

## Abstract

This study focuses on expats, professionals and specialists from English-speaking countries who were sent by their employers to work abroad in Switzerland. They together with their families, were asked to move to a foreign country and start new lives. Although the relocation does bring a change in career and in most cases, a better personal economic situation, it also brings with it, big life changes. The most obvious changes are associated with separation from their ancestral homes and families, and the need for the establishment of new ones. The central point of this study is the question of what helps to create these new homes and what is involved in this sphere. The fieldwork, which was defined by cohabitation with the families, consisted of observation and analysis to determine the social and material practices through which expatriate families relate to their homes – and how it was narratively reflected. Some major points of observation included the universal need for the families to have with them, objects of a material nature that linked their new home to the original and contemporary home, and a tendency to establish social ties with other expats as a substitution of the family support network. Also observed were the aspects of the adaptation of the family members to their new homes and the differences of the perception of what constitutes home, based on how temporary or permanent the situation.

**Key words:** expats \* home \* migration \* material culture \* au pair \* anthropology of food