative experience that is not a part of the commercialized representation of Shanghai and secondly a pleasant surprise that is not always highlighted but of course is evident in some place. However, these perceptions are of course subjective interpretations and the individual preferences do vary from one expat to another which is why a narrow approach to representing a city can have certain incidental consequences.

#### **7.4. Findings**

This chapter has provided an insight into how Danish expats view representations in Shanghai i.e. stories and symbolic meanings attached to the lifestyle and certain physical areas.

I found that the Danish interpretation of representation in Shanghai displays:

- Lack in pre-existing knowledge about the city before moving.

- Similarities in the perception of representation between them and the “official” Shanghai.
- How the Danish expat could wish for more of the traditional Chinese culture.
- Recognition of the Bund as an independent symbol of Shanghai.
- An awareness of a symbolic duality that is being forced upon the Bund.
- A view of Pudong as being the most accurate representative of Shanghai but feel that this image can be misleading.

A shared perception of how the city of Shanghai is viewed amongst the Danish expats. This perception again coincides with the commercial story analysed in the previous chapter that provided a very uniform picture of what Shanghai is all about, namely a modern business city. Another shared quality amongst the Danish expats was their pre-existing knowledge about Shanghai – what they knew about the city before moving there – which was very limited. Here I found that what lacked in pre-existing knowledge could be found in expectation towards the features they needed or at least hoped for in the city which is characterised by a desire towards a western appearance that

enables them to maintain a lifestyle they are accustomed to. The Danish expat agrees that Shanghai offers endless opportunities for entertainment and living the life you want to but the more overall views of what is important to them varies from one expat to another. This variation is perhaps caused and/or amplified by the massive cultural and physical change Shanghai is undertaken that can cause a lot of confusion about what to expect or how to use the city. The Danish expats are, however, mostly agreeing with the commercial story of Shanghai and think this path is chosen because Shanghai wants to appear strong and superior. They also feel that Shanghai is representing itself as a western city but are not sure they are targeting all the people they should be in terms of international representation (or at least to a Danish mindset) – they think Shanghai has more to offer than only the modern part. One example of this can be found in the Bund area the Danish expats consider the Bund as an important part of the history because it represents the ascent as an international city. They all like the Bund on its own and recognize the qualities it possesses but at the same time they are aware of how the Bund represents a duality between: the old and the new both; the western hegemony and loss of it; conveyer of history and template for constructing the new vision of Shanghai. The Danish expats think Shanghai is trying to sell the idea of the Bund as a place for shopping and

other leisure activities and thereby drowning the old story of the Bund. This act is interpreted as a change in symbolism where the Bund mainly is functioning as a viewing platform towards Pudong and a footnote in contemporary importance. Here the Danish expat again agrees with the commercial story as they view Pudong as the new and perhaps more accurate representative for Shanghai with many spectacular buildings and constructions. However, the Danish expats are noting that the representations of Pudong can be misleading and the spectacular features like height records and so on are enticing at first but of little relevance when settled in the city where on the other hand a quality like night time tranquillity is an overlooked feature that many of the Danish expat long for after some time in the city.

After having analysed both the commercial side of representation in Shanghai and the Danish expat point of view I will now proceed with entering a discussion of what significance that lies in the juxtaposition between these two sides – the comparison of perceptions of representations in Shanghai.

## 8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

*This chapter pursues creating an inclusive picture of the findings from my analysis in regards to getting an insight and knowledge of the representation found in Shanghai. This is done in a bid to understand the differences, if any, between how Shanghai is representing itself and how this representation is understood and interpreted amongst Danish expats living in Shanghai. The first two parts of this discussion is going to discuss the results from the two part-analysis', as described in their respective chapters, namely chapters 6 and 7, individually. The final part of the analysis is meant to synthesise these two discussion parts into a combined discussion where the juxtaposition between the "official" and "Danish" perspective and its relevance is going to become evident.*

### 8.1. Selling Shanghai

The analysis of the "official" or commercial representation of Shanghai revealed a quite consistent story – a uniformity of how the city is portrayed that is thought provokingly alike in every possible way. This can also be related to the theory where it was seen how uniformity is key component in creating persuasive

stories hence making the story of Shanghai persuasive. Evers (1993) also talks about how it is important for a city to have a unified understanding of what the various structures should symbolise. This is again related to the uniformity Shanghai has succeeded in created where the many iconic buildings stand as a physical sign of this. The pictures painted or the stories told about Shanghai all seems to be pointed in the same direction namely towards representing the city as a modern business city with a considerable western touch. Throgmorton (2003) mentions how the contents of a story give insight into what matters or a desired future. To add on this the analysis revealed that Shanghai has been undergoing transition phases from a western influenced international city of trade and importance via a communistic cultural and financial recession period and finally towards becoming what it is now namely an international financial metropolis on the global scene with a western influence. This transition phase resembles the mentioned theory where both Throgmorton (1996) and van Hulst (2012) argues that building conflict, crisis and resolution into stories make them more believable. This conflict, crisis and resolution could be viewed as Shanghai's journey from opium addicts to a concession area to the communistic deliberation and now financial supremacy. These periods in the history of the city is evident its physical

appearance and are also a conveyor of symbolic meaning and stories to interpret. This is a clear manifestation of the theory described by Nas (1993b) and Leclerc (1993) when they describe how urban symbolism can be used to endorse change in a city and can be seen as a change in era's for instance from colonial to post-colonial and this change is in many cases accompanied by character buildings that is used to recover or built national identity. It is clear when looking at the findings from chapter 6 that Shanghai is trying to sell the vision about itself as modern city where old saying: "bigger is better" is a main characteristic. This is especially visible when looking at the Shanghai Expo that really put Shanghai on the world map or amongst the many futuristic and amazingly tall buildings in Pudong – size matters! This is a very clear indicator of how Shanghai is trying to position itself through symbolism as a city where nothing is unachievable or a way to state that "we are on the move and cannot be stopped - we are the best".

The physical development in Shanghai has been carried out in an astonishing pace and the sheer speed of this building process symbolises the determination and will to achieve the goals of Shanghai – a trade that is closely linked to the qualities and temper that characterises a modern (western) businessman. The analysis also revealed that the effect of this determination on the

physical and cultural milieu is having, however, does have certain consequences as the old parts of the city – the traditional Chinese and colonial traditions and physical landmarks – are being torn down and deprived of "official" symbolic relevance and are being rebuilt and reinvented as symbols of the new Shanghai. Here the Bund stands as an excellent example as the stories and symbolic meaning of this exact spot is changing. The Bund has historically been regarded as a symbol of Shanghai and is by most both tourist agencies and by the municipal government of Shanghai being highlighted as the number 1 sight in Shanghai – the symbol of Shanghai. However, I found through my analysis that this is perhaps an overstatement or a legacy of the past as all indicators point towards Pudong as the main attraction or symbol. The function of the Bund has been reduced to serving as a viewing platform to gaze at the Pudong skyline – a platform where it becomes possible to display superiority or win over the colonial past. I find that the symbolism in the location of the two parts of the city is unmistakeable: to stand on the remains of the old suppressors – the symbol of colonial presence – and view towards an even more breathtaking, crazy and impressive sight built by the Chinese is laden with symbolism as it reveals that China did prevail and did rise to become even more capable than their western predecessors. This claim is also backed up by the many

Chinese flags weighing over the colonial art deco buildings on the Bund. The flags on top of almost every single building on the promenade mutually symbolise the consolidation of power, almost like raising the stars and stripes over Iwo Jima or the raising the hammer and sickle over the Reichstag. The claim of the area cannot or should not be questioned. Nevertheless the Bund is being portrayed to the world as the primary symbol of the city but on a controlled level as the symbolic meaning has been firmly established and I find this to a part of the practice of the city where the few traditional Chinese cultural sites have been polished, restored or even torn down and rebuilt to create a nicer attraction. This gesture has certain parallels to the ancient Greek term of the tabula rasa where the blank slate can be rewritten in accordance to one's own perceptions of reality. This can often seem to be the case in Shanghai as the past is deleted/forgotten/manipulated and through that process by starting up on an empty slate allows the city to shape and built a preferred vision into perfection – without much room for counter symbolism.

There is no doubt about that Pudong is impressive – the view of the skyline and the futuristic buildings – but the analysis revealed that behind the façade of the skyline lays a cold boring area without street life and atmosphere to why images and

representations behind the façade are few. This for me indicates the role of Pudong as a financial district in terms of functionality but on a more symbolic level it shows that Pudong is a picture postcard and an idealisation of the city. The functionality of the place in terms of work and touristic merits can and should not be questioned nor should the usage of it as a symbolic catalyst for change as the uniformity of the representation is massive – Pudong is, in spite of its lack in street life, the preferred picture of Shanghai to the outside world as it symbolises the new, western looking and modern city.

The commercial story of Shanghai is about a battle between the old and the new or a battle between the past and the future and it looks like the city has chosen sides by selecting to focus on Shanghai as a new city of the future with very little reference to the past of the city. I see this approach as persuasive storytelling at its best. By taking the drastic step of reshaping the physical and symbolic city and by making the representation so uniform Shanghai has allowed very little room for counter symbolism and furthermore a very good foundation for making the story about the city persuasive.

## **8.2. A Danish understanding of Shanghai**

The second part of my analysis revealed that Danish expats are agreeing on the commercial representation of Shanghai with its symbolic features and stories told. The expats are definitely seeing the picture of Shanghai as an international and western orientated business city with countless opportunities for living the lifestyle they so chose. However, I found some irregularities in how they convert this shared perception into a daily life in the city that are rooted in their pre-journey expectation towards the city and the individual views on what is important to them. I think these deviations are amplified by the tabula rasa way of convening the cultural and physical city as I mentioned in the previous section. Danes and most other nationalities, whether they are expats or tourists, do have perceptions of what to expect in Shanghai/China. These perceptions are really challenged when exposed to an array of different symbolic meanings in the sense that adding a new symbolic meaning to a cultural feature like a traditional Chinese building gives way to confusion and ambiguity as these “shaped” features and newly constructed symbolic meanings do not necessarily match pre-existing expectations. This causes perplexity (especially) amongst the expats that have based decisions on their future life in Shanghai on expectations and perceptions of representation. So when

Danish expats, or others for that sake, are being submitted to the commercial representation of Shanghai expectation starts to build up. In line with this Nas (1993b) argues that cities will try to present their city as a beautiful, attractive and modern city, naturally. He goes on by stating that a city for the elitist with many touristic qualities and all these systematically disseminated positive images are bound to consequences on the perceptions of a city in the minds of both the residents as well as the rest of world. The expats in my analysis are no exception as they revealed that their perception of the representational truth did not entirely match what they encountered on arrival and the reality turned out to hold both disappointments and positive surprises. I furthermore find it striking that the Danish expats are saying that the city offers endless opportunities for living the preferred lifestyle they want to but none of them seems to be really satisfied with how the realities are for them. I think this is somewhat connected to how the city is portrayed and planned as the case in Shanghai points towards a city that is being build on a chosen and desired vision and by means of altering already existing symbolic meanings to fit this vision rather than the opinions and perceptions from its own population.

In connection to the just stated the Danish expats feel that the picture of the city is in need of a bit more diverse representation



namely in terms of history. The Danish expats want to see more of the “real” historical and traditional Shanghai but are well aware of, and in full respect of, the preferred story and symbol of the city and that is a story of a modern city. The Danish expats view the Bund as a symbol of the old China and all like the story about the Bund as a cultural and financial hotspot back in and around the roaring 1920’s - to walk around in the beautiful settings and perhaps feel a bit more western for a moment - but do in fact also see the Bund as a clear symbol of the new Shanghai and here we again find the duality of this geographical spot that is evident in the previous chapter. The analysis showed how the Danish expats are perceiving the Bund almost as the cherry on top of the cake in terms of the westernised Shanghai because it is situated at the end of Nanjing Road and almost sets the stage and draws people in to view the skyline of Pudong there at the end of this westernised line of representation.

The overall image of how Danish expats are perceiving the representation of Shanghai can be described, exactly like the case in the previous section, as uniform and again true to the image set up to represent a commercial Shanghai. I furthermore find that the interviews, which the second part-analysis is based on, suggest a relation between how long the Danish expats have lived in Shanghai and how much they advocate for the story of the

modern Shanghai as the dominant one just as a relation between the perception of the symbolic meaning of both the Bund and Pudong seems to be more in line with the commercial perception the longer the expats has lived in the city. This is evident in the statements from the interviewees and how they speak about the city. Over time the Danish expat seems to accepting the “official” representation to a higher degree. This connection between the commercial perception and perception of the Danish expats is going to be further addressed in the following section.

### **8.3. Juxtaposing Shanghai and the Danish expat**

The combined analysis has revealed that the representation of Shanghai from a commercial or “official” point of view is very uniform in the sense that what is shown to outsiders as the picture or story of Shanghai is not an intricate representation but one that is easy to understand, mediate and above all one that does not leave people in doubt about what Shanghai is about even in spite of existing symbolic dualities. This is an indicator of, in accordance to the theory, that the number of actors constructing the representation is at a minimum which points to either (or both) a strict top-down way of controlling the flow of information available to others or simply that the drastic and convincing physical and cultural transition is very successful and leaves little or no room for plural stories and counter symbolism - the

“official” image of the city is uniform and so are the interpretations from, at least, the Danish expats. The Danish expats does, however, not start out with a uniform image or story about Shanghai as they all have somewhat different ideas about the city based on second-hand encounters, sparse pre-existing knowledge or literature research, but what is important note here is the way these differences turn into a unified image over time. The lack of coherence between their expectations and the “official” representation leads to some confusion and seems to be caused by the lack of actual knowledge and/or too much misleading or irrelevant knowledge about city. These scattered starting points became unified to match, for the better part, the image of the “official” Shanghai after having spent some time in the city and this leads me to wondering about the relation between perceptions and time. I here find, based on the theory, that the constitutive element is the explanatory factor as my analysis strongly indicates how the longer time you live there – the more persistent hence also persuasive storytelling and symbolism – the more constitutive – the more real. This is backed up by Throgmorton (2003) who state that the people involved in a planning process, the people who write and tell the stories, have the ability to shape community, character, and culture Throgmorton further describes that the constitutive play a part in

how the writers and tellers “*choose to characterize (name and describe) the people who inhabit and activate their stories shapes how those characters are expected to act and relate to one another. And how planners write and talk shapes who ‘we’ are and can become.*” (Throgmorton 2003, p. 130). This pattern again draws in the matter of uniformity which I have been discussing on earlier occasions and here I find that the uniformity of representation in Shanghai has enabled a solid basis for the creation of a persuasive story with many supporting symbols that leads to a shaping of the reality for the Danish expats (and others) consequently the representation can be/is constitutive to them. The question is now when it becomes constitutive to them – how long time in the city does it take before diverging perceptions become constitutive. I do not really think that there is a definitive answer to that as there are many unknown variables that each play a part in this process but I do, however, find that the more uniform a representation is the more easily and faster the process will be.

The next question is now the manner by which the city of Shanghai has chosen to go about this representation and the acts that constitute this image. This is one of the only places which the Danish expats breaks free of the union of understanding that lie between the city and the expat in terms of representation. Here

my analysis points towards that the Danish expats want more of the old – the authentic – and not only the modern Shanghai. This could be caused by familiarity that lays in the old image of the city, namely the western touch. The history of Shanghai stars the west but when living in Shanghai most of this seems to be forgotten and the symbols fading. This can perhaps create tensions as the analysis indicates that the Danish expats feels somewhat misinformed and lured into thinking that Shanghai was something it is not. Do not be mistaken; Shanghai is still about the west and the Danish expats are feeling this but the difference is now that this time Shanghai have been allowed to define where, when and how – their own version of a western touch. The drastic and effective transition towards a modern city has meant that many of the old symbols have been given new meaning – even important ones like the Bund. When creating this kind of change it is bound to step on some people's toes and this might also be the case with the Danish expats as they feel that the Bund is not being portrayed rightfully and its qualities are not being put to good use thereby causing their perceptions not to match the “official” version. This shows just how difficult it is to take a strong symbol like the Bund and alter the meaning of it. This can also be related to the theory where memory and old practices tend to stick to a geographical claim and gives identity to that specific

area. The Bund is the major place of symbolic dispute as it has such a big historical reference and meaning to many people that regard the Bund as the symbol of (old) Shanghai but at the same time it is used to promote the new Shanghai. This again has a reference to the theory about symbols and stories that hold elements of time in an attempt to shape reality to either mend the wound from the colonial days or in an attempt to shape the future. I do not know if Shanghai is trying to mend a wound as such, it seems more like they are trying to claim superiority over the old suppressors not only by choosing the Bund as the main viewing platform towards the new symbol of Shanghai but also in terms of the many flags weighing over the buildings on the Bund. This has a clear symbolic meaning as it is a physical sign of what the story really is about because the Bund should not be regarded as a sign of the west anymore but more as a sign of how Shanghai/China prevailed.

I will now proceed by offering my final conclusion in the next chapter.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

*This chapter is going to provide answers to the research question and the three related sub-questions based on the findings from my work related to this report. Since the three sub-questions are “helping-questions” that is meant to make it easier to understand and answer the research question, these sub-question will be answered first setting the stage for the research question in the end. The research question is as follows:*

***How is Shanghai representing itself  
internationally and how is this representation  
being perceived by Danish expats living in  
Shanghai?***

In the introduction of this report it was clarified what might seem obvious to many people; forces of globalisation, commercialisation of cities and the economy is causing competition between urban areas thus creating a market for making spectacular cities worthy of remembrance that often have a signature structure to represent them. So the question is now: what lies behind the word “representation” and how is this representation used in a city, in this case Shanghai?

This leads me to the first sub-question that clarifies how representation can be influential in an urban context.

### 9.1. Sub-question 1

***What are the predominant representations in Shanghai and how are they being communicated?***

It is said that a picture says a thousand words and in this Shanghai case this could very well be true. The answer for this sub-question can be found in the way Shanghai looks through the first picture you will see if you are to Google: “Shanghai”. Here you will see a picture of the Pudong skyline. A city of 23 million inhabitants and 2500 years of Chinese and international history can actually, in 2013, be boiled down to a single photo. I found the representation in Shanghai to be very uniform in the sense that almost everyone agrees on a single story about the city – a story containing spectacular buildings that each add to the image of Shanghai being a modern and western-like city with tremendous economic growth and prosperity for its inhabitants. I found that Shanghai is a showcase of capability in Shanghai but also in general in China. This is manifested in a transition phase in the city where stories and symbolic meanings are being altered to fit a new image of the city – an image of a modern city - and this is supported by the many record-breaking structures that symbolise

the will and ability to challenge other major cities and countries on a global scale thereby, through the iconic buildings, creating a sense of respect and recognisability towards Shanghai. It is also manifested in the way the city goes about doing things such as the holding of the 2010 World Expo that was a clear indicator of how Shanghai is entering on an international scene. The representation is characterised by Shanghai wanting to be bigger and do better and the way to achieving this goal is to go all the way – cut no corners – when creating this showcase city. This can of course be read in its symbolic entities where new meaning has been given to certain geographical places and structures. This change in symbolism seems to be snuck in the backdoor on many occasions and this is especially visible at the Bund where it “officially” is regarded as the prima symbol of Shanghai but the symbolic meaning clearly point towards the Bund being submitted a decrease in symbolic value as the Bund seems to function as a place to display Chinese supremacy and to view the new and real symbol of Shanghai, namely the Pudong skyline. This is a symbolic battle between the old and the new; the Bund and Pudong. I found that the Bund is taking on a different role than originally intended where it served as a symbol of a financially strong and western Shanghai, noting of course that it at the same time was a symbol of western supremacy. The role of the Bund

today points towards it being a symbol of leisure time and commercial activities, like doing shopping and nightlife. Pudong now stands as a symbol of the newly obtained international status as an international economic power centre and as a trophy case of Shanghai’s achievements – the new symbol of Shanghai.

I therefore conclude that the “official” representation of Shanghai is about a new version of Shanghai representing it as a modern city where nothing is unachievable and nothing is too challenging or big and where changes in symbolism are being utilised to promote this transition. Pudong represents the new Shanghai thus altering and leaving the previous “official” symbol of Shanghai - the Bund – to support this version.

But what do others, namely Danish expats think about this representation; how are the images of Shanghai interpreted? This leads me to answering the next sub-question.

## **9.2. Sub-question 2**

***Which perceptions do Danish expats living in Shanghai have of the representation in the city?***

This question is focused on how the representation is viewed by a certain group of people in this case four Danish expats that embodies the Danish expat community in Shanghai. I found

during my project that the “official” interpretations of the symbols and stories chosen to represent Shanghai is quite often shared by and therefore also amongst the Danish expats. There is very little doubt about, from a Danish point of view, where Shanghai is going in terms of representation and the Danish expats really feel that Shanghai is doing the right thing in portraying the city in a western way, as it seems to be a precise label and the expats think that Shanghai offers endless opportunities for them to live the lifestyle of their own choice. I found that the Danish expats came to Shanghai with different attitudes about what to expect and what is important to them in a city in general and this seems to be amplified by the transitions Shanghai is undergoing – a transition towards a new modern city – with many cultural and physical changes and to add on this I found that a relation between time spent in the city and the degree of belief in the “official” version was evident. Furthermore I found that the Danish expats value other parts of the city like a traditional cultural aspect as well as the historic charm of especially the Bund. The Danish are experiencing how the Bund is subject to a duality of representation: a clash between the old and the new – the Bund and Pudong where they feel a deliberate, but yet understandable, change in symbolic meaning that drowns the original story of the Bund. I furthermore found that the strive

Shanghai is showing in terms of a new type of representation has consequences for the Danish expats as they feel that the representation built on spectacular features and iconic hallmark structures are enticing at first but of little relevance when settled in the city where on the other hand a feature like night time tranquillity is an overlooked quality.

From this I conclude that the Danish expats largely share the view on the representation put forth by the “official” Shanghai and this perception seems to be amplified over time in spite of differences in opinions about symbolic meanings in some places.

I will now answer the final sub-question that ties the previous part together into a whole through a juxtaposition of the perceptions.

### **9.3. Sub-question 3**

***How is the representation in Shanghai influencing the Danish expat’s perceptions of the city?***

I found in my work that the uniformity that characterises the “official” representation is evident in the minds of others and therefore reflecting upon the Danish expats. This is an example of how persuasive stories and clear symbolic mediation caused by a drastic and very convincing transition of the cultural and physical environment in the city can shape perceptions of people to fit into

a desired mould. I found that time was a key factor in the process of shaping the perceptions of the expats as my analysis revealed indicators of how the longer time they live in the city the more constitutive it becomes in shaping the reality to match the “official” version. This I found to be connected to the matter of a uniform type of representation where the more uniform the representation the easier it is to create persuasive stories and symbols hence the more constitutive for the reality.

There are, however, differences in perceptions between the “official” layout and the Danish interpretation and this is reflected in the clash between the old and new – here manifested in a clash between the Bund and Pudong. The Danish expats feel a bit misinformed in regards to what the essence of the city is and this is especially visible in the way Shanghai is altering symbolic meanings and established stories to fit a new version of representation – a version about a modern city. This alteration causes the Danish expats to feel as if the Bund is being incorrectly portrayed thus causing perception to vary from the “official” version thus giving an indicator of how difficult it is to change established symbols and stories.

I so conclude that the juxtaposition of perception provided the answer that the representation of Shanghai has a way of shaping

the perceptions of the Danish expats to match the “official” version over time and this is amplified by the degree of uniformity characterising the representation. There were, however, differences of opinions between the “official” and Danish perception especially evident when altering important and established symbols this indicating the difficulty of changing symbols and creating persuasive stories.

I will now conclude upon my research question.

#### **9.4. Concluding remarks**

I conclude that Shanghai has made a very uniform and hence persuasive representation. This representation involves creating a story about a modern, western, prosperous and international Shanghai that is supported by many iconic structures and successful events that stands as symbols of this transition. This perception is mainly shared by the Danish expats that perceive Shanghai as an international city with endless opportunities and a clear representational profile but at the same time are experiencing the clashes caused by this transition.

Shanghai has created a successful transition process towards becoming a modern and western-like city supported by many symbolic features that are either changing old, established to fit

the new version or simply creating new ones. The transition is very convincing which is visible in the uniformity of the representation. The uniformity also affects the way Danish expats perceive the city as it aids in making Shanghai constitutive to the reality of the expats over time. Shanghai has very quickly become a household name (again) after having been on international economic standby for some time. The way Shanghai is representing itself is often through spectacular structures and record breaking events and buildings accompanied by a western atmosphere that all together seems enticing to an international audience. There are, however, some downsides to creating this kind of representation as especially expats, who are to live in the city for a longer period of time, can feel deceived by the type of hallmark/showcase representation – it is irrelevant for them and does not fit into the picture of what they need to know.



## 10. REFLECTIONS

*This project has dealt with describing the perceptions of representation of Shanghai from “official” point of view but also through the eyes of a specific group of resident’s namely Danish expats. I feel this process of researching and writing has provided me with knowledge and insight into a topic that in lies in the periphery of traditional urban planning and perhaps less significant in the context of urban planning as it deals with topics and methods not often used. Therefore I now wish to add a bit more to my findings – thoughts and self-criticism about my work and process along with a scope beyond the boundaries of this case in order highlight the qualities and significance of this way of doing urban planning.*

It may seem as though my analysis and discussion is trying to display the Shanghai way of doing planning as wrongful by the altering of symbols to fit into their new story. I do not in any way consider this as a wrongful way of going about changes and I do not think it is wrong to change the symbolic meaning of places etc. if you are to do good planning where persuasiveness is the key.

Shanghai has been extremely good and successful at creating a persuasive kind of representation and I think much of the success

is due to the political and financial strength that is causing an environment for planning that enables the city to really follow through on their decisions. No short-cuts are taken in terms of creating a new story of Shanghai and this is ultimately resulting in a very uniform representation that is persuasive because no alternatives are offered and little or no “material” is available for making alternatives. In that previous sentence lies, in my mind, the key to good planning through representation: persuasive representation. Shanghai is a success story as it has managed to create a physical and cultural setting through representation in which even Danish expat will feel the stories as co-shapers of their lives.

For the first part of my analysis regarding the “official” representation in Shanghai I consider my findings valid and reliable. Valid in the sense that I do not believe that “official” representation can become more evident and real than found in places easily available to the general public. However, I as a planner and for the sake of this project would have liked to have known the rationalities of the Shanghai planners’ – to hear their thoughts about the official plans that often offer a foundation for creating and distributing representation in a city. I feel that by adding this insight into my analysis it would have created a basis for an even stronger conclusion. There were, however, linguistic

and geographical challenges that meant no interviews were possible along with a severe lack in readable documents for me to interpret. I also find my findings reliable in the sense that all my answers seems to point in the same direction again connected to the uniformity I have described in my report.

This leads me to the second part of my analysis concerning the Danish expat and here I find there to be a fair validity connected to my findings. I do at the same time question the ability to generalise my findings based on only four interviews as the interviewed Danes only constitutes around 1% of the Danish population in Shanghai.

Another concern about my work could be connected to the merging of storytelling and urban symbolism – a merging of urban planning to the world of anthropology. As I described in my theory chapter I do not necessarily find there to be good enough grounds to perform an analysis based on storytelling to real-life event and especially when one does not know the stated vision and ulterior motives are. I feel that storytelling, when applied to a case study such this one, can have deficiencies that cause it to become insignificant and perhaps give irrelevant answers as I find it to be of a more general nature – providing an insight into the general condition. By applying or adding urban symbolism to storytelling I find there to be a lift in the number of

details available to study. When looking at urban symbolism one does not have know the stated vision of a city or an area or building to think it symbolises something or to give meaning to it. To add on this I often find that it is easier and more descriptive to look the different uses and perception of something than to look at what is being stated. By merging these two I think my work has earned a higher level or higher degree of details in the sense that I believe I have been given a more detailed insight into the actual situation in Shanghai with the perceptions of actual citizens and their interpretation of representation. I believe this way of looking at and analysing cities is applicable to anywhere and if done so would provide local planners with a better foundation for creating relevant plans that are less submitted to dispute. This is also why I think that the lesson learned from this case is that a higher usage of physical and cultural elements in urban planning plan-making can contribute in creating better and more durable plans. Furthermore I believe that by mastering representation and using it actively a city can create a competitive element in which they can attract desirable people and/or initiate and maintain a cultural and physical transition of the city. The latter stated is of course no new matter but by using “official” symbols actively in the representation makes it even more powerful as cities tend to become more memorable – with symbols as (co) creators of

identity - and if applied with care can create a clear definition of that city again aiding in a stronger representation.

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# APPENDIXES

## Appendix A – Interview with Caroline Andersen

### Interview with Caroline Andersen (Intern at Germanischer Lloyd<sup>7</sup> Shanghai)

**Me:** Can you tell me something about yourself?

**Caroline:** I'm 22 turning 23 tomorrow and I have lived in Shanghai now for 8 months. I came in September. Last year during the summer I finished my bachelor degree at CBS and I decided it was time to get some international work experience so I started applying for a job abroad and I got an internship at a German company here in Shanghai.

**Me:** So you are a Copenhagen girl and life in a city that is not that unusual?

**Caroline:** Actually I grew up in a small city just north of Copenhagen – Virum – and then I moved to CPH when I started at CBS. But life here in Shanghai is very different compared to life in CPH.

**Me:** What was your knowledge about Shanghai before moving there?

**Caroline:** I did not have a very strong impression of Shanghai before moving there. I remember I got in touch with my boss because I was applying for a job in Hongkong and Singapore because I wanted to go to a big mega-city in Asia because I would like to go to Asia but still have the international atmosphere other foreigners so at that time that meant Beijing, Singapore and Hongkong so I did really think Shanghai at that time in that perspective but I got in touch with my boss and I Googled Shanghai and I saw pictures of the Bund and all the skyscrapers and I thought OK that is a really cool city. That is why I want to go.

**Me:** That leads me to my next question: How much research did you do? Was it just the Googling or did you do anything else?

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<sup>7</sup> (An international technical assurance and consulting company for the energy sector)

**Caroline:** I Googled and read online and then I contacted some Danes who lived here and asked them for advice and how is life here in Shanghai when you come from Denmark? I did a lot of research but I only had a month from when I had my boss to I was here so...I also went to the library and read a couple of books about China before going here because I felt that I did not know a lot so I had to do some research and it actually got me even more interested in going

**Me:** If you take any city in the world it does not matter which one then what is important to you. I mean how do you use the city in terms of park life and café's and these sorts of things?

**Caroline:** For me it is very important that it is a city where it is possible to walk around in. I also lived in New Orleans (USA) and it was totally different type of city and when I think back of what I really enjoyed I liked to be able to walk around and not that you have to have a car. A lot of American cities you have to have a car to do your shopping and other practical things. I really enjoy smaller streets and a lot of green areas, a lot of outdoor activity and I think I found that here.

**Me:** So could you say that during your 8 months in Shanghai your patterns have changed? Are you using the city in a different way now than when you lived in CPH?

**Caroline:** No i don't think so. I just think it is because the cities are so different

**Me:** So you just go with the flow and try to blend in the natural way of living in the city?

**Caroline:** I think so. Maybe I do more discovery here because I feel like I know CPH better so I don't just go to certain neighborhoods just to walk around but I do that here because there are so much of the city that I don't know and I am curious to discover but I would never do that back home I think

**Me:** If you were to describe Shanghai to a person who had not been there before how would you describe the city?

**Caroline:** I have done that a lot actually because no one at home know where I am when I for instance upload pictures and they are surprised of how Shanghai really looks but I always describe it as a city where there is a lot of contradictions and a lot of different impressions so you have the last hundred years of history that is really evident in how the city is build. I always tell them about the French concession area and we have Shanghai and the Bund with all the influence from the British and the French and then the modern city with

the skyscrapers and Pudong being build all the time – getting bigger and bigger. It is a city with a lot of different influences like when I look out of my window, I live very close to Yuyuan Garden, so I can see all these old traditional Chinese houses with the iconic types of roofs and behind that I can see the bottle opener (SWFC) and all the other skyscrapers in Pudong so it is just so many different impressions you get at the same time and I love that about Shanghai and I think that is one of the most interesting things about being here that you get all these different things in one package – both the past and the future.

**Me:** Ok! I am going to move on the a concept called storytelling where you in urban planning try to envisage the future through stories you tell and these stories tend to become real to the persons in a city. The stories are often told through master plans or any process where you tell the public about how this area is going to look or how the future is going to be. You just told me how you how you would describe Shanghai and you also told me about the Bund and the Pudong skyline as well but could you perhaps tell me where do you find Shanghai 20 years from now? How does it look?

**Caroline:** That is a really difficult question because I hope that certain areas will still be preserved but I am not sure that is going to happen and I am afraid that a lot will be turned from a new build up because a lot of the buildings in the French Concession are not very tall and I guess that a lot more people will need to live here so I don't think it is going to look the same as I look now which is a shame. I also hope it will be less polluted. I hope they find a solution to the pollution.

**Me:** Would you say that these colonial/concession types of areas are important to you and your Shanghai?

**Caroline:** Yes it is definitely very important. It is a very important part of the story of the city where you have both old and the new part – the mix – and that is probably the most important part to me because I like that old style like the Bund and the old banks and hotels. I like the way they look and it makes me think of Shanghai in a perspective that it has always been an international city because during the last 100 years there has been international influence from Europe

**Me:** So if you are to take Shanghai as both a physical city and take all these tourist agencies that are trying to make Shanghai into a brand and try to sell it to the rest of the world how do you think Shanghai is portraying itself to the rest of the world?

**Caroline:** I think it could be a lot better especially because I have my own experiences where I had really no idea of what of to expect when coming here and what is shown from the tourist agencies are often the Pudong side of the story and I think that the other side of the

story and the other side of the river is much more interesting and that is also the impression I get when I have friend of family visiting me here they are so impressed because they had no idea that Shanghai also looks like that – like the old part.

**Me:** So Shanghai is mainly portraying itself through these new skylines of Pudong and the development that Pudong has undertaken during the last 20 years or so.

**Caroline:** Yes that is my impression and maybe it is because that what they are really proud of it here but from my perspective that is not the only thing they should be proud of.

**Me:** So you do not find that these “vision” are quite fitting to the Shanghai you really like?

**Caroline:** No definitely not. There is a very big difference between what I expected and what I found and I think Shanghai has a lot more to offer than just the new buildings and the modern city so I do not think it is portraying itself in the best way. It could be better. I love the old buildings

**Me:** Why do you think they chose this kind of story?

**Caroline:** I think it is because that this is what China is proud of in the moment. Being a country with great economic growth and all their modern buildings are symbols of wealth, innovation and things happening fast and I think that is what they are proud of and what they want other countries to see and not how China was a hundred years ago.

**Me:** Do you think that they are, perhaps not ashamed, but want to move away from that part of their story?

**Caroline:** I could be but I am also thinking that maybe that this is what I really appreciate – the old French influence does not have a lot to do with the old China. I might not be the same symbols for the Chinese people - I guess that someone else occupied their city and part of their country - and it could be that it has a different meaning to them.

**Me:** So do you think there is difference between the Shanghai you first heard about – read about and Googled – and the Shanghai you live in? Could you describe that difference?

**Caroline:** I feel like I only saw the very modern part before getting here and I also expected that the old part would be a bit Chinese. I ended up living in the French concession when I first got here so it was very different from what I expected. A much nicer city than expected and I think that it is a perfect to walk around in and enjoy life in the small streets and that was not what I expected and what I saw when I Googled Shanghai. But I still think it is very impressive and still feel very small when I stand on the Bund and look at the Pearl Tower and the bottle opener – very impressive.

**Me:** Ok. I am going to move on to this topic of urban symbolism. You talked a little bit about it already but it mainly about what does things represent, what does things symbolize so what do you think the city of Shanghai symbolize?

**Caroline:** It symbolizes the new China; the modern China and the China with great potential and with a very attractive marked for international investments. It symbolizes the economic growth over the last 10 years and how fast everything has happened here. I guess you think of the old part and it also symbolizes how important the positioning of Shanghai as a well located trade point and I know there is an important harbor both now and a hundred years ago.

**Me:** If you are to look at yourself as a Danish expat what would the Bund symbolize to you as a Danish expat? How are you using the Bund and how are thinking of the Bund?

**Caroline:** For me it is positive I must say and I know that would not be the same story as a local would tell but for me it is positive because I enjoy walking on the Bund and I think the atmosphere is nice and the buildings are beautiful so I use that area very much actually. I not sure what it symbolizes but it is positive and I like it and it is not because I am thinking how horrible that European imperialists came to China and took over Shanghai that is not the case.

**Me:** It is just appealing to your nature to use it?

**Caroline:** Yeah it is...and also when I have visitors I am proud that I am able to show them this side of the story as well.

**Me:** When we take the Pudong area – the skyline – we have all these really fancy buildings and many of these buildings have many record breaking things to display like the tallest observation deck and highest swimming pool and so on. Does this have any significance to you at all that your city has these qualities?

**Caroline:** Not really actually. It is not something I think of as something...no! It is impressive but it is not something that makes me proud of living in a city that has these things. But it is impressive from the outside I guess. But it is not really important to me.

**Me:** The Pudong area in general you mentioned to me briefly that it symbolizes the new China and the development of China so do you think being a Danish expat and working for a large organization does this mean anything to you as a Dane in Shanghai?

**Caroline:** Actually I just realized that before coming I focused much more on things like I read that this building is the tallest and so on and I felt a little proud that I was going to live in that city but now when I live here it does not mean anything for me anymore. That is the easy things to focus on before really getting here – the impressive numbers and that you can live in a city with 23 million people but I never think about that anymore. It does not feel that big anymore.

**Me:** Ok, interesting. So when you arrived in Shanghai what were the first things you noticed in terms of buildings and structures during the first week or so?

**Caroline:** I was very impressed. I remember getting a taxi from the airport and he drove into the French concession and the trees were green and there were so many people outside and there was a nice atmosphere and I really got a good first impression and the next day when I went to the office my office was on the 32 floor I was really impressed that the city had all these different impressions in one city.

**Me:** Did you go sightseeing?

**Caroline:** Yes in the weekend when I had time I did a little sightseeing but I do not think there is so much... I mean most of the things I enjoy doing here is going to the different areas and enjoying café's. So it is not so much sightseeing, but a bit more dining and drinking. I think the city is proud of that as well.

**Me:** So if we are to go back to first time you Goggled Shanghai what kind of buildings and structures would represent the impression you got at that point?

**Caroline:** The pearl Tower! The pearl tower and the river, I thought that it was really nice that there was a river in the middle of the city as I enjoy living close to water. So that was very nice to discover as I did know that. I think Shanghai means something like above the river or something like that.

**Me:** Now 8 months later what kind of buildings would represent the Shanghai you like?

**Caroline:** I think it is the combination of everything that it has it all but I always take guests to the shikumen houses that has been restored but for me I think it is just a nice to walk around in the old areas that has not been restored and enjoy the traditional China.

**Me:** My last question is: do you think Shanghai is a good representative for China?

**Caroline:** No it is not a representative of China. I have been traveling to other cities in China and Shanghai is a whole different country than China. International influence and it is just very, very different.

**Me:** So do you think that Shanghai could give a more nuanced picture of itself?

**Caroline:** I think so yes. For instance when the city is selling itself it could give a bit broader impression than just the new China.

### **Official Interview over**

**Caroline:** Jeg har hele tiden været begejstret for byen, men det bliver ikke mindre af, at jeg ved, at det er ved at nærme sig sin afslutning.

**Caroline:** Jeg brugte det danske netværk rigtig meget, specielt lige da jeg kom. Jeg kan huske at der var en ven og en aktivitet allerede dagen efter jeg kom, som jeg tog til sammen med og allerede der syntes jeg at det var dejligt at møde nogen. Jeg er selv nu gået med i det der "Young Professionals" og nu er jeg med til at arrangere events. Jeg synes dog det er svært for jeg tror man vil få en mere autentisk oplevelse, hvis man ikke engagerer sig så meget med andre danskere, men jeg synes det er hyggeligt og især når man er så langt hjemmefra at have det netværk – et lille sikkerhedsnet.

**Caroline:** Helt nede, selv på laveste niveau i byen, er der altid meget kaos – meget lyd. Man får aldrig rigtig ro faktisk. Jeg trives ikke helt i den slags, det bliver lidt for meget.

**Appendix B – Interview with Kaleb Prabakaran**  
**Interview with Kaleb Prabakaran (Masters student at AAU)**

**Me:** Can you tell me something about yourself?

**Kaleb:** I am a student at AAU studying to be an engineer in supply chain and operation management and I am in my final semester

**Me:** Why did you move to Shanghai?

**Kaleb:** It was simply because of an internship and I lived there 5-6 months

**Me:** Before you moved to Shanghai what was your knowledge about the city?

**Kaleb:** I knew it was a business city; where everything was going fast because it is one of the brick countries. A city where business takes place and that was pretty much what I knew about the city.

**Me:** So basically a knowledge that is based on a business perspective and not a tourism perspective?

**Kaleb:** Yes business!

**Me:** Did you search anything about sightseeing?

**Kaleb:** No! I just went there knowing that this is a city where business is done. Every businessman or every big company is talking about or moving to Shanghai

**Me:** When you live in a city then what is important to you? What facilities do you use like café's etc?

**Kaleb:** I use café's a lot and McDonalds a lot because I am afraid to eat at low budget places and I when to McDonalds because I already knew McDonalds from home and Starbucks.



**Me:** So compared to living in Aalborg is there a difference in the way you use the city (Shanghai). Do you tend to go out more in Shanghai?

**Kaleb:** Yes definitely because in Denmark every store or McDonalds is closed at night 6 o'clock or so and in Shanghai they are open late so you have like 5 hours to spend in the city and I found that to be interesting.

**Me:** Did you like living in Shanghai?

**Kaleb:** Yes definitely but at first it was like devastating because nobody speaks English – only a few – and if you were to take a taxi you often ended up in nowhere and had to take metro back but after like 3 months I liked it but the first 3 months was hell. I wanted to go home.

**Me:** If you had to describe Shanghai to person who does not know the city how would you describe it?

**Kaleb:** It is...everything is happening in Shanghai but I would say that the first few months you do not what to be there and may want to go home but after that you will love it. There is a big difference in the culture and the people but after you learn to understand the Chinese culture you love it you fall in love in their culture because they are relaxed and everybody want to help you. In the beginning it is like why are they looking at me but after you learn their culture you understand that they want to help you. Another thing is if you want to go a telephone store you have to check like a one hour window to do that because you have to discuss and talk to the people at the store where in Denmark it would be 5 minutes. You have to be patient if you want to go to Shanghai.

**Me:** Could you describe the difference between being a tourist in Shanghai and being an expat in Shanghai?

**Kaleb:** An expat is living and working there where a tourist is there for like 5 days and that is it and you won't get an insight into the culture differences and the difference in living in a whole other country. It is also related to the three months of hell I talked about earlier. As a tourist you will not get the full image of the city. Being an expat is hard but because there are many Danish people here it is easier and I used the Danish network a lot.

**Me:** Do you know anything about the history of Shanghai?

**Kaleb:** No! Only that Pudong was built in ten years. 30 years ago there was nothing and now it is one of the biggest cities in the world with some of the tallest buildings in the world so they want to be the biggest city where they have everything.

**Me:** So it is also from a business point of view that you know it?

**Kaleb:** You could say that.

**Me:** So could you perhaps tell me where do you find Shanghai 20 years from now?

**Kaleb:** Shanghai will be much bigger as they will include all the smaller cities around it to make a bigger city and I think it will be one of the biggest business cities in the world so it will come to look more like New York I think

**Me:** How do you think Shanghai is portraying itself and branding itself?

**Kaleb:** Actually through some of the buildings because when you see Shanghai in pictures you see Pudong and these buildings and you think yeah it is like New York or some of the other large cities in the world but before having seen anything from Shanghai I thought Shanghai was a poor city because I was thinking of a typical Chinese city so I was surprised and my family that visited me was equally surprised. Some areas in Shanghai is like a ghetto area like low budget for poor people but then there is also places like Pudong and Nanjing that is mind-blowing. Here you will find every possible international brand because they want to be there in Shanghai. Shanghai is a modern city.

**Me:** So do you think they are using this technological and business perspective?

**Kaleb:** Yes to attract people and state to the outside world that they can match the technological and business development from other cities.

**Me:** Do you like this way of branding yourself?

**Kaleb:** yes I like it because before development was a western thing but now it is also in the east and you can see it through their economy and their physical city that is building and expanding all the time. But I do not like that they copy everything.

**Me:** You mentioned that you were surprised when coming here because you thought it was poor so do you think it is the right story that is being told about Shanghai or do they need to tell something more or else?

**Kaleb:** Yes the communication to other people needs some adjustment because when I talk to my siblings they are like: China is all bad and they are really poor but because I went there and saw I experienced that it is really good but their buildings suck the quality is not good. But they have to brand themselves more to other people than business people because every businessman knows that Shanghai is there and it is happening but if you ask a doctor or another group of people they would often think that this is a poor city why should I go there. But it is a business city.

**Me:** Who do you think is communicating this kind of representation?

**Kaleb:** I think it is the business milieu. Every big company is there to be close to the supplier. Shanghai did something to create a setting for this type of development with an international scene, big buildings. When you walk around Shanghai you will see many internationals but I heard that only 15 years ago you would find very few of them. Something changed. And the Chinese people like that we are there so it feels like they are building a bigger city just for you. Come, we want your knowledge!

**Me:** You mentioned earlier that you didn't really know that much about Shanghai other than it was a business city but did the stay in Shanghai change that perception?

**Kaleb:** Yes definitely I got a new view of Shanghai and China

**Me:** Could you have used some information before going there?

**Kaleb:** Actually I was glad that I had not read a lot about it because it was all the more mind-blowing when arriving there at the airport I thought WOW they are modern. Also when arriving in the downtown area – I lived in the downtown area I thought it was mind-blowing experience.

**Me:** What does Shanghai symbolize to you? You mentioned earlier that it was a city of business...

**Kaleb:** Yes but also the culture is crucial – it relaxes you after you finish working and go out it is relaxed, every store is still open and all the Chinese people are happy and on every corner they have a food stand and drinking beer... that is relaxing; why stress.

**Me:** So you're a fan of these opportunities?

**Kaleb:** yes the people are just happy, eating all the time and stick together and that I love

**Me:** Did you go sightseeing? Did you go on tours in Shanghai?

**Kaleb:** Yes I did. I had to! When you're there you have to because if you don't and people ask you are going to look stupid and they will ask you: why didn't you go. From my building I could see Pudong with all the tall buildings and that was good.

**Me:** What does these tall buildings symbolize to you?

**Kaleb:** It shows something about the development of China and they want to be best of the best. They don't want to mediocre like for instance when they heard about Dubai the Chinese people said we have to build taller than them but now it is like what do we want to use it for (the building) and they don't really know. They just want to show that they can beat everybody and show that we are the best and I love that mentality about we were the underdogs but now we are the big dog and we can beat everybody if we want to.

**Me:** What about the Bund. What does it symbolize?

**Kaleb:** I love the Bund. All the old stories with all the different colonies and I was actually surprise that they still keep all these old buildings from England and the Japanese and that is some of the only international culture from that time that still exists.

**Me:** You mentioned these tall buildings that they want to have the tallest buildings and the fastest trains are that important to you?

**Kaleb:** No not for me but I heard from other Chinese people I know and they were like: why are they building so much? The business people were glad about all the construction as said yeah lets show them how we do it but all the other people said why are we building this? So Shanghai is divided up into two classes the poor and the rich. All the rich people want to have the biggest car because you can show other people that you have money. So you have that mentality about wanting to be the best that is now only found in the physical city but in the minds of the people. It is a competitive city they want to be the best.

**Me:** When you arrived in Shanghai what was the first things you noticed during the first week or so?

**Kaleb:** I had never been or lived in a big city like that before so I got lost like 15 times. I thought all time: where am I? But I of course went to see all the must see things in Shanghai and then I went to other smaller cities outside Shanghai after that.

**Me:** What are the most spectacular structures in Shanghai from your point of view?

**Kaleb:** I think it is the Oriental Pearl because of the light but also the other tall buildings

**Me:** What about the tee houses and the other traditional Chinese buildings?

**Kaleb:** I kind of love them because they are a part of their culture but now it is a modern replica. They are beginning to lose their culture because they want to copy everything. The traditional Chinese things were ok but because also saw other Chinese cities I am comparing them. I like the tall futuristic buildings because I can compare Shanghai to the US and I think that it have something do with my business point of view. But I liked spending time at sort of low budget places the most. In the beginning all the Danes were like business business... We have to show that we have a lot of money and as time when I got tired of that mentality and sort of change to an opposite mentality – took a change at the smaller, less know places and ate alongside the Chinese. I guess it was an opportunity for me to experience some different culture because if you are an expat with a large budget you will never see those places. That is at least my perception of it.

**Me:** So you think that the Danish expats in Shanghai want to show off and so on?

**Kaleb:** Yes I think they want to show everyone else that they have a lot and I think that a lot of Danes only see the Shanghai that is about tall buildings and fancy hotels and therefore miss out on something else. In the eyes of the Chinese to be an expat is a nice thing because they make a lot of money.

**Me:** Do you think that Shanghai is a good representative for China?

**Kaleb:** yes I do. I would be sad if they took Beijing as the representative because Shanghai is very international compared to Beijing and they already speak a lot of English compared to Beijing so I think it is a good representative for the new China – a China on the way forward.

## **Appendix C – Interview with Anders Christensen**

### **Interview with Anders Christensen (Vice President of R&D at Thrane & Thrane, Shanghai)**

**Me:** Could you tell me something about yourself? Job, personal life and so on.

**Anders:** I am 49 and I have been working in Shanghai for about 2 years as an R&D manager setting up an R&D team in Shanghai and I have been working 15 years at Trane & Trane's R&D department. Divorced and I was alone in Shanghai.

**Me:** So the main reason you moved to Shanghai was work related reasons

**Anders:** yes I moved to start a new department at Trane & Trane in Shanghai and we have been there for 8 years with a sales and technical department so it was time to start up a new R&D department.

**Me:** So you had some knowledge about the city before moving there?

**Anders:** Personally no. I had never been to Shanghai before. Beijing a few times but never Shanghai.

**Me:** So how did you know about the city in terms of facilities and so on?

**Anders:** A very limited knowledge. Only that Shanghai is China's most western style city – the most international city in China. I knew the size of it and I knew a little about life there because we have had a few other Danes from the office living there so I talked a little bit with them but besides that a very limited knowledge.

**Me:** Did you acquire any additional knowledge or searched online before moving?

**Anders:** Only a little. I mainly searched because I had to decide where to live but I mostly to advice from the people I knew about where to settle down. I ended up living in the Pudong area the new Pudong area mainly because the office is out there so for the sake of convenience.

**Me:** I you are to take a city and that is not necessarily Shanghai what is important to you in a city?

**Anders:** For me it is often work related reasons such as transportation to and from work. But what I came to realize during my stay in Shanghai was that, looking back, I would probably have chosen a different place to live because the part of Shanghai where I live, in Pudong, has a very limited nightlife, social life so Pudong is almost a purely residential area whereas the other side of the river is much more lively. So as a single in Shanghai I would probably have chosen to on the other side of the river where there is more room for a social life. So my priorities have changed since I moved here.

**Me:** Did you like living I Shanghai?

**Anders:** Yes I like a lot. I think Shanghai is a great city and I think there is a lot of opportunities for entertaining yourself...I mean Shanghai I very western orientated for a Chinese city and you can practically live any life you want to in Shanghai.

**Me:** So if you are to describe Shanghai to a person who has never been there before how would you describe it?

**Anders:** I would describe it as a very, very big city...It is hard to compare large cities because I have tried a lot of different big cities, not living there but being there, mostly on business trips and even though you can compare them in size and infrastructure and so on Chinese cities are just different mainly because of the Chinese people and Shanghai is a very big city with a huge amount of Chinese people living there and if you don't like the Chinese culture and the way the Chinese people behave I would not recommend Shanghai as a place to live. If I could chose freely between any of the big cities in the world Shanghai and Chinese cities would not be my first choice at all but it is not because of the infrastructure or the architecture or the companies it is because of the Chinese people. But put aside Shanghai is a very easy city to live in – transportation is very, very efficient both the metro and the taxi's and so on and it is easy to get around in Shanghai

**Me:** If you are to tell me the story of Shanghai –the key incidents in the history of Shanghai – what is worth mentioning?

**Anders:** There are a few things. First of all there is the fact that Shanghai is very special because there is very little Chinese history in the city so Shanghai is a very modern city. In any other Chinese city you will find a lot of artifacts of history in the city but Shanghai is very modern. The second thing is a huge amount of the architecture – the buildings – in Shanghai that is very different from China. The Chinese architects are good a designing so no two buildings are the same. If you look at Denmark many of the buildings are the same – typical office building in Denmark are always square but you won't find any square buildings in Shanghai. It sort of the architectural playground of China where a lot of architects have had permission to built buildings or even whole parts of the city from their free mind. I think that

puts a very unique perspective on the city and when you drive around in the city you will see a lot different types of buildings. There is also something I have been told from my Chinese colleagues because I have seen a lot of buildings where there has been a very strange architecture to it but there is a good reason behind it. I have seen high rise residential buildings where there is a large pole with a big ball on top of it and my colleagues told me that the reason for it was that the buildings were placed on top of an old graveyard and the Chinese people don't like the idea that the souls of the dead were captured underneath the buildings so they built this device to make sure that the souls could pass on to the sky. I think they consider the environment, place and the history they built in and not just headless construction. Another good example is the SWFC where there is a big hole in the top of the building which is square today but the original plan from the architect was to make round hole but the problem for the Chinese people was that the architect was Japanese and they could not bear the thought to have a huge building with a round hole as the morning sun - the Japanese sun – shining down on Shanghai and the people protested so they had to make it into a square hole instead.

**Me:** Could you perhaps carry this story on 20 years from now? Where do you find Shanghai?

**Anders:** I think the economic environment will continue in the future and I think they will continue to build very spectacular buildings and evolve extremely fast. Today Shanghai has two centers the new one on the Pudong side and the old one on the Puxi side but already now we can see other local centers in Shanghai developing to become key centers in Shanghai – position themselves as the newer Shanghai to attract money developers and young people - thereby causing the city to become so big in the future that traveling into the traditional centers will take a very long time and I think that in the future Shanghai will see more of these competition between local areas thus creating self governing centers.

**Me:** How do think they are portraying themselves to the outside world? How are they communicating this branding of their own city?

**Anders:** I actually participated myself in one of the smaller municipalities in Shanghai in an afternoon seminar where topic was how to set up a company in China and was held at building belonging to this small municipality and they actually started out by playing an official video for the local municipality. It was like a tourist video where they were telling the story of this small municipality and everything that was good and they had these architect movies that was about how is this waterfront of the municipality going to look 5 years from now. This seemed like a tourist video for a whole nation but was in fact just a small municipality so it is definitely a big thing here – they all do it here with the promotion videos where they try to position themselves as the place for investors to deposit their money, place their



headquarter or branch in China. But Shanghai position themselves as a place where international companies can place their headquarter or branch office so they definitely targeting foreigners both companies and individuals to come to their city.

**Me:** How do find this marketing in terms of the shanghai you know?

**Anders:** One thing is how they portray the environment and what they want to built and I think it probably going to come true because what I have learned is that the Chinese say they are going to do is what they end up doing. If they set their minds to do something they will do it. Portrayed in these promotion video are of course a positive image of how easy business can be done and how easy it is to settle down but they are of course painting a picture where things sound a lot better than they actually are.

**Me:** Which visions do you see Shanghai is applying to its contemporary and future development?

**Anders:** The economy of Shanghai is roughly about the same size as a large European country and they positioning themselves as the place to for foreign companies in China. The biggest problem right now, however, is the real estate prices are going through the roof a there is a big mish-match between the real estate prices and the ordinary salary. It is not a vision but it is definitely a threat to the economy in Shanghai and China.

**Me:** So if you are to think about your everyday life in Shanghai do you think it is the right story that is being communicated?

**Anders:** I think a lot of it is true. It is cheap for companies to settle down here except for the real estate prices but everything else is actually true. It is quite fitting to the story that is being told.

**Me:** Who is communicating this representation?

**Anders:** It is definitely the local authorities – the Shanghai government is the one painting the picture of Shanghai as an economic center.

**Me:** You mentioned earlier that you have some Danish colleagues who knew something about Shanghai before you moved there but is there a difference between what they told you and what you are experiencing?

**Anders:** No not really. The main focus was where to live and what the environment was like in different parts of the city and that picture was very much what I experienced when arriving here.

**Me:** If we are to take the Bund what do you think it symbolizes?

**Anders:** If you look at the part of the Bund with big piece of promenade is you have all the 19 century buildings that has been restored to perfection and I think they represent the history of Shanghai where Shanghai rose as an international trading city and that piece of promenade stands as a historic statement of that period.

**Me:** Do you think it is important to the Chinese to keep it like that?

**Anders:** I think it is. Although the history is not always in the Chinese favor with the opium war and British was there and the French was there everybody was there it is not necessarily a pleasant memory they have but it is important to them – an important part of Shanghai and it think it is important for them to keep the buildings as a statement of that period.

**Me:** What about the Pudong area? What does it symbolize?

**Anders:** It symbolizes the new Shanghai. That is the core of the Shanghai business area and the fact that they managed to attract all these international companies and Pudong represents...it is where they have all the tall buildings in Shanghai in that small area and that is like a statement of what you can do. It is a statement of the prosperity of the Shanghai economy from the early 1990's and to today.

**Me:** If you think back to when you first landed in Shanghai what was the first things you noticed during the first week or so

**Anders:** Pollution! I spend most of my first week on the Pudong side because that was where my office was but what struck me the most about Shanghai was probably the pollution because I came at a time where it was very visible and secondly about the Pudong side was how the streets was very deserted in the evening and therefore very quietly in the evening but that is definitely not the case if you go the the Puxi side. It was a positive surprise for me

**Me:** What buildings represent Shanghai the best?

**Anders:** I think the image you have when you are standing on the Bund looking towards the Pudong side that skyline is it I men if you see a picture of that skyline anywhere you would know it is Shanghai cause that is how you know Shanghai that picture taken from the Bund towards Pudong. There are a few other buildings here and there that are unique to Shanghai I mean that if I saw them again on a picture I

would recognize them but other than that I would say that most buildings in Shanghai are not unique in the sense that you would recognize them anywhere. They are unique when you are there because they are special but I don't they are the kind of buildings you would remember

**Me:** So are these buildings the same you would use if you where to describe Shanghai to a person – to tell how special it is here?

**Anders:** Yes there are a few new buildings i would use to describe Shanghai which are spectacular and one of them is the science museum on Pudong which I think is very spectacular but there are also some old historic buildings I would use like an old slaughterhouse just north of the river that has been turned into a culture house with café's and art shops and that is one I use to describe the architecture in Shanghai to others – a case where they have taken an old building and not destroyed it

**Me:** Do you think that Shanghai is a good representative for China?

**Anders:** No definitely not because it is too little Chinese history in it. I think Shanghai is a metropol in the sense that if you were blindfolded and released in the middle of Pudong or a crowded area you would not know whether you where Shanghai, Singapore, Hongkong, New York or any other major city. It is not a good representative for China it is a metropol. Beijing on the other hand is a good representative for China. But not Shanghai it is too international

## **Appendix D – Interview with Charlotte Jakobsen**

### **Interview with Charlotte Jakobsen (PhD at Aalborg University)**

**Me:** Can you tell me something about yourself?

**Charlotte:** I have a master's degree in business administration and got a PhD position also in business administration and it was in relation to that PhD that I had to go to Shanghai together with my husband and my son...he is two years.

**Me:** What was your knowledge about Shanghai before going there?

**Charlotte:** Before I knew that I had to go to Shanghai I did not know anything about the city. I knew about the Expo but I did not know anything about Shanghai before going there but then I started to read about it and get familiar with the city

**Me:** Where did you acquire your knowledge from?

**Charlotte:** Books and the internet...so lonely planet and different WebPages.

**Me:** If we are to take any city in the world what is important to you? What facilities do you use?

**Charlotte:** As a tourist or as a citizen?

**Me:** As a citizen

**Charlotte:** Possibilities for shopping like if I had to stay there like do I Shanghai then the possibilities for shopping groceries like we can get in Denmark – familiar items. Outdoor spaces as there are here in Shanghai were there are all these parks so open outdoor spaces.

**Me:** Has the things that important to you changed since you moved here?

**Charlotte:** No I don't think so.

**Me:** So are you using the city in a similar manor like you would do back in Denmark?

**Charlotte:** No not all the way but I try to make it fit. That is also why is said the things with the groceries and the everyday items because when you move there with a family as an expat and not as a tourist is important for me to maintain sort of the same lifestyle as we would have done in Denmark.

**Me:** Did you like living in Shanghai?

**Charlotte:** No! The city is too big for me; too noisy; too much traffic and too much chaos.

**Me:** If you are to describe Shanghai to a person who had never been there before how would you do that?

**Charlotte:** Like a very hectic city with a lot of possibilities for going out and seeing things; they have a lot to offer but you have to have the right kind of temper and the right kind of setting and living-style because if you are used to a small city like I am then I can become too much. But a nice city still because there are all these possibilities for shopping, going out and they all these parks so the city has these plusses and minuses and the plusses for me is the things that can make me feel like I still are in touch with Denmark like shopping western things and groceries.

**Me:** Could you briefly tell me the story of Shanghai.

**Charlotte:** I don't know that much about the history of Shanghai. I know that is has been a colony once but I am not that familiar with the history of the city but I know that is has moved from being this colonial city to a more financial city – a metropol with all these big companies present in Shanghai but that is pretty much it except they say that it is the city in China that is most familiar with the English language and has the most foreigners living there

**Me:** Does that influence your view on the city?

**Charlotte:** Yes and it also has something to with why I chose that city and not for instance Beijing I wanted to be in a place where I could feel more like at home.

**Me:** How do think Shanghai is portraying itself? What is the overall vision of the city?

**Charlotte:** It is an important city for China as a whole and it is a financial metropol; a business city. It is not a cultural city where it would think more of cities like Beijing where there is more of the old culture left.

**Me:** Is this sort of western approach they have taken a part of their vision?

**Charlotte:** Yes I think so. They want to be this big international city and are proud of this

**Me:** So looking at your experiences in the city and looking at the profile Shanghai has chosen do you think it is the right story that is being communicated to the outside world?

**Charlotte:** That depends on where they want to go because if they want to a big international and global city where they attract foreign companies and citizens then yes – they are doing what should be doing but in terms of attracting tourists then it is maybe only the skyscrapers because there are not any genuine Chinese culture here. The city is not that authentic. So if they want to have this image of being a rich global city then it is the right image.

**Me:** Is this also the feeling you get when walking around in Shanghai?

**Charlotte:** Some of the places but you also see slum and the less fortunate site of the city and when you stay there for a longer period than what you do as a tourist you will be more likely to see that site of the city also of course.

**Me:** Is there a difference between the Shanghai you first heard or read about and the Shanghai you live in?

**Charlotte:** Yes it is far more chaotic and far noisier than I imagined that it could be I mean there were people everywhere and the traffic...so chaotic and even though I read about this in the books it came as a shock to me that it was to such a high degree. Also the thing about the Chinese not being good at English also came as a shock to me even though I had heard about it before I went. The whole thing was far more extreme when I got there than I imagined before going there.

**Me:** Did this shock in any way change your perception of the whole thing?

**Charlotte:** Yes I went there with a positive attitude and an open mind and looking forwards to staying there in the city and I am also suppose to go back later on but now I don't feel like going back I have experienced the city now and I don't feel like going back and it was just too overwhelming.

**Me:** So do you feel like if you had been given some additional information before going there making the shock less obvious it could have influenced your perceptions?

**Charlotte:** Probably because I came there being a bit naïve or thinking how badly can it be but had I been alerted by for instance people – friends - who had already been there. Later on when I asked my friends they said that they did not want to tell before I went but they actually had an awful time in Shanghai and I think that if I had heard those stories before leaving I would have been more prepared.

**Me:** What does the city of Shanghai symbolize - the whole city?

**Charlotte:** On the one site it symbolizes the rich and the financial growth of China but on the other side there are also the thing about the poor people and the forgotten cultural past. But mostly the financial growth and the economic situation in China with all the new buildings. Everywhere in you can see a new building being built. Shanghai symbolizes growth in China.

**Me:** So more precisely what does the Bund area symbolize?

**Charlotte:** The Bund is a symbol of their history – of a time in their history but again if you stand on the Bund you will both see the Bund but you will also see the other side – Pudong where all the growth is situated and the Bund sort of drowns in all this new history

**Me:** How do you think the Chinese feel about the Bund and the history of it?

**Charlotte:** I think they are proud of it but the other side is more important – they are more proud of Pudong than the Bund because it is the story of their own success.

**Me:** So more precisely what does Pudong symbolize?

**Charlotte:** it symbolizes financial growth getting rich and so on.

**Me:** What about the Oriental Pearl Tower. What does it symbolize?

**Charlotte:** It is a very futuristic building that for me symbolizes the Chinese future.

**Me:** These futuristic features like having the tallest building and so on are they important to you?

**Charlotte:** No not to me, perhaps if you are a tourist but not as an expat and I think there is a difference because tourism is about stating that now you have been there – in the tallest building and ridden the fastest train and seen the skyline but not important for me as an expat.

**Me:** When arriving in Shanghai what were the first buildings and structures you noticed during the first week?

**Charlotte:** I live close to the stadium so I would say the stadium. But also just driving from the airport to our apartment we saw some of the buildings in Pudong; we saw the bottle opener. But also just in general I was overwhelmed by all these tall buildings. I don't remember I visited the Bund during the first week...

**Me:** Did you go sightseeing?

**Charlotte:** Yes. Perhaps not like a tourist but we used the first...actually we still do it occasionally – go to a new park, to a temple or to the Bund or Pudong and those things you need to see in Shanghai but we do it like more occasionally.

**Me:** What kind of buildings or features would represent the Shanghai you first heard or read about?

**Charlotte:** Probably the bottle opener. The Pudong side of Shanghai

**Me:** Are these buildings like the SWFC fitting to the story you would describe to a person who had never been there before.

**Charlotte:** Yes I would say so. They are more a part of the image and story of Shanghai than the Bund is. Even though the Bund is also a big part of the Shanghai history it sort of drowns or lies in the shadow of all the other things. It is like they would rather show the image of their economic growth rather than their historic past

**Me:** What symbolic meaning do you attach to this?



**Charlotte:** That is just how China is, they want to show the world how good they are it is not just Shanghai or another part of China. China want to show the world that they are leading and moving forward and they want to appear innovative and financial strong and perhaps also in terms of technology that they can build all these things as fast as they do it. They want to show that they are superior.

**Me:** So do you think that it is deliberate that they neglect their historic past and instead focus on the modern future China?

**Charlotte:** Yes in Shanghai I think it is a choice they have made to focus on the other things and if you go to Beijing it is another story

**Me:** Do you think that Shanghai is a good representative for China?

**Charlotte:** No! Ok then again it is like two opposites because on one hand it represents the whole idea of China as a place of growth and superiority but on the other hand it is not that representative for how the majority of people live in China because it is such a international and global city but it represents the vision of future China – the model city of future China. But as far as culture and everyday life goes you shouldn't go to Shanghai – it is not a representative for China I think

## **Appendix E – Interview guide**

Opening questions:

**1) Can you tell me something about yourself?**

- a. Job and personal life
- b. Where did you live in Denmark
- c. Why did you move to Shanghai

**2) What was your knowledge about Shanghai prior to moving there?**

- a. How much research did you do about the city before moving?
- b. Where did you acquire this knowledge from?

**3) What is important in any a city to you (not necessarily Shanghai)?**

- a. Has it changed since you moved to Shanghai?
- b. Are you “using the city” in a different way now?
- c. Do you like living in Shanghai?

**4) How will you describe Shanghai as if you were describing it to a person without any prior knowledge about the city**

**5) What is an expat?**

- a. What is the difference, besides the duration, between a tourist and an expat?
- b. Is it easy to be a Danish expat in Shanghai?

Questions relating to storytelling

**6) Can you, briefly, tell me the story of Shanghai (key element in the history of the city that you think is worth telling)?**

- a. Which episodes/periods are of significance when setting out to describe “your” Shanghai?
- b. Could you continue the story 20 years forward (your account of the future development)

**7) How is Shanghai portraying itself as a city?**

- a. What visions do you see Shanghai is applying to its contemporary and future development?
- b. Is this/these visions fitting to the Shanghai you like?

**8) Do you think it is the right story of Shanghai that is being communicated to outside world?**

- a. Your alternative story (if any).
- b. Who is communicating this representation?
- c. Why do you think they choose this version?

**9) Is there a difference between the Shanghai you had heard/read about and the Shanghai you live in? What/which?**

- a. Could you have used some other information (stories/pictures) before leaving for Shanghai?

Questions relating to Urban Symbolism

**10) What does the city of Shanghai symbolise?**

- a. What does the Bund area symbolise in your mind (the old financial and leisure centre)
- b. What does the Pudong skyline (as seen from the Bund area) symbolise in your mind (the SWFC or the Pearl of the Orient)
- c. Are the many record breaking attractions (fast train, tallest bar/swimming pool, rapid development important in this context to you?
- d. How do you see/experience the old status as a treaty port affecting Shanghai today?

**11) What structures did notice on arrival in Shanghai (first week)?**

- a. Did you go sightseeing? What did you see?
- b. How did you go see them?

**12) What kind of structures/buildings would represent the Shanghai you first heard about?**

- a. Are the many record breaking attractions (fast train, tallest bar/swimming pool important here?

**13) What are now the most spectacular structures/buildings of Shanghai to you now and why?**

- a. Are the structures fitting for the story you described in question 4?
- b. What symbolic meaning do you attach to these structures/buildings?

**14) Do you think that Shanghai is a good representative for China?**

## Appendix F – Authors photo's from the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center October 2012

