Migrants' experience of being at home

Outcome of interaction of multitude of individual and environmental factors & processes
Accompanied 17 participants for ~ 2 years → ethnography

Migration Experience of Germans to A/NZ

Germany

Episodic Interviews

~ 6 m

Participant Observation

Australia or New Zealand

Episodic Interviews

~ 12 m

Participant Observation

Episodic Interviews

~ 24 m with potential migrants

Episodic Interviews

Participant Observation

Germany

Unstructured Diaries
Migration: Transformation processes towards actualising authentic selves & lives

Past

Living in the gap/3rd space: Transcending boundaries

Becoming conscious of self & world

Detaching: Breaking away from cultural roots

Learning to fly: Gaining capabilities & confidence

Future
Growing-up unconventionally

- Safe wild nature places
- Love reading & exploring cultures
- Family history moving/migrating
- Moving within Germany & travelling with family
- Feeling different/exotic & not fitting in
- Unusual & challenging life experiences

Developing higher degrees of consciousness

- Curiosity, imagination & longing to experience world
- Value nature, reading, experiences & learning
- Value family, friends, community
- Shallow roots: ↓ attachment
- Maturity, independence, agency, confidence & trust
- Desire to be authentic self

LEAVING HOME, TRAVELLING INDEPENDENTLY & LIVING ABROAD
Becoming conscious of self & world
More experiences that provided more opportunities for comparison & critical deliberation/reflections

Self-knowledge →
Getting to know their selves & becoming more conscious of values, needs, likes & dislikes

Re-evaluation of values & priorities

Realising that physical & social living environment created & influences well-being

Expanding cultural competence/experience

Developing increasingly critical perspective of Germany

Feeling sense of belonging in A/NZ & realising A/NZ fulfills needs & matches values, desires & aspirations
LEAVING GERMANY

Scarc nature & outdoor activities
Long cold & grey winter
Weak economy
Exploitative work conditions
High unemployment
Leadership incompetent

High population density
High crime
Social systems deteriorating
Low community spirit

“Grey” Aggressive, cold & closed people
High pressure to conform

Oppression of self & opposing creating dreamed off life

Choosing ANZ

Vastness/space
“Bright” Friendly, warm
Relaxed & open people
Lower pressure to conform
Pioneer country
Flexible, active, potential

Low population density
Warmer & sunny climate
Low stress
Growing economy
Supportive work conditions

More pristine nature & outdoor activities
Low population density
Supportive work conditions
Lower unemployment
Multicultural Bilingual

Realising of self, alive & allowing creating dreamed off life
Low unemployment
Social systems good quality
Lebensgefuehl: Joy & self-determination

Safe place
Simple, slower original

Living priority, Possible to life
Supportive work conditions

Higher community spirit
Lower regimentation relaxed/free

Working priority
Exploitative work conditions
High constant & global stress

High regimentation
High unemployment
Leadership incompetent

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Growing economy
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Detaching:
Breaking away from cultural roots
Cutting the cord to country of origin emotionally & physically → maturing

**Places**
- Resolving/completing unfinished business/emotional baggage
- Local & cultural knowledge

**People**
- Telling significant others
- Reactions of people

**Possessions**
- Negotiating boundaries of responsibility

**Situations**
- Culture
- Language
Pronounced “loss” of “outer” identity

De-rootedness & alienation from people, places & situations

Knowledge of self & external conditions

Realising that able to live somewhere else without roots

Space for new things

Being more authentic self-actualised self
(Maslow, 1943, 1970; Golomb, 1995)

Assigning priority to own thoughts & well-being

Advanced stages of moral development
(Kohlberg, 1984)

Living own life → actions determined by self vs others
Learning to fly: Gaining capabilities & confidence
Gaining of trust & confidence in self

Leaving comfort zone

Jump into the unknown/uncertainty & fly

Constant interaction with new environments -
wealth of varied interaction

cultural & migration competence

many perceptions & interpretations

English capabilities

new capabilities \rightarrow flexibility

Realise that they are able to live somewhere else

independence & autonomy

trust that able to survive on own

relaxed & calm in difficult situations

Trust in self & Life/’God’
Living in the gap/3rd space: Transcending boundaries
Emigration

Feeling different/exotic & not fitting in

Identification with Germany

Travelling → Rift to others

Self independent of nationalities/ethnicity → Citizen of the world (cosmopolitan)

Sense of belonging to A/NZ

Emigration

Physically living in Germany yet mentally & emotionally living already in ANZ

Undecided: Being uncertain whether want to migrate or not

Decided: want to leave but cannot → living on stand-by/in limbo

Decided: unsure about whether ANZ right country
IMMIGRATION

Physically living in A/NZ yet mentally still living in Germany → feeling surreal

Constant conscious re-creating of self → authentic & self-actualised selves

Having several homes & feeling increasingly at home within self

Increasingly realising German aspects of self yet increasingly less German

Never be pure-bred Australian yet less German

Choosing what German aspects of self to reject or keep

Choosing what aspects from other countries to accept & integrate
BEING AT HOME: PERSON-ENVIRONMENT CONGRUITY

Historical
Natural & build
Social
Cultural
Political
Economic
Faith

MIGRANT
Multitude of factors influencing experience of home

- Living up to green & clean image
- Friendly, cooperative, relaxed & supportive
- Society appreciating, allowing & accepting diversity & strong sense of community
- Sufficient space & opportunities for contact with nature
- Environmentally conscious
- Easy & immediate access to jobs & welfare system
- Sufficient employment opportunities & social systems
- Low crime rate
- Provide honest information
- Low bureaucracy & regimentation
- Original, simpler, slower, self-determined, self-sufficient & joyful life

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Thank you!

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Migrating:
Reclaiming My Power to Fly

A world of unlimited possibilities
I commanded when I was young.

Further down the river of life
the ringing of the division bell began.

Forgetting my dreams and self,
vegetating comfortably yet numb,
settling into mediocrity -
I defined.

No! This is not who I am!
No! This is not how I ache to live!
Aspiring flying powerfully
climbing to indescribable heights,
being alive, unbridling and blossoming
fully -
that is who I am.

Getting to know myself and the world
by reading and travelling,
breaking away from the doubts, fears
and stories
that tie me down and restrict me,
rising up and looking for conditions
that meet my needs and empower me,

trying to joyously dance with all
possibilities -
that is what I do.

Reclaiming my power and innocence,
creating my self and my dreamed of
world,
bathing in a state of freedom and bliss
that is what I have.
Degree to which environment provides opportunities for being and developing self & creating desired life

- Degree of matching desires, values & needs
- Degree to which suitable for children
- Nature & outdoor activities
- Climate
- Political leadership
- Immigration requirements & administration
- Degree of economic strength & innovation
- Unemployment rate & work conditions
- Space
- Population density
- Community spirit
- Mentality & language
- Pressure to conform
- Living priorities & awareness
- Degree of Reglementation
- Degree of stress
- Degree of environmental consciousness
- Quality of social systems