Leave – Stay – Return: Understanding Mobility Trajectories of German Migrants by Choice Moving to and from Canada

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the mobility trajectories of highly skilled and relatively affluent migrants who move between highly developed countries of the "global North". While these "migrants by choice" are often seen as "desired immigrants" who hold the privilege to move internationally relatively unrestricted, little is known about their actual migration decision-making behaviour and their lived experiences in their place(s) of destination. To address this research gap, I explore the migration trajectories of German migrants by choice moving to and from Canada as a case study. Drawing on 48 narrative life story interviews with Germans at different stages of their migration trajectories (i.e., the pre-movement phase, the phase of settling down and living in Canada and the phase of return and/or onward movement) I specifically analyse a) their lived experiences in their day-to-day life (including experiences of settlement and integration as well as the place attachments they form during their mobility trajectories to b) understand how these experiences impact their decisions of leaving, staying, returning, or moving onward, i.e., to be internationally mobile. The results demonstrate that emotional or ideational reasons as well as chance were the main drivers behind my interviewees' movements to Canada. Moreover, the findings underline that migration decisions are often formed in ongoing processes that change and evolve over time and are closely tied to my interviewees' lived experiences at their local places of destination as well as significant life course events, such as the birth of a child or relationship break-up. Drawing on these findings, I ultimately propose a new and comprehensive model explaining the migration decision-making processes of migrants by choice. In doing so, this dissertation makes five important contributions to the field of migration and mobility studies, namely 1) it challenges the sedentary bias in migration studies; 2) it underlines the importance of moving away from strictly national or transnational perspectives on migration movements; 3) it highlights the importance of considering the lived experiences as well as the challenges and hidden frictions of highly skilled migration movements; 4) it challenges a purely economic or political understanding of migration processes; and 5) it highlights the importance of exploring the dissonance between policy intentions and the actual behaviour of migrants.

Keywords: Migrants by choice, mobility, migration decision making, step-by-step immigration, Germany, Canada

Résumé

Cette thèse se concentre sur les trajectoires de mobilité des migrants hautement qualifiés et relativement aisés qui se déplacent entre les pays développés du « Nord global ». Bien que ces « migrants par choix » soient souvent considérés comme des « immigrants désirés » qui détiennent le privilège de se déplacer à l'international avec peu de contraintes, on en sait peu sur leur comportement réel de prise de décision en matière de migration et sur leurs expériences vécues dans leur(s) lieu(x) de destination. Pour combler cette lacune de recherche, j'explore à titre d'étude de cas les trajectoires de migration des migrants allemands hautement qualifiés arrivant et/ou quittant le Canada. En m'appuyant sur 48 entretiens narratifs de vie avec des Allemands à différentes étapes de leur trajectoire migratoire (c.-à-d. la phase pré-mouvement, la phase d'installation et de vie au Canada et la phase de retour et / ou de mouvement ultérieur), j'analyse spécifiquement a) leurs expériences vécues dans leur vie de tous les jours (y compris les expériences d'établissement et d'intégration ainsi que les attachements aux lieux qu'ils forment au cours de leurs trajectoires de mobilité) pour b) comprendre comment ces expériences influencent leurs décisions d'immigrer, rester, retourner ou émigrer ailleurs, c.-à-d. d'être mobiles à l'international. Les résultats démontrent que les raisons émotionnelles ou idéationnel ainsi que le hasard étaient les principaux motifs des déplacements de mes interviewés vers le Canada. De plus, les résultats soulignent que les décisions de migration sont souvent formées dans le cadre de processus continus qui changent et évoluent au fil du temps et sont étroitement liés aux expériences vécues par les personnes interrogées dans leur lieu de destination local ainsi qu'aux événements importants du parcours de vie, comme la naissance d'un enfant ou la rupture d'une relation. Sur la base de ces résultats, je propose finalement un nouveau modèle global expliquant les processus de prise de décision en matière de migration des migrants par choix. Ce faisant, cette thèse apporte cinq contributions importantes au domaine des études sur la migration et la mobilité, à savoir 1) elle remet en question le biais sédentaire dans les études sur la migration; 2) elle souligne l'importance de s'éloigner d'une perspective strictement nationale ou transnationale sur les mouvements migratoires; 3) elle souligne l'importance de considérer les expériences vécues ainsi que les défis et les frictions cachées des mouvements des migrants hautement qualifiés; 4) elle remet en question une compréhension purement économique ou politique des processus de migration; et 5) elle souligne l'importance d'explorer la dissonance entre les intentions des politiques et le comportement réel des migrants.

Mots clés: Migrants par choix, mobilité, prise de décision en matière de migration, immigration étape par étape, Allemagne, Canada

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List of Abbreviations

AE	Assigned expatriation
DLI	Designated learning institution
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
GAIN	German Academic International Network
IEC	International Experience Canada
ICT	Information and communications technology
IMP	International Mobility Program
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
LMIA	Labour Market Impact Assessment
MNC	Multinational corporation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGWPP	Post-Graduation Work Permit Program
PNP	Provincial Nominee Program
PR	Permanent Resident
SIE	Self-initiated expatriation
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TFW	Temporary Foreign Worker
TFWP	Temporary Foreign Worker Program
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States

1 Introduction

As early as 1993, Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (1993), proclaimed “the age of migration” and highlighted the important role of international migration for contemporary societies. Today, almost 30 years later, and with the sixth revised edition of their book just published (Haas, Castles, and Miller 2020) this proposition could not be more true. Besides climate change and the current global pandemic caused by the novel Coronavirus, migration is one of the most debated and contested topics on a global scale. Even within the debates of the other two topics, questions about migration and mobility take an important stance. The predicted consequences of climate change, for example, raise questions about how to deal with the increasing numbers of so-called climate refugees that we are likely going to see over the next few decades due to rising sea levels and an increase in severe weather conditions threatening the livelihoods of millions of people. The current state of global emergency caused by the spread of the Coronavirus has resulted in halting much of the travel usually happening at an international, national, and even regional level on a day-to-day basis. In fact, much of the air traffic, which is a prerequisite for our globalized world, is currently cancelled. In addition to that, countries are increasingly, if temporarily, closing their borders and (re-)introducing border controls as well as other measures to stop the spread of the virus. Some countries, including Canada, even temporarily paused the right for individuals to seek asylum by entering through their land borders. This raises questions about the “deservingness” of people to enter a country (who should be allowed to enter and who should remain outside of the national territory and based on which criteria?), questions that have long been at the forefront of political and public debates around international migration. Apart from discussions around the climate crisis and the Coronavirus outbreak, most recently, we saw these questions being discussed in relation to the so-called refugee crisis starting in 2015 as well as in the discussions around Trumps plans to build a wall to “seal off” the border between Mexico and the USA.

Usually, the debates around the deservingness of migrants to enter a country differentiate between individuals who are identified as "desired" (e.g., because they bring certain skills, experiences, or monetary funds with them that are assumed to help the host society economically) or "deserving of entrance" (e.g., because they have "legitimate" reasons for fleeing their countries) and those who are identified as "undesired" (e.g., because they are not highly qualified) or "undeserving" (e.g., because they are supposedly "exploiting the asylum system") (Diop 2014; Weinar and Klekowski von Koppenfels 2019; Bonjour and Chauvin 2018). It is important to highlight that these notions of "deservingness" and "undeservingness" are also (and increasingly so) linked to migrants' "country label", i.e., the country they originate from and the "set of beliefs about a country's cultural, social and economic characteristics that defines its passport holders in the eyes of the host community" (Weinar and Klekowski von Koppenfels 2019, 172). As a result of this, being white, highly skilled, belonging to the middle class, and originating from a Western European country is often associated with being the "ideal immigrant". In fact, immigrants from Western countries are often thought to easily integrate because they supposedly can effortlessly find employment and their assumed high level of education as well as their "socio-economic background […] is seen to warrant (sufficient) cultural proximity particularly in terms of having 'modern' views", i.e., sharing the same values and norms as their receiving societies (Bonjour & Dyvendak 2018, 895). In contrast to that, "'non-Western'"[1] immigrants are often assumed to be poor and lacking "skills and education" which then is also associated with adhering to "traditional norms" and supposedly puts them at a further "cultural distance" to their host societies (Bonjour & Dyvendak 2018, 895). Ultimately, this means that "non-Western" immigrants are "assumed to be unfit for 'integration' in terms of education and skills as well as norms and values" (Bonjour & Chauvin 2018, 7). As such, the discourses around the "deservingness" and "undeservingness"

[1] "Non-Western" is here to be understood as individuals who either originate from countries outside of the so-called global North or while holding citizenship of a country belonging to the "global North" differ from the majority societies of these countries in terms of their skin colour, ethnicity or religious beliefs.

of migrants are not only inherently linked to their nationality as well as their ethnicity and religious beliefs but because these attributes are then linked to assumptions about the cultural and economic performances of migrants, among other, they are also inherently classed (Bonjour & Dyvendak 2018, Bonjour & Chauvin 2018).

This means that not only the context in which "Western" and "non-Western" immigrants migrate differs, but also that the climate of reception that they face in their countries of destination is vastly dissimilar. While the former are seen as "desired", "welcomed" and their presence is not questioned, the latter are often confronted with xenophobia, racism and they have to proof their "worth" of residing in their host countries by demonstrating their extraordinary integration outcomes and, ideally, even surpassing the host county's expectations toward them. As such, the former are disproportionately privileged compared to the latter and their overall migration, integration and settlement experience need to be examined and understood as such. This differential perception and treatment of "Western" and "non-Western" immigrants is, as Paik (2020) for example demonstrates for the US, not a new phenomenon but rather something that is historically embedded in the political, economic, and social culture of countries. Moreover, this classification of the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' migrant is also linked to the discriminatory practices against other minority groups such as women, people of colour, differently abled individuals, or members of the LGBTQI+ community (Paik 2020).

This dissertation focuses on the group of relatively privileged individuals, i.e., those who are usually perceived as "desired" and, in fact, often encouraged if not "courted" by countries to move there in order to boost a country's economy and help them stay afloat in the global market. Specifically, this research explores the mobility trajectories of highly skilled individuals who move between highly developed countries of the "global North".[2] The migration processes of these individuals have so far only gotten little attention in the research

[2] The "South" is here used as a synonym for less developed countries whereas the "North" represents developed or highly developed countries (United Nations 2013).

literature and research on "migration within the Global North" is at best "an emerging field of research" (Weinar, Klekowski von Koppenfels 2019, 171). This is surprising considering that Weinar and Klekowski von Koppenfels (2019, 171) citing data from the 2017 UN DESA highlight that "of the estimated 258 million international migrants in 2017 (…), over half, or 146 million, lived in the Global North. [And] [o]f those, more than one-third (39%), totalling 57 million, had been born in another country of the Global North". Thus, while admittedly, migrants from and moving within the "global North", do not present the largest group of migrants worldwide, they are still "not an insignificant category" and further research is needed to understand their migration and integration behaviour (Weinar & Klekowski von Koppenfels 2017, 171).

Throughout this dissertation, I refer to these individuals who migrate within countries of the "global North" as *migrants by choice*. This term was, to the best of my knowledge, first proposed by Angelika Dietz (2011) in her study on belonging and a sense of place among contemporary Italian migrants in Northern Ireland. Dietz (2011, 31) uses the term to underline the voluntary character of her interviewees' movements which she highlights is in stark contrast to other groups of migrants "who have to leave their country of origin because of political, economic or other reasons". I use the term *migrants by choice* in a similar way than Dietz (2011) – i.e., to emphasize that the reasons for migration among the group I am studying are neither forced by outer circumstances, such as war or natural catastrophes, nor by an unfavorable situation in their country, e.g., social or political crises, but rather are determined on a more personal level and are undertaken voluntarily. However, my dissertation goes a step further by also providing a definition of who migrants by choice are. This definition is deducted from a thorough review of the literature. Specifically, without previously being aware of Dietz' dissertation, I decided to use the term *migrants by choice* rather than other terms used in the research literature – e.g., lifestyle migrants (Benson and O'Reilly 2016a), transnational mobiles (Vorheyer 2016), the mobile elites (Jansson 2016b), expatriates (Richardson and Mallon 2005)

or the creative class (Florida 2002) just to name a few – because the group of migrants I explore in my research includes a wide variety of individuals who belong to different of the above-named sub-categories. What they all have in common is that they are highly skilled and that they initiated their migration individually and voluntarily. Thus, using a single of the aforementioned categories would not have allowed me to adequately capture the group under investigation. Nevertheless, research on all these groups inspired my undertaking and informed my study design and the definition of my target group to a significant extent. Based on the reviewed literature (see chapter 3), I therefore propose the following definition of migrants by choice: Migrants by choice refer to highly skilled individuals, i.e., individuals who have obtained tertiary education in a variety of different domains and/or are in the process of obtaining tertiary education (e.g., international students), or individuals who more generally work in "science and engineering, architecture and design, education, [or] arts, music and entertainment (…) [as well as] business and finance, law, health care, and related fields" (Florida 2002, 8). As their migration processes are understood as being voluntary, migrants by choice self-initiate their mobility and they have control over where they move to. Lastly, their migration is not understood as a one-time event that necessarily results in the permanent settlement in the countries they move to. Much rather permanent settlement is only one possible option as their migration is understood as a process that continuously evolves and where the prospects of leaving, staying, returning, or moving onward are negotiated in an ongoing manner.

This leads to the next factor that warrants a closer definition, namely the question of mobility versus migration. While the term migration is often associated with the movement to a host society that results in permanent settlement, the term mobility is more commonly associated with temporary or ongoing movements within, across and between national and regional boundaries. Consequently, migration is often also associated with people who are forced to leave their home countries for various reasons and are in search of a new permanent

home elsewhere whereas mobility is associated with those who have the means and possibilities to be internationally mobile and whose movements do not necessarily result in the permanent settlement elsewhere but rather in temporary stays of varying length. In this dissertation I use the terms migration and mobility interchangeably as I conceptualize migration as an ongoing process that can consist of multiple and ongoing movements of varying length within, across and between different countries, regions, cities and even neighborhoods. Moreover, by using both terms interchangeably, I want to challenge public discourses which typically frame mobility exclusively as a term used for those who are well off and migration for those who are poor and in need. Much rather, I would argue that any kind of migration movement involves forms of mobility and that even those who are considered as "less desirable" (e.g., because they are lower skilled), can be highly mobile. This is demonstrated by the example of temporary foreign farm workers all around the world who often move to another country for a part of the year to work on farms, return home after the harvest season and then move again in the year after.

Thus, while many migration processes involve multiple moves and/or connections to several different locales, migration research so far predominantly focuses on the situation in one specific location and at one specific stage of individuals' migration trajectories, i.e., the situation in the receiving society or the return to one's country of origin, which results in a sedentary bias. Rarely, however, does research examine the different phases of migration trajectories (emigration, immigration, return and/or onward movements) in one study. This is because such an undertaking requires a multi-sited and/or longitudinal research design, both of which are relatively difficult to implement due to the financial and organizational challenges they imply. However, since migration is an ongoing process and the experiences of migrants change over time and in different phases of their migration trajectories, studies that apply these kinds of research designs are needed to obtain a more holistic understanding of migration experiences (Rashid et al. 2013). This is particularly true for the group of migrants, namely

migrants by choice, who are under study here, as they often have the opportunity to move internationally without any major risks and restrictions and their migration processes thus become more and more fluid (Jansson 2016b).

In fact, as briefly mentioned above, in today's global economy, the mobility of these migrants by choice, has gained in importance as, on the one hand, countries are increasingly competing to attract the best and most qualified individuals to secure their competitiveness in the world market, as well as social cohesion and successful nation-building. This competition for global talent has been captured in research by terms such as "the war for talent" (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, and Axelrod 2001) and is not only reflected by countries trying to attract international talent but also that they increasingly try to retain and/or encourage the return of their "own talent" from abroad (Shachar and Hirschl 2013). As a result of this, a lot of Western European countries, for example, are experiencing high emigration rates, especially of their young and well-educated national-born population (van Dalen and Henkens 2007). Moreover, research has also started to pay some attention to the fact that reasons for emigration have become more diversified, with migration for study purposes, "professional advancement, marriage, retirement or lifestyle" becoming more and more popular (Castles 2010, 1567). Often, individuals who can be classified as migrants by choice are described as rational actors whose migration and integration processes are relatively "uncomplicated" as they possess high human, social and cultural capital (Metthews and Satzewich 2006). This, however, ignores the complexity lying behind their mobility decisions, as well as their integration and settlement experiences. While scholarship has started to pay attention to this phenomenon, empirical studies specifically on the lived experiences of these individuals are rare and classical migration theories insufficiently capture this highly-coveted form of migration (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006; van Riemsdijk and Wang 2017b).

To obtain a better understanding of the experiences of these migrants by choice and their mobility trajectories, I argue that both the reasons that might have caused them to move

in the first place as well as their lived experiences in their day-to-day life (including experiences of settlement and integration) and the place attachments they form during the different stages of their mobility trajectories need to be taken into consideration. This is because these individuals hold the privilege to decide – relatively unrestricted – whether to stay at a place or to move elsewhere. Therefore, I assume that their experiences of integrating into their (local) places of destinations and feeling at home there might impact their decisions of whether to leave, stay, return, or move onward to a significant degree. However, studies examining both the causes of migration and migration outcomes (i.e., integration) and taking these factors into consideration for future mobility prospects are rare.

1.1 Research Aim and Research Contributions

Drawing on King's (2002, 90–91) call for the need of an interdisciplinary approach to migration that

> brings together and integrates a range of perspectives, frameworks, theoretical stances and methodologies in order to study migration (or the various forms of migration) in a manner which is holistic (embedding migration in its social context) and which recognizes its multifaceted diversity,

my dissertation aims to address the above outlined research gaps: First, by bringing together different literatures and approaches used in the field of migration and mobility studies that rarely are in dialogue with each other. This includes, on the one hand, the literature on the causes of migration and the literature on the outcomes of migration, including integration as well as place attachment, home and belonging. On the other hand, it also involves bringing together the insights of studies exploring several different types of migrants or mobile individuals which are rarely explored together but who do share a lot of things in common, including international students and academics, expatriates, mobile professionals, lifestyle migrants as well as travelers, backpackers, tourists, or global nomads. Second, by examining migrants by choice at different stages of their mobility trajectories, i.e., the pre-movement

phase, the phase of settling down and living in the receiving society and the phase of return and/or onward movement. Specifically, it strives to answer the following questions:

1. **How do migrants by choice experience the different stages of their migration trajectories and how do they negotiate processes of belonging and integration to their local environments during these phases?**
2. **How do migrants by choice decide whether to leave, stay or return/move onward, i.e., to be internationally mobile?**

Thus, the aim of this research is twofold: Firstly, it strives to obtain a better understanding of how migrants by choice experience the different phases of their mobility trajectories, specifically with regard to the local environments they live in. In doing so, the research is also interested in how these experiences might impact mobility decisions. Which leads to the second goal, namely, to gain a better understanding of the decision-making processes lying behind the mobility decisions of these migrants by choice. To explore these questions, my research uses the example of highly skilled Germans who are moving to and from Canada as a case study. There are three reasons for this: Firstly, Germany is one of the most important source countries of highly skilled emigrants worldwide (OECD 2015). Secondly, Canada's immigration policy increasingly focuses on attracting the best and most qualified individuals to the country (Griffith 2013; Root et al. 2014). Thirdly, Canada is one of the most attractive OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries for highly skilled immigrants and has long been one of the preferred destinations of Germans and, in recent years, specifically of highly skilled Germans (OECD 2015; OECD/Bertelsmann Stiftung 2019). Specifically, my research draws on 48 narrative interviews that are inspired by the life story approach developed by Daniel Bertaux (2016). Interviews were conducted with highly skilled German migrants at different stages of their migration trajectories, i.e., in the pre-movement phase, the phase of settling down and living in Canada and the phase of return and/or onward movement.

In answering my research questions and analysing migration as an ongoing process that involves both movement and stasis and highlighting how the two are interconnected, my dissertation aims to overcome the binary division between "mobility and stasis" that dominates much of the research on migration and mobility (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013, 188). Thus, following Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013, 188) the overall aim could be defined as the attempt to "further advance social theory by developing contemporary discussions of simultaneity (Levitt and Schiller 2004), relationality (Anthias 1998), and the mutual constitution of mobility, place and subjectivity (D. B. Massey 2005)". Specifically, based on the empirical data of this dissertation I develop a comprehensive model explaining the migration decision-making processes of migrants by choice. This model and the overall research findings make five important contributions to the field of migration and mobility studies: First, by analysing and interpreting migration as an ongoing process that can result in multiple different outcomes including return or onward movements rather than seeing it as a one-time event that results in the permanent settlement of migrants, it challenges the sedentary bias that is still present in the field of migration studies. Second, it raises awareness of the need to consider other units of analysis than just the national or transnational to obtain a better understanding of the lived experiences of migrants which often are related to several different places and spaces across different scales (e.g., regions, cities, neighbourhoods etc.). Third, it highlights that contrary to the common perspective that the migration and integration processes of highly skilled migrants moving between countries of the "global North" are uncomplicated, these migrants too face challenges and hidden frictions both at places of destination as well as upon return to their home countries. Fourth, it questions the use of migration theories that focus purely on economic or political factors, instead highlighting the importance of also considering emotional, ideational, relational, and affective factors as well as chance. Fifth, and finally, it identifies a dissonance between the intentions of migration policies and the actual behaviour of migrants.

1.2 Outline and Structure of the Dissertation

This introduction is proceeded by **chapter 2** which presents the problem that underlies and inspired my research, namely a lack of knowledge of the processes of the international mobility of highly skilled individuals moving between countries of the "global North". I start by briefly reflecting on migration regimes and specifically the shift toward a "market model" of immigration regimes which was proclaimed by Boucher and Gest (2018). I then link this idea to the so-called race for talent which has sparked an increase of debates about highly skilled migration. These debates can also be closely linked to the idea of the creative class and focus on the observation that countries (or cities) need to attract the best and brightest, i.e., the most highly skilled, individuals to their countries (or cities) in order to stay competitive in the world market and secure social cohesion. These debates coincide with a neoliberal trend in migration laws and regulations as well as the migration strategies around the globe. Many countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and Canada among others, have implemented regulations that make it easier for highly skilled individuals to enter their countries and for them to obtain citizenship. Moreover, numerous countries (as well as major cities) of the "global North" have implemented not only publicity campaigns and programs to attract and retain international talent but also to encourage the return of their own talent from abroad. While the migration of highly skilled individuals thus has become an important topic driving the public and political debates around migration relatively little research has been conducted on this topic so far, particularly with a focus on "North-North" movements. Moreover, there is only very limited information on the actual lived experiences of these individuals especially on their post-migration experiences.

Chapter 3 explores the current state of literature on the migration and mobility movements of different types of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants including academics, international students, expatriates, mobile professionals, lifestyle migrants as well as travelers, backpackers, tourists, and global nomads. Instead of analysing each of these

literatures separately I highlight the five main points that we can learn about the migration and mobility process of highly skilled and privileged migrants from this literature, namely that a) migration is not only caused by economic factors but also by factors that are seen as more emotional, affective, relational and ideational; b) migration is an ongoing process and especially highly skilled migrants are prone to move more than once, e.g. participate in short term mobility which can result in return or onward movements; c) even highly skilled migrants can experience difficulties when entering and exiting a country and when adjusting to new environments; d) while highly skilled individuals are increasingly mobile and, thus, apparently less attached to places, their lived experiences still take place and are shaped by local environments; and e) migration is closely connected to individuals' life courses, i.e. migration intentions, decisions and experiences change over time and are related to other spheres of individuals' lives such as family, work, free time, education, housing etc.

Chapter 4 presents the conceptualization of the research project. It draws on the observations from the literature review and highlights the guiding principles that directed my fieldwork and the subsequent analysis of the material. As such, on the one hand, my research is embedded in the mobility literature which views migration as an ongoing process (Urry 2000; 2002; 2007) and uses a trajectory approach to study international movement (Schwarz 2020; Schapendonk and Steel 2014). Such an approach is particularly pertinent for my study as it allows to examine the different stages in the migration trajectories of my target group, which often involve multiple moves between Germany and Canada (as well as other countries). It also allows to obtain a better understanding of the motivations that lie behind these moves, as well as the contexts in which they take place. On the other hand, my research also draws on the conception of translocal geographies which highlights "a simultaneous situatedness across different locales which provide ways of understanding the overlapping place-time(s) in migrants' everyday lives" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 4). This approach allows to obtain a better understanding of the local embeddedness of my target group as well as how the connection

between different locales impact their everyday experiences, and, thus, how they negotiate processes of integration and belonging in their everyday life which may impact their future mobility decisions.

Chapter 5 provides a contextualization of my case study and explains the reason for choosing this specific case, i.e., the migration processes of German migrants by choice to and from Canada. To this end, the chapter is divided into two sub-sections. The first section explores the Canadian context with a specific focus on immigration policies and nation building in Canada. It highlights the neoliberal turn that Canada's immigration policy has gone through over the past few years highlighting the increasing focus on attracting the best and brightest to the country. It also examines the different streams that are available for highly skilled individuals to enter the country. The second section explores the German context and examines Germany's role as one of the most important source countries for highly skilled migrants. As such it analyses recent trends of outmigration from Germany including the major destinations and the population profile of those that move. Then it specifically zooms into recent trends of highly skilled Germans moving to Canada.

Chapter 6 explains the research design and the methodological choices that were made. Overall, the research applies qualitative methodology and is placed within an interpretive epistemology which assumes that reality is constructed through social interaction. Specifically, it uses narrative interviews that were inspired by the life story approach developed by Daniel Bertaux (2016). The chapter starts by explaining these methodological choices in further depths. It then outlines the procedure of conducting the research including sampling and recruitment strategies, the structure of the interviews and how the interviews were conducted as well as it provides an overview of the profile of my interviewees. Then, it presents the analytical framework and tools that were chosen, highlighting the process of analysis. The chapter closes with a reflection on ethical considerations, my own position as a researcher as well as the shortcomings and pitfalls of the research.

Chapters 7 to 10 present the analysis of my research data. These chapters follow the different stages that my interviewees went through in their movements to and from Canada. As such, **chapter 7** explores the contexts in which and the factors that impacted their moves to Canada. It highlights that often these moves are inherently linked to my interviewees' pervious mobility trajectories as many of them had lived abroad for shorter or longer periods before. **Chapter 8** examines the initial stage of adjustment and arrival at my interviewees' places of destination in Canada. While their experiences differed depending on their individual situation it was demonstrated that all of them had to re-build their lives at least to a certain extent and many encountered several, often unexpected, challenges during this process. **Chapter 9** continues with an exploration of how my interviewees' lived experiences at their places of destination in Canada changed over time and specifically focuses on how they formed place attachments to these places. It then analyses how these experiences impacted their migration decision-making processes and resulted in the decision to prolong their stays in Canada. Finally, **chapter 10**, explores the return or onward movement phase that some of my interviewees went through. In this regard, it first explores the reasons and motivations that resulted in return or onward movements. It then focuses on the lived experiences of my interviewees upon their return to Germany or their onward movements to another country and concludes by examining their future mobility intentions.

Chapter 11 brings the most important findings of this research together by referring them back to the two research questions and answering these. Based on these findings it then proposes a model to conceptualize the migration-decision making processes of migrants by choice and discusses the wider implementations of this model as well as the overall findings not only for research on migration in general but also for policy makers. Finally, the **Conclusion** (chapter 12) briefly summarizes the most important aspects of this dissertation and explores what questions are left unanswered and, thus, should be addressed by future research.

2 Problématique

This chapter lays out the problem that inspired my research, namely the lack of knowledge of the processes of the international mobility of highly skilled individuals moving between countries of the "global North". The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the policy perspective and highlights the increasing importance that highly skilled migrants have gained in the immigration policies of many countries. The second part presents the problems that derive from the existing literature on highly skilled migration which explores these movements often from a policy or economic and development perspective. As a result of this, highly skilled individuals are often portrayed as rational actors and, thus, as a commodity that can be easily moved from one place to another as long as it is offered the right incentives. It is demonstrated that such a perspective ignores the "human" – and supposedly irrational – dimension of highly skilled movements. Moreover, as a result of this focus, relatively little research has been conducted on the movements of highly skilled individuals moving between countries of the "global North". This is despite the fact that these countries have experienced relatively high emigration rates of their young and highly skilled population in recent years. Therefore, the chapter concludes by arguing that further research is needed to explore this "human" dimension to obtain a better understanding of the migration processes of highly skilled migrants, specifically those who are moving between highly developed countries as their perspective has mainly been ignored thus far.

2.1 A Policy Perspective on Highly Skilled Migration

A look at the development of immigration policies demonstrates that over time and specifically in the last 20 to 30 years, highly skilled migrants have been specifically targeted by the immigration policies of many countries (and cities) all over the world. Highly skilled migrants present a desirable group of immigrants as they possess high human, social, cultural, and economic capital and are thus thought to positively contribute to the economic development of

a country (or city). This makes it easier for states to justify their presence in their countries and to promote their long-term incorporation into society. This section explores the development of immigration policies which today reflect an increasing competition for these individuals. It starts by briefly describing the development of immigration regimes and specifically the trend toward a "market model" of immigration regimes which has been observed over the past 20 years. Then it presents the idea of the "race for the best and brightest" and explores the strategies that states implement to attract and retain and/or encourage the return of highly skilled migrants as well as the roles which cities play in these processes.

2.1.1 The Development of Immigration Regimes

In times of an increasingly borderless world, it is argued that immigration control has remained one of the few bastions for nation-states to demonstrate their power by deciding who is allowed to enter and stay in a country and who is not (Dauvergne 2008; J. Walsh 2014; Shachar and Hirschl 2013). The policies that countries implement to control the movement and settlement of non-natives, as well as the outcomes of these policies, are usually referred to as immigration regimes (Boucher and Gest 2018). These immigration regimes "are generated both by regulatory processes, but also by a range of powerful interests who enforce policies, contest policies, and sometimes evade policies" (Boucher and Gest 2018, 4). While international movement has always taken place as a result of trade, war, exploration, conquests and colonialization which were often organized by states (Hollifield 2007), it is only during the middle to late 19th century that immigration regimes emerged as countries started to implement laws to regulate and restrict migration movements (Boucher and Gest 2018). Initially, these laws aimed at "controlling the ethnic and racial composition of countries" by favouring some groups of migrants based on their (ethnic) origins and excluding others (Boucher and Gest 2018, 39–40; J. Walsh 2014, 588; Castles 2007; Zolberg 1999; 2006). For example, "Britain, Canada and Australia all introduced rules excluding specific groups" such as "European Jews" or

"Asians" (Castles 2007, 33). Later on, during the early 20th century, countries started to apply different measures such as criminal history checks, health and moral requirements, literacy tests or quotas to control movements to their countries (Zolberg 1999). The interwar years and the rise of fascism and communism in Europe resulted in restrictive immigration policies as well as the movement of refugees either fleeing from the oppressive regimes of their countries and persecution or being displaced as a result of World War II (Boucher and Gest 2018; Hollifield 2007; Zolberg 2006). As a result of these big refugee movements, "the United Nations [UN] and a new body of refugees and human rights law" such as the 1951 Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were created in the aftermath of World War II (Hollifield 2007, 68). During the post-war years the movement of labour force was at the center of migration policies, especially in many of the Western European countries that needed workers to rebuild their countries and, eventually, to saturate the demand for work force which resulted from the industrial boom during the 1950s (Hollifield 2007). Often this need for workforce was regulated "by forming exclusive bilateral or colony-based agreements" which ensured that only people from preferred countries, such as former colonies, would be able to enter (Boucher and Gest 2018; Castles 2006). In other instances, countries recruited people from states in Southern Europe that had access to a large labour force that was willing to move (Hollifield 2007; Zolberg 2006). In these instances, movement was supposed to be temporary and workers were meant to return to their countries of origin after the end of their work contracts (Castles 2006; 2007; Boucher and Gest 2018). However, countries that are often identified as settler colonial states, such as Canada and Australia, resisted these temporary foreign worker schemes and instead promoted the permanent settlement of foreign workers (Bloemraad 2012; J. Walsh 2014, 588). With the rise of the civil rights movement and processes of decolonialization during the 1960s and 1970s, national and ethnic selection criteria started to take a back seat and immigration categories started to focus more and more on the skills of migrants as well as encouraging family reunifications (Boucher

and Gest 2018). Canada, for example, introduced a points-based selection system for immigrants in 1967 which removed racial criteria and instead focused on the skills of immigrants (Bauder 2014). Liberalization and democratization processes during the late 1980s and early 1990s resulted in the opening of markets and the recruitment of international labour force in countries that were not traditionally seen as countries of immigration, including many of the Southern European countries, countries of the former Soviet Union as well as countries in East Asia (Boucher and Gest 2018). At the same time, humanitarian and refugee movements caused by "ethnic conflicts and civil wars" also increased, overall resulting in "increasingly open, liberal and non-discriminatory" migration regimes (Boucher and Gest 2018, 2–53; Hollifield 2007; Castles 2006).

2.1.2 The "Market Model" of Immigration Regimes

Over the past 20 to 30 years, a development in an opposite direction to the more liberal model of immigration regimes described above can be observed. In fact, countries are becoming more restrictive in their immigration policies, progressively closing their borders and restricting admission only to those who are seen as deserving of entrance (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 77–78; Hollifield 2007). Boucher and Gest (2018) argue specifically that three broad trends can be observed in migration policies on a global level:

First, countries increasingly try to focus on attracting economic immigrants to their countries, e.g. through the introduction of more "economic visas" and "free movement agreements," while at the same time limiting "humanitarian and family-based immigration" (Boucher and Gest 2018, 5–6). In fact, since the early 2000s many Western countries have moved towards a more economic focus in their immigration policies and specifically introduced points systems to select (highly) skilled workers (Boucher and Gest 2018, 68). For example, the Schengen area allows free movement between most of the European Union (EU) member states as well as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein (European Commission n.d.).

The Erasmus+ (formerly Erasmus) program makes it possible for students and other young individuals from EU countries to participate in mobility schemes linked to the fields of education, training, youth and sport (European Commission n.d.). This has given thousands of students the possibility to study in another EU country and expand their social and professional network providing future opportunities for their professional development. Finally, the EU also introduced the so-called blue card to attract highly skilled workers to EU countries and to make it easier for these individuals to work, settle and live there (EU Blue Card Network n.d.; Cerna and Chou 2014). At the same time, the US has tried to find a way to reduce its focus on family reunification and instead to increase the inflow of economic migrants (Boyd 2014). This shift of focus in immigration policies can partly be explained by the fact that many Western countries are – and/or will be – facing the aging of their societies while at the same time experiencing low fertility rates. In the long run, this will not only result in a decline of the population that is of working age, but it will also result in labour shortages, especially in skilled professions (Castles 2006, 745). Already today, many Western European countries are facing a shortage of workers in (health) care professions as well as other skilled occupations. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, for example, highlights that "[a]cross the EU, the top five skill shortage occupations are ICT [information and communications technology] professionals; medical doctors; science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professionals; nurses and midwives and teachers" (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training n.d.). Consequently, "[m]ost OECD countries have introduced policies aimed at facilitating the recruitment of such workers in recent years and efforts along these lines can be expected to continue" (Chaloff and Lemaître 2009, 4). At the same time as this policy shift, Boucher and Gest (2018) highlight by drawing on the work of Block (2015), Block and Bonjour (2013) and Wray, Agoston, and Hutton (2014) among others, that policies regulating the immigration of family members have become more restricted across Western Europe. For example, many countries have implemented requirements for income levels, age of sponsored

and sponsor, language knowledge or other factors determining integration outcomes prior to arrival. Thus, while economic immigrants are seen as an asset, family immigration is often seen as a strain on the social welfare system of a country at least in a policy context.[3]

Second, in recent years many countries are increasingly falling back on guest worker systems or temporary foreign worker schemes limiting the rights to permanent residency and staying long-term (Boucher and Gest 2018, 94; J. Walsh 2014; Castles 2006; Pellerin 2011). This trend is in opposition to the so-called "Liberal Model" of immigration systems which seemed to dominate during the 1980s- and -90s and which was characterized by a move toward the permanent and long-term settlement and integration of newcomers in many countries (Boucher and Gest 2018, 94). For example, in recent years, several European countries have (re-)introduced "[t]emporary or seasonal migrant worker programs" (Castles 2006, 741). This is even true for countries that are typically referred to as settler colonial states, such as Australia and Canada, and that usually encouraged the permanent settlement of newcomers. This is demonstrated by Dauvergne (2016, 124) who highlights that settler colonial states increasingly prefer "temporary migration programs" which can be seen by their "decrease in 'permanent' migration numbers" (see also Pellerin 2011; Fleury, Bélanger, and Haemmerli 2018). As an example, in 2017 Canada admitted 302,821 temporary workers compared to only 286,479 permanent immigrants (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2018). This trend toward temporary foreign worker schemes can be explained as they allow countries to address labour shortages by enabling the movement of needed work force with a quick turnaround time, as well as "address[ing] anxieties concerning immigration's fiscal, socioeconomic, and cultural

[3] Despite this, research has shown that these ideas which are often preeminent in policy contexts are only true to a certain extent as economic immigrants might face challenges upon their arrival in a country hindering them from a smooth and quick transition into working life. Moreover, family migrants can actually be an asset to economic migrants as they can provide a support network not only contributing to the emotional wellbeing of these economic migrants but also helping with household and care work (Boucher and Gest 2018, 69). Lastly, looking at the actual numbers of family migration across a range of countries for the time period from 2006 to 2011, Boucher and Gest (2018, 80–81) find that there is a discrepancy between the intentions of migration policies and their actual outcomes as despite the relative negative attitudes toward family migration in the policy context, overall family migration has not decreased, but in fact increased from "14.5 percent in 2006 to 18 percent in 2011".

consequences" by reducing the strain on the welfare system, limiting the time of residency, excluding the entrance of family members and restricting mobility within the labour market (J. Walsh 2014, 587; Boucher and Gest 2018, 96). In addition to that, because of the insecure status of temporary foreign workers (TFW), temporary foreign worker schemes allow countries to keep their production costs relatively low and to have access to a flexible labour force that is willing to work for relatively low standards (Bosniak 2006; J. Walsh 2014, 587). Consequently, "TFW schemes represent political-legal arrangements for producing labor markets that advance the neoliberal agenda" (J. Walsh 2014, 587). While TFW schemes are often associated with the movements of low-skilled labour, many countries are also using them to attract highly skilled individuals to their countries. In fact, it is important to recognize that the rights and benefits that highly skilled temporary workers enjoy by far outweigh those of low skilled temporary migrants. Thus, while low skilled TFWs face more and more restrictions in transforming their temporary status into a more permanent one, many countries have implemented policies which allow and even encourage this transformation for highly skilled temporary workers and students alike, in an attempt to bind them to their countries on a permanent basis (J. Walsh 2014, 596; Castles 2006). Moreover, low skilled TFWs are often barred from bringing their family members as well as accessing social and health care benefits, and their workers' rights are limited. In contrast to that, highly skilled temporary workers are often better protected, being able to access these rights and benefits and in many cases being allowed to bring their spouses and children (J. Walsh 2014, 586; Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 104; Boucher and Gest 2018, 99).

Lastly, there also seems to be a downward trend of naturalization rates with fewer and fewer immigrants taking up citizenship. This trend is further strengthened by "[m]ore restrictive or stringent integration policies" that countries increasingly implement (Boucher and Gest 2018, 6). Low naturalization rates are particularly present in countries of the Gulf area, Asia and parts of the EU (Boucher and Gest 2018, 155). Nevertheless, even on an international scale, a general downward trend in naturalization rates can be observed since the early 2000s (Boucher

and Gest 2018, 158–60). Boucher and Gest (2018) argue that these three trends, i.e., a focus on economic migrants, the use of temporary immigration programs and declining naturalization rates, are the main characteristics of a "Market Model" of immigration regimes. This market model sees "immigration as an economic instrument that serves the national interest, rather than an entitlement of people who are fleeing human rights violations, reunifying with families, or simply migrating out of general desire and interest" (Boucher and Gest 2018, 161). Moreover, they argue that while there are slight differences between the immigration regimes of the major immigration countries worldwide, overall, all of them seem to be moving toward this market model (Boucher and Gest 2018). This shift can be explained by three main reasons, namely a) a general movement towards neoliberal ideologies in post-modern societies, b) increasing fears of a "foreign infiltration" of societies resulting in the growth of racist and xenophobic sentiments, and c) ideas that migration and terrorism are linked with each other, which are promoted by some politicians and the media (Boucher and Gest 2018). Dauvergne (2016, 2) argues in a similar way and proclaims the end of "the era of settler societies" which has resulted from a convergence of migration policies in most of the countries of the "global North". This convergence can be recognized by an increasing focus of migration policies on both sides of the Atlantic differentiating "between sought-after highly mobile individuals on the one hand, and illegal migrants on the other" (Dauvergne 2016, 8). Similar to Boucher and Gest (2018), Dauvergne (2016, 7) argues that this policy convergence has resulted from "the crisis of asylum", "the fear of Islamic fundamentalism", and "the end of multiculturalism". Finally, while the "Market Model" does not allow to openly favour some immigrant groups over others based on their national origin, it still allows states to address some of the above fears by (symbolically) regulating the number of immigrants that are allowed to enter a country based on visa categories (e.g., family, economic, humanitarian), as well as determining the duration of stay for different immigration classes and their possibilities for naturalization (Boucher and Gest 2018, 54–58; Elrick and Winter 2018). To conclude, the development of the "market

model" of immigration regimes results in an increasing focus on economic migrants, the introduction of temporary foreign worker systems and declining naturalization rates. Within this "market model" we can see that there is a trend within the immigration policies of countries to provide some migrants (i.e., highly skilled and educated individuals) with preferential treatment as compared to others (i.e., low and lower skilled individuals). The next section focuses on the former group of migrants (i.e., highly skilled and educated individuals) and the policies that countries implement to attract and retain them in their countries. Specifically, it examines the idea of the so-called "race for talent" highlighting the increasing international competition for highly skilled individuals.

2.1.3 The Race for the "Best and Brightest"

The increasing desire for economic migrants which is part of the so-called market model can be explained by the fact that these economic migrants are assumed to be more productive in the labour market and, thus, less dependent on the state, e.g., not requiring as much social assistance and/or welfare, as, for example, family or humanitarian migrants. This in turn makes it easier for states to justify their presence in the country (Boucher and Gest 2018, 66–67). However, as highlighted above, even within this group of economic migrants there are gradations with highly skilled migrants being seen as an asset who are desired and, thus, deserving of preferential treatment whereas lower skilled individuals are seen more as a necessity that needs to be tolerated. Research has, for example, shown that public attitudes toward highly skilled immigrants are better than toward low-skilled migrants which explains why countries often specifically target these individuals (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). The need of countries (and to a certain degree cities) to attract the "best and brightest", i.e. highly skilled individuals, can also be explained by the fact that these individuals are assumed to be needed to stay competitive in the global economy (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 73; Boucher 2016; Banaś 2018; Boeri et al. 2012). As highlighted by Cerna (2016, 5), different studies (Boeri et al. 2012; Chiswick 2011;

Nathan 2014; Peri 2012) have shown that highly skilled immigration is associated "with greater competitiveness, innovation, economic growth, productivity, efficiency, entrepreneurship and invention". It may also help to address "labour shortages in the short term" and help to address problems associated with an increasingly aging population that many countries are facing (Cerna 2016, 6–7). As a result of this, Shachar and Hirschl (2013, 72–73) argue that over the last few years "a global race for talent has emerged" as "the demand for highly-skilled migrants has intensified". Others support this thesis and refer to it as "the war for talent" (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, and Axelrod 2001) or highlight that "[t]he competition for global talent has become one of the key policy priorities in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries" (Cerna 2016, 3). In this "race" for the "best and brightest" individuals, countries are increasingly competing against each other in an attempt to not only attract highly skilled individuals to, but also retain them in their countries, respectively to encourage the return of "own talent" from abroad. In what follows, I briefly reflect on strategies that are used to attract and retain international talent. I then highlight the strategies used to encourage the return of "own talent" from abroad. Finally, I also explore the role of cities in this global race for talent, as much of the international movement of the highly skilled is directed toward global cities.

2.1.3.1 Strategies to Attract and Retain International Talent

Over the years, countries have implemented different strategies to attract and retain international talent. The establishment of the so-called points system can be seen as one of the corner stones in the policymaking associated with the race for talent (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 81–82). Canada was the first country to establish such as system which moved away from evaluating migrants based on their ethnic, racial or national origin instead focusing on their skills in 1967 (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 81–82). The points system allows Canada to select immigrants based on their skills, including among others, education, training, job experience

and language skills, and grants these immigrants the right to permanent residence (Government of Canada 2019o). In this way, Canada can not only specifically select highly skilled individuals but also hopes to retain them in Canada by allowing them to stay there indefinitely (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 81–82). While Canada was a pioneer in this regard, other countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, and, more recently, Germany, introduced their own versions of a points system to target highly skilled individuals. Alternatively, they introduced special visa categories allowing highly skilled individuals to enter their countries and, in most cases, either automatically obtain permanent residency or easily apply for it which paves a relatively easy path to citizenship (Koslowski 2014; Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 83; J. Walsh 2011; Kolb 2014). A few examples include: The *First Preference EB-1 visa* in the US which is targeted at individuals with "an extraordinary ability, […] outstanding professor[s] or researcher[s], or […] multinational executive[s] or manager[s]" and provides individuals admitted under this stream with easy access to a Green card (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services n.d.). Australia has the *Distinguished Talent Visa* which admits individuals who "have an internationally recognized record of exceptional and outstanding achievement in […] a profession, a sport, the arts [or] academia and research" on the basis of permanent residency (Department of Home Affairs, Australian Government n.d.). Other countries such as the UK and France that are not typically identified as settler colonial societies are also getting on board with this trend. The *Tier 1 visa* in the UK is targeted at people with "exceptional talent" and "exceptional promise" in the fields of science and humanities, medicine, engineering, digital technology, as well as arts and culture, including fashion, architecture or film and allows individuals to stay and work in the UK for about 5 years with easy processes to either extend the visa or apply for permanent residence (Government of the UK n.d.). The *"'passport talent' residence permit"* in France allows "qualified or highly qualified paid employee[s]", business investors, individuals with "national or international reputation" and "performer[s], artists or writers" to work in France for up to four years and to bring their families along, who are also provided with work permits

(Government of France n.d.). In addition to these visas which in most cases automatically grant permanent residency to the individuals applying for them, many countries also offer temporary work visas which make it easy for highly skilled immigrants to enter their countries. The US, for example, allows highly skilled individuals to enter on *H-1B visas* for an initial period of three years with the option to renew the visa at the end (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services n.d.). Australia has, among others, a *Temporary Skill Shortage visa* which allows "an employer [to] sponsor a suitably skilled worker to fill a position they can't find a suitably skilled Australian to fill" and allows individuals to stay in Australia for up to four years (Department of Home Affairs, Australian Government 2019). Canada offers temporary work permits for highly skilled individuals, such as academics or individuals performing an occupation that is on the "Global Talent Occupations List," through programs including the *Academics* stream and the *Global Talent Stream* (Government of Canada 2017a; 2019r). And New Zealand, among others, offers the *Essential Skills work visa* which allows skilled individuals working in jobs that are on the country's skill shortage list to move and work in New Zealand for a certain amount of time, depending on the job offer, salary levels and the situation of the labour market (New Zealand Immigration n.d.). In addition to that, many countries also offer visas or study permits for international students as well as options for working holiday visas which can also be seen as an access way (if indirect) for highly skilled individuals. Moreover, many countries have also changed their citizenship policies making it easier and more accessible to obtain citizenship for people with "super-talent," e.g. "the wealthy and highly educated, […] top scientists, elite athletes, world-class artists, and successful entrepreneurs and innovators" (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 73). Citizenship has thus transformed "into a recruitment tool used to bolster a nation's standing relative to its competitors" which means that states are willing to 'hand out' citizenship to those considered to help their country gain an economic and innovative advantage over other countries (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 74). Finally, countries also compete for international talent by providing them with other benefits such as tax breaks or

accommodating their spouses and children (Banaś 2018, 388). One example for this is the One-Thousand-Talent Program which was established in China in 2008 and aimed at attracting "high-caliber international scholars" among others to take up leading scientific positions in China by implementing "financial, taxation, and membership perks" (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 84; Recruitment Program of Global Experts n.d.). Often countries engaged in the race for talent borrow best practices and policies from each other in an attempt to stay competitive in this race and, overall, more and more countries are getting involved in the "global race for talent" (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 79). Based on UN data from 2015 that was collected from 176 member states, for example, 44% of the countries, and, thus, twice as many as in 2005, "had adopted policies to raise immigration of highly skilled workers" (United Nations Department For Economic And Social Affairs 2018). These policies were particularly popular in developed countries with 62% of them having employed such policies, compared to only 37% of less developed countries (United Nations Department For Economic And Social Affairs 2018). Specifically, it is not only countries that traditionally have been perceived as immigration countries that participate in the "global race for talent" but other countries, for example in Asia and the Middle East are too becoming attractive destination countries for highly skilled individuals (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 76). Moreover, "even countries that have experienced a backlash against immigrants and multiculturalism tend to" promote and facilitate the immigration of highly skilled individuals which are needed as experts in their economy (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 77).

2.1.3.2 Strategies to Encourage the Return of "Own Talent" from Abroad

The "global race for talent" does not only focus on attracting and retaining highly skilled individuals, but countries are also increasingly trying to stay in contact with their own talent that is currently living abroad (Larner 2007) and/or aim at encouraging the return of their "own talent" from abroad by providing incentives, programs and support for their repatriation

(Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 76–77). Most state-assisted return programs provide support not only during the relocation process but also before and after the actual return of individuals and their families (N. Cohen and Kranz 2015, 798). Often, returnees are accompanied during their re-culturation and re-establishment phase in their country of origin and in some cases receive "direct (e.g., housing cost reimbursement) and indirect (e.g., tax incentives) assistance" (N. Cohen and Kranz 2015, 798). Some countries, such as Israel, have a relatively holistic approach to their return program with state-assisted return migration addressing older people (Returning Home at Sixty), the general population (Returning to Israel for All the Reasons in the World) and highly skilled individuals (Israel National Brain Gain Program) specifically (N. Cohen and Kranz 2015, 797). However, the target of the return campaigns of most countries focuses on the group of highly skilled individuals. The German Academic International Network (GAIN), for example, actively encourages and helps German academics working at universities in the US and Canada with their return to Germany. In this function, GAIN provides them with advice and information about academic jobs and careers in Germany and also "facilitate[s] contacts to potential employers" (German Academic International Network 2016). Their indicated aim is "to help turn the skills and knowledge acquired abroad into key assets for a successful career in Germany" (German Academic International Network 2016). In fact, a recent study conducted to evaluate the GAIN-Program showed that 50% out of those who participated in this study and who had participated in a GAIN-Annual Meeting in Northern America between 2004 and 2011 had returned to Germany, while 42% were still living in North America and 8% had moved to other countries (Umfragezentrum Bonn - Prof. Rudinger GmbH, n.d.)[4]. Similar programs can also be found in other countries. China probably has one of the most extensive programs and initiatives to secure the return of their own talent from abroad. In the early 2000s China, for example, "set up 52 educational bureaus in embassies and consulates" in countries that were

[4] In total, 1,665 individuals participated in the GAIN-Annual Meetings between 2004 and 2011. Out of these 811 participated in the evaluation study.

popular destinations for Chinese international students to organize and encourage the return of Chinese students and scholars (Zweig 2006, 71). At the same time, the Chinese Ministry of Education also invested in the establishment of Service Centres for Overseas Study which "send out 'recruitment delegations' to encourage overseas graduates to return" (Zweig 2006, 72). Prior to that, China had already established a number of programs providing financial incentives to encourage the return of students, young academics and established scholars alike (Zweig 2006, 72; Cao 2004). In addition to that, the Chinese government also implemented other policies encouraging or facilitating the return of Chinese students and scholars, such as, providing help with finding jobs in China upon return, establishing schools for the children of returnees to help them catch up on their language skills or simplifying the "residency and entry visa requirements for overseas scholars who have taken foreign citizenship" (Zweig 2006, 73). Other examples include return initiatives from Pakistan – Pakathon – and India – Make in India – which actively encourage and facilitate the return of their highly skilled population from abroad ("Pakathon" n.d.; "Make In India" n.d.). Thus, countries are not only increasingly competing to attract international talent but also to encourage the return of their own talent from abroad.

2.1.3.3 The Role of Cities in Competing for the "Best and Brightest"

While it is usually states that implement policies to encourage the movement of highly skilled individuals, these movements are often directed toward so-called global cities. These cities are the central hubs of the global economy where the headquarters of many important multinational corporations (MNCs) as well as important financial institutions, specialized services and major transportation and communication nodes are located (Friedmann 1986; Sassen 2012). Moreover, global cities are often the sites for research centers, universities, and other prestigious educational institutions as well as centers fostering creativity in the arts and music. As such, these cities are not only attracting highly skilled workers and professionals, researchers and scientist but also artists and musicians and other creative minds that are generally

considered as important drivers of innovation and economic growth (Florida 2002; 2005; 2006; Hospers 2003). This idea was particularly fostered by Richard Florida's (2002) ground-breaking work *The rise of the creative class*. Florida (2002, 8) argues that highly skilled individuals – which he refers to as the "creative class" and defines as "people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content" – are essential for modern businesses and cities to secure their economic development and competitiveness. He portrays these creative individuals as being highly mobile and seeking innovative and inspiring, open-minded, tolerant, and diverse environments which support their creative lifestyles. As such, he portrays these creative and highly skilled individuals as highly rational actors who can easily be attracted to a place as long as cities implement and follow the "3Ts of economic development: Technology, Talent and Tolerance" (Florida 2002, 249). This means that cities need "to invest in, exploit, and utilize technology," they also need to "attract, utilize, and retain talent," and in order to achieve this, they need to promote a climate of tolerance, e.g. by offering a "place that people want to come to and can easily get to where they can lead the lives they want and express themselves freely" (Florida 2006, 25–26). These ideas have impacted urban planners all over the world (Gibson and Klocker 2004; Martin-Brelot et al. 2010; Peck 2005), and, as a result of this, cities are in fact often involved in the global war for talent by trying to create an environment that is particularly welcoming and attractive for the best and brightest (Beaverstock and Hall 2012). As part of this strategy, cities, for example, offer "tax breaks for new firms, subsidized housing, tax-free imports of automobiles and computers, schooling for children of returnees, jobs for spouses, and long-term residence permits" (Zweig 2006, 75). Likewise, employers located in big cities also participate in this race by implementing initiatives to recruit the best and the brightest and offering high salaries and other incentives (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 79). In some cases, several actors, such as cities and companies join forces and create projects together which aim to attract international talent to the company's headquarters,

and, thus, ultimately also to the cities where these headquarters are based. One such example is *project.amsterdam* an initiative that was launched by "[t]en innovative companies" in cooperation with the city of Amsterdam and aims to attract highly skilled individuals in the tech sector to come to Amsterdam and work in one of "ten future-shaping projects" initiated by these companies (project.amsterdam n.d.).[5] The initiative is promoted under the hashtag #DefineWhatsNext and tries to gain the interest of potential candidates by promoting the innovative and exciting character of the companies and projects as well as advertising Amsterdam for its "livability, connectivity and tech savviness" (project.amsterdam n.d.). Overall, this initiative has been a success with two rounds already finished and a third one currently being prepared.

2.2 Understanding the Migration Processes of Highly Skilled Migrants

From the sections above we can conclude that for some time now there has been an increasing focus on highly skilled migrants in the immigration policies that countries implement. This trend is also reflected in many of the political debates on migration around the world. Nevertheless, apart from this policy perspective, this topic has received relatively little attention in the research literature thus far (Shachar and Hirschl 2013, 73–74). There are two problems that arise from the existing literature on highly skilled migrants so far: First, applying a policy or economic perspectives on these movements leaves out the human perspectiv of these migration processes and at best portrays highly skilled migrants as one big unit of rational actors. Second, much research on the migration processes of highly skilled individuals focuses on movements from countries of the so-called global South to countries of the global North. Less however is known about the migration processes of individuals moving between countries of the so-called global North. The following sections highlight each of these research gaps in

[5] For another example see the initiative "Live in Melbourne" (Victoria State Government n.d.).

further detail and finally explain why these two research gaps exist.

2.2.1 Highly Skilled Migrants: Rational Actors?

One problem with the perspective that policies apply toward highly skilled migrants is that it sees them as a commodity that can easily be moved around from one place to another and can be used to secure a country's economic and technical development, as well as its competitiveness in the world market, or, to put it in the words of Mosneaga and Winther (2013, 191): "Currently, talent attraction and retention policies are informed by homogenizing and simplistic accounts, at the expense of more holistic accounts about the human facets of talent mobility." As a result of this, highly skilled migrants are frequently portrayed as highly rational actors who can easily be attracted to a place as long as they are offered the right incentives and conditions. Florida (2002) highlighted the importance of technology and tolerance for attracting highly skilled and "creative" individuals to cities. These ideas, which initially were developed for the local context, apply, according to Florida (2005; 2006), also in a global context. Thus, countries have to create an innovative environment in order to attract the best, most qualified and creative workers and to be able to compete with other countries. The same is also true for international students who are increasingly seen as human capital as they present a highly educated labour force that is already familiar with how things work in their receiving societies and, thus, are becoming part of the targeting strategies of countries in the race for the best and brightest (Beine, Noël, and Ragot 2014; Raghuram 2013). However, this outlook at the migration of highly skilled individuals completely ignores the perspective of the migrants themselves as well as their lived experiences (Chen 2017).

This is also true for much of the research literature that has been published on the phenomena of brain drain, brain gain and brain circulation which is closely tied to the idea of the creative class. This research mainly examines highly skilled migration from an economic resource perspective and analyses the structural and developmental impacts of these migration

processes for a certain region or country. This literature typically views the outmigration of highly skilled individuals as a strain on the local, regional or national economy and development whereas the immigration of highly skilled individuals to certain regions or countries is seen as an economic and structural advantage for the development of this specific area (Chacko 2007; 2017; Boeri et al. 2012; Tyson 2019; Mishra 2006; Dawson 2007; Tanner 2005; Chand 2019; Labonte 2006). Recently, the idea of brain circulation has also gotten some attention. Brain circulation assumes that highly skilled individuals originating from developing countries who leave their countries of origin to work or study elsewhere will either eventually return and/or invest in their home countries at some point and, thus, help its economic and technological development (Radwan and Sakr 2018; Dawson 2007; J. Lee and Kim 2010; Blachford and Zhang 2014; Yoon et al. 2013). While this literature has risen the awareness that migration does not necessarily end in the permanent settlement in the receiving society but can also result in return movements, it still mainly employs an economic and political perspective on these migration processes, leaving "a social-cultural analysis" of these processes out (Chen 2017, 2). Moreover, this literature often employs quantitative methodology, for example, survey studies, which "focus mainly on the physical characteristics of movement such as the numbers and push/pull factors in sending and receiving countries" but does not allow for an understanding of "mobility within individual and situated contexts" (Chen 2017, 7).

This lack of the human perspective in research on the international migration of highly skilled migrants was already criticized as early as 2006 by Smith and Favell. Particularly, they argued for the need to explore the "human face" of highly skilled migrants and their specific experiences in more detail (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006). According to these authors, highly skilled individuals do not represent a homogeneous group as their experiences of crossing borders and living and working in another country differ significantly depending on, for example, which country they come from, what ethnic group they belong to, their age, gender, and family situation etc. To capture this diversity of highly skilled migration movements, they

argue that "more micro-level, phenomenological studies of the everyday reality of 'global mobility'" and specifically the global mobility of different types of highly skilled, educated and professional migrants is needed (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 3). Focusing on the human perspective of highly skilled migration thus means to shift the focus away from the economic and political perspective and to interpret highly skilled migrants as social agents rather than solely seeing them as economic ones. Such a perspective then needs to focus on the social and cultural dimensions of the moves of highly skilled migrants. It needs to pay attention to their lived experiences[6] as well as their agency and it needs to consider the emotional, ideational, affective, and relational aspects of these moves. Therefore, it also needs to pay attention to how these moves are interconnected with other spheres of the life courses of highly skilled migrants, for example, their family dynamics, social networks, but also their individual values and expectations. Finally, as highlighted above, to capture this human perspective, studies also need to consider the heterogeneity that exists within highly skilled migration movements and therefore explore the impact of individual characteristics such as age, gender, ethnic origin, nationality, and religion, among others.

2.2.2 Moving Within the "Global North"

Much of the literature on highly skilled migrants focuses on highly skilled individuals moving from developing countries to the developed or highly developed countries of the so-called global North or examines movements of these highly skilled individuals from countries that are situated outside of the "Western world" to countries within it such as the US or Canada (Chacko 2007; Tyson 2019; Dawson 2007; J. Lee and Kim 2010; Radwan and Sakr 2018; Blachford and

[6] Lived experience is here to be understood as "a representation and understanding" of the "human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one's perception of knowledge". Specifically, the term tries to capture "not only […] people's experiences, but also […] how people live through and respond to those experiences". In this way, exploring the lived experiences of individuals often focuses on their "everyday life occurrences and self-awareness" as well as "ordinary, everyday events (language, rituals, routines)" which are then used to obtain a better knowledge and interpretation of the world (Boylorn 2011, 490).

Zhang 2014; Al Ariss 2010; H. Alberts 2017; A. Butcher 2004; Ho 2011; Ley 2013; D. S. Massey 1987). These migration processes are often explained by referring to classical migration theories, using, for example, the model of push-and-pull factors (E. S. Lee 1966), the ideas of neoclassical migration theories (Hicks 1932; Sjaastad 1962; Todaro 1969), or the new economics of migration (D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998) which frequently put economic factors, such as cost-benefit calculations, at the centre of the decision-making process. Less is however known about highly skilled migrants who originate from highly developed countries. While some studies have examined the movements of highly skilled individuals from countries of the so-called global North who are moving to countries outside of the "Western world" (M. Butcher 2010; Nowicka 2007; K. Walsh 2006; 2011; Richardson and Mallon 2005; Selmer 2002; Peltokorpi 2009; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Lehmann 2013; Boncori 2013; Harrison and Michailova 2012; Ashwini Konanahalli et al. 2012), little is known about the movements of highly skilled individuals who are moving between countries of the "global North" (Beaverstock 2005; Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice 2008; Eich-Krohm 2012; Favell 2008; Kennedy 2016). As a result of this, our knowledge on the lived experiences of these individuals as well as of their reasons and motivations for moving from one highly developed country to another is very limited (van Dalen and Henkens 2007; Lederer 2004; L. Sauer and Ette 2007; Brooks and Waters 2011), or to put it in the words of van Dalen and Henkens (2007, 37): "What drives the international mobility of people living in high-income countries remains somewhat of a mystery". This is especially true so from a sociological perspective where relatively little research has been conducted thus far. Recently, however, this topic has gained some attention in the research literature as a lot of "Western" countries are experiencing high emigration rates, especially of their young and well-educated national-born population (van Dalen and Henkens 2007; Hugo 2009; Biacabe and Robert 2014; Murray et al. 2012; Ackers 2005). Specifically, the movement of young and highly-skilled individuals belonging to the "upper and middle classes" of countries in the "global North" who supposedly "hold the privilege to enter and exit

foreign countries without taking any major risks" has gained some attention (Jansson 2016b, 422). These individuals often leave their countries with the realistic goal to potentially and eventually return or move elsewhere. Moreover, there has been an increasing awareness that the reasons for emigration have become diversified, with migration for study purposes, "professional advancement, marriage, retirement or lifestyle" becoming more and more popular (Castles 2010, 1567) and that "migrants, ideas, knowledge, information and skill sets" have become more fluid, with movements often not necessarily being permanent but rather temporary and often involving return visits or moves as well as onward movements to other places (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 12). This raises questions about the traditional understanding of migration as a one-time event as well as the binary construction of mobility and stasis (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). So far, there exist only few attempts to explain this phenomenon as well as the dynamics of how immigrants moving between highly developed countries decide whether to leave their country of origin, stay (permanently) at a certain place, return to their home country, or potentially move to another place and how these decisions are impacted by their lived experiences. While scholarship has started to pay attention to this phenomenon, empirical studies are rare and classical migration theories insufficiently capture this highly-coveted form of migration (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006; van Riemsdijk and Wang 2017b).

2.2.3 Explaining the Gap in Research on Highly Skilled Migrants and "North-North" Movements

The two previous sections have, on the one hand, highlighted the lack of research exploring the "human" perspective of highly skilled international migration, and, on the other hand, the lack of research exploring the movements of highly skilled individuals between countries of the "global North". By partly drawing on the observations of Smith and Favell (2006) in the following I explore some assumptions about the migration processes of highly skilled

individuals that might explain these research gaps and emphasize why these assumptions are not true and, thus, why further research on highly skilled migrants is needed. A first assumption, i.e., that highly skilled individuals are often seen and portrayed as rational actors who essentially go wherever they have the best opportunities, was already highlighted in section 2.2.1. Three other assumptions are discussed below.

First, it is often assumed that highly skilled migrants belong to the "'elites'" of their societies who are well off, can pass borders relatively easily and differ significantly from other types of less-privileged groups of migrants who are often associated with having lower skills, belonging to the lower classes and belonging to "ethnically distinct" groups (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 7). Some studies, for example, even refer to this group of highly skilled migrants as the "mobile elites" (Jansson 2016b). As a result of this, their migration processes are viewed as relatively "uncomplicated" and, thus, warrant little attention. This assumption, however, does not take into consideration that there might be "stratifications within and across categories" (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 7). Not all highly skilled immigrants necessarily belong to the elites, rather as a result of globalization, the international mobility of individuals has become a lot more common for individuals belonging to the middle classes too, especially in developed countries (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 8). These middle class but highly skilled migrants might experience migration and integration very differently from those actually belonging to the elites (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006).

Second, as a result of the assumption that highly skilled individuals belong to the "elites", it is also assumed that they can move across borders relatively easily and without any major restrictions or being impacted by state policies. While it is true that they might hold a more privileged position as compared to other groups of migrants, it is important to keep in mind that their migration movements are still impacted by factors such as quotas, visa and work permit regulations, other state policies regulating migration, "corporate and professional steering mechanisms" such as the policies regulating "intra-corporate transfer[s]" as well as

"normative and ideological constraints" such as "the prevailing national cultures of sending and receiving societies" (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 10). As such, even highly skilled individuals face "distinctive" opportunities and challenges when entering and exiting a country (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 15).Thus, their migration and mobility is not "frictionless […] but rather a differently tracked mobility with its own costs and constraints" (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 15).

Third, it is often assumed that highly skilled migrants can easily integrate into their host societies as they possess high human, social and cultural capital (Metthews and Satzewich 2006; Calhoun 2003; van Riemsdijk and Wang 2017a; Plöger 2017). Moreover, it is assumed that their integration in the receiving society is facilitated by the fact that they do not differ significantly in skin color or other outward appearance from the majority population and, thus, simply can "blend in". Likewise, it is also often assumed that there are no major cultural differences between their countries of origins and their host societies, further facilitating their integration (Brooks and Waters 2011). Consequently, it is thought that integration for these individuals "would somehow escape the coercion of a sociological process and become more of an *à la carte* set of individualistic choices, in which one can always out-trump the imposition of any particular norm or constraint by an appeal to post-national rights or one's mobility right of exit/entry" (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 17). While this might be true to some extent, I argue that migrants from highly developed countries still face similar experiences and obstacles as other migrant groups, at least to a certain extent. Furthermore, they influence their new host countries and their countries of origin in numerous ways which should not be underestimated. Arguably, these immigrants are likely to pass as "locals" and thus unlikely to experience discrimination based on, for example, skin color, ethnicity, or religion. Moreover, the lifestyle and cultural traditions they are used to from "back home" might not differ as much from that of their new host society as compared to immigrants coming from a country with a vastly different way of life. Nevertheless, immigrants from Western European countries moving to other

Western European countries or North America still have to adjust to a new lifestyle, different cultural and language traditions, and a different administrative system (Eich-Krohm 2012; M. P. Smith and Favell 2006; Plöger 2017). They have to find employment, or integrate into the labour market and, above all, they are not completely freed from "local social structures" as they do have to establish social networks and deal with "'everyday' issues of housing, taxation, health, child-care, schooling and retirement" (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 18).

2.3 From Policies to Real Life: Moving Toward a "Human" Perspective of Highly Skilled Migration

This chapter has laid the foundations for the problem which underlies and inspired this dissertation research and was divided in two parts. The first part of the chapter explored the policy perspective on highly skilled migrants. It started with briefly examining the development of immigration regimes, i.e., the regulation of migration through state policies on a global scale. It then specifically zoomed in on the so-called "market model" which highlights that the immigration policies of countries all over the world increasingly converge toward three main issues, namely the attraction of economic migrants, the introduction of temporary migration programs and the decrease of naturalization rates. From there, the focus was placed particularly on the "race for the best and brightest" which has emerged as a result of this policy convergence with countries increasingly competing to attract and retain "international talent" as well as encouraging the return of "own talent" from abroad to secure their competitiveness in the global economy. Different strategies such as the introduction of specific visa categories as well as providing certain incentives that countries implement to succeed in competing for the best and brightest were highlighted. Finally, the role of global cities which provide innovative and creative environments and, thus, are important destinations for highly skilled individuals was explored. After examining the policy perspective which highlighted the increasing interest in highly skilled migrants as reflected in state policies and political debates around the world, the

second part of the chapter addressed the question of how to understand the migration processes of highly skilled migrants. This second part of the chapter highlighted two major gaps in the research, namely, on the one hand, the lack of a "human" perspective on highly skilled migration, and, on the other hand, the lack of research on highly skilled movements taking place between countries of the so-called global North. Several conclusions that guide this dissertation research can be drawn from the observations in this chapter: First, it is important not to see highly skilled individuals as purely rational actors but also as emotional actors whose migration processes might be influenced by their lived experiences. Second, highly skilled migrants are not simply able to move from one country to another, i.e., their migration processes are not completely "frictionless" but are also affected by outer regulating circumstances such as state policies. Third, the migration processes of highly skilled migrants often seem to be fluid and ongoing processes that can involve return and/or onward movements. Fourth, the reasons for such movements have become diversified with other factors but economic considerations impacting them. Fifth, even though their migration processes are fluid this does not mean that they are completely detached from place, much rather they still have to integrate in their local places of destination and deal with the everyday challenges there. Sixth and finally, there is a need to portray highly skilled migrants not as one united group who all share the same experiences but rather as individuals whose migration and integration experiences may differ depending on their personal characteristics such as age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class etc. Therefore, further research on the perspective of highly skilled individuals themselves including their decision-making processes as well as their lived experiences during different stages of their mobility trajectories is needed to explore this field further and obtain a better understanding of their mobility, integration, and settlement patterns. This is especially true in a time where, on the one hand, countries increasingly compete to attract and retain the best and brightest individuals to secure both a country's competitiveness in the world market

and cohesive nation-building, and, on the other hand, migration processes are becoming more and more fluid and the reasons for migration more diverse.

The objective of this dissertation research is to contribute to this knowledge by exploring the mobility, integration and settlement patterns of highly skilled migrants moving between countries of the so-called global North. The reason for this focus is that, as demonstrated above, the movements of highly skilled individuals moving between these countries has not gained a lot of attention so far and, thus, warrants further research. In the next chapter, I take a closer look at the literature that explores the migration and mobility movements of different types of highly skilled and/or privileged migrants including academics, international students, expatriates, mobile professionals, lifestyle migrants as well as travelers, backpackers, tourists, and global nomads. This review allows me to obtain a deeper understanding of what is already known about this topic and how this knowledge can be used for the further conceptualization of my research. Specifically, it focuses on what information we can draw from these different literatures in regard to the conclusions drawn above.

3 State of the Literature on Highly Skilled and/or Privileged and Affluent Migrants

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, highly skilled migration has so far often been explored either from a policy or an economic perspective which sees highly skilled migrants as a commodity that can easily be moved around from one place to another and can be used to secure a country's economic and technical development, as well as its competitiveness in the world market. In addition to this, different sets of literature have addressed (in some capacity) the topic of highly skilled migration and/or the migration processes of migrants who are perceived as being more privileged and affluent and often originate in countries of the "global North". These include the literatures on a) **academic mobility** (Bauder 2015; Kim 2008; Veugelers and Bouwel 2015; Siekierski et al. 2018; Trembath 2016; Richardson and Mckenna 2002; 2003; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Chen 2017; Hardwick and Tremblay 2013), b) **international students**, (Van Mol and Timmerman 2014; King and Raghuram 2013; Beech 2014; H. Alberts 2017; H. C. Alberts and Hazen 2005; Soon 2012; Tharenou and Seet 2014; King et al. 2011; Gu and Schweisfurth 2015; Calder et al. 2016; Ozer 2015; Hotta and Ting-Toomey 2013), c) **expatriates** (Andresen et al. 2014; Thomas, Lazarova, and Inkson 2005; Peltokorpi 2009; Richardson and Mallon 2005; Biemann and Andresen 2010; Inkson et al. 1997; Suutari and Brewster 2001; Carr, Inkson, and Thorn 2005; Al Ariss and Özbilgin 2010), d) **mobile professionals** (Vorheyer 2016; Mulholland and Ryan 2017; Plöger 2017; Ho 2011; Nowicka 2007; Chacko 2017; Meier 2015c), e) **lifestyle migration and lifestyle mobility** (Benson 2016; Benson and O'Reilly 2009; 2016b; S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015; Igarashi 2015; Benson and Osbaldiston 2014b; 2016; Eimermann 2015; Higgins 2018; Ibrahim and Tremblay 2017; Janoschka and Haas 2014; Oliver 2011; Torkington, David, and Sardinha 2015) and f) literature that addresses other types of mobilities or mobile individuals such as **travelers, backpackers, tourists or global nomads** (Germann Molz 2008; Thorpe 2012; O'Reilly 2003; Casado-Díaz, Casado-Díaz, and Casado-Díaz 2014; Inkson and Myers 2003; Richards 2015;

Mclachlan 2007; Killguss 2008; Burns and Novelli 2008; Schapendonk, van Liempt, and Spierings 2015; Allon, Anderson, and Bushell 2008; Kannisto 2017; Redshaw 2017). Following Allon, Anderson and Bushell (2008), I argue that combining these literatures is beneficial as the boundaries between different categories of mobile individuals (e.g., migrants, tourists, students etc.) are becoming increasingly blurred. Thus, rather than "concentrating exclusively on singular instances or examples of mobility" combining these literatures allows to explore "the connections and relationships between [different] mobile forms and groups" (Allon, Anderson, and Bushell 2008, 79). While an in-depth analysis of all these literatures would go beyond the scope of this dissertation, there are five main points – which also reiterate the conclusions drawn at the end of the previous chapter – that we can learn about the migration and mobility processes of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent individuals based on this literature, namely:

1) Migration is not only caused by economic factors but also by factors that are seen as more emotional, affective, relational and ideational such as lifestyle, social networks, love, self-fulfillment etc.
2) Migration is an ongoing process and especially highly skilled migrants are prone to move more than once, e.g., they participate in short term mobility which can result in an eventual return to the home country, onward movement(s) to another country(ies), or multiple moves between the home country and different destinations.
3) Even highly skilled migrants can experience difficulties when entering and exiting a country and when adjusting to new environments, e.g., their movements do involve hidden frictions as well as social and emotional costs.
4) While highly skilled individuals are increasingly mobile and, thus, apparently less attached to places, their lived experiences still take place and are shaped by local environments.

5) Migration is closely connected to individuals' life courses, i.e., migration intentions, decisions and experiences change over time and are related to other spheres of individuals' lives such as family, work, free time, education, housing etc.

This chapter examines each of these five points in more detail and highlights what we can learn from the existing literature.

3.1 Non-Economic Causes of Migration

In today's globalized world, international migration is a common phenomenon, with more and more people moving across boundaries, both social, cultural, and national ones. Over the last decades, for example, the number of international migrants has increased from 154 million in 1990 to 232 million in 2013 (United Nations 2013). This has put the discussion about migration on the agenda of politicians as well as academics. As a result of this, the field of migration studies has grown significantly over the past decades. Traditionally, research conducted within the field of migration studies has concentrated on explaining migration streams, thus, the reasons lying behind migration movements (King 2002; D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998). A second area of concentration was and still is the assimilation, respectively integration process of immigrants in the societies of receiving countries (Alba and Nee 2005; Bauböck 1994a; Castles 2002; Kivisto 2003; 2004; Koopmans and Statham 2001; Ley 2013; Portes and Borocz 1989; Wayland 2006; Couton 2014; Couton and Gaudet 2008). With the increased interest in migration, however, scholars have enlarged the field by a plurality of other topics, such as citizenship (Bauböck 1994b; Brubaker 1992; Joppke 1999; 2010; 2013; Kymlicka and Norman 2000; Soysal 1994; Winter 2014a; 2014b; 2016; Winter, Diehl, and Patzelt 2015; Winter and Patzelt 2017) securitization and migration politics (Boswell 2007; Hollifield 2007; Zolberg 1999), or transnationalism (Basch, Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994; Bauböck 2003; Bauböck and Faist 2010; Vertovec 2007; 2009). While none of these areas deliberately exclude migration processes between highly developed countries in their analysis, when examining the main

topics which are discussed in each of these areas and the literature surrounding them over the past 40 years, it becomes obvious that, almost all of them are targeted towards explaining and examining migration movements from underdeveloped or developing countries to (highly) developed countries. This section explores how migration movements in general and specifically those of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants are explained. It starts by reflecting on some of the classic migration theories which explain migration movements mainly from an economic perspective and predominantly by focusing on "South-North" movements. It then presents some criticism toward this economic interpretation of migration and highlights other non-economic factors that also impact migration processes with a specific focus on what the literature has to say about the movements of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants.

3.1.1 Classic Migration Theories

Research on "South-North" migration processes often highlights that these movements are caused by some kind of crisis, e.g. war, political instability, or natural catastrophes, and that they are explained by referring to classical migration theories, using the model of push-and-pull factors, amongst others (E. S. Lee 1966). This is also true for the study of movements of labor migrants which predominantly take place from the "South" to the "North". On a micro-level, these migration processes are explained with the help of, for example, *neoclassical migration theories*, putting economic factors in the form of cost-benefit calculations at the centre of the decision-making process (compare: Hicks 1932, Sjaastad 1962, Todaro 1969). At the center of these approaches lies thus the assumption that individuals are "rational actors" who move to the place where they can expect the highest "discounted net returns" over a certain period of time (D. S. Massey et al. 1998, 19). This means that migration only takes place if there exist differences in wages and employment opportunities, in which case people would move to the place that offers the highest expected personal outcomes, whereas if no such

differences exist, migration would ultimately come to an end (D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998). On the meso-level, these "South-North" movements are explained by, for example, the *new economics of migration* which focuses on "families, households, or other culturally defined units of production and consumption" as units which lie at the heart of migration decision-making processes (D. S. Massey et al. 1998, 27). Families/households decide to send away one or several of their members to work elsewhere to secure additional earnings which are send home in form of remittances (D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998). Thus, the main motivation for migration is not necessarily the existing wage differences between countries but rather, migration is interpreted "as risk-sharing behavior of families and households" which allows for the diversification of the family's/household's income (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014, 38; Piché 2013; D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998). Finally, when applying a macro-level approach, these migration movements are explained by, for example, the macro approach to *neoclassical migration theory*, *segmented labor-market theory*, or *world system theories*, which put capitalism and the global world order between core and periphery countries at the centre of explaining migration processes (Wallerstein 2011). The first assumes that international migration is a result of the geographical "differences in the supply and demand for labor" and differences in wages (D. S. Massey et al. 1993, 433). Migration of low-skilled workers takes place from countries that have low wages but have large amounts of labour resources to countries that have high wages but are poor in labor supply (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014). Whereas skilled workers move from capital-rich to capital-poor countries as these countries often lack human capital making it possible for these individuals to make a higher profit out of their skills (Massey et al. 1993, 1998). It is assumed that the resulting labor movements will eventually even out wage differences resulting in a halt of migration movements (D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998; Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014). The second also interprets migration as a consequence of the structure of international labor markets (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014). However, it does not see wage differences between countries as the driving force behind

migration but rather the changes in the economic patterns and the structure of the labor markets in the receiving countries resulting from economic expansion and recession (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014; D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998). While in times of economic expansion, there is a high demand for workforce which generates a need for (temporary) migrant workers, in times of recession, workers will be laid off and migrant workers are send back to their countries of origin (Bauder 2006). The third sees migration as a "structural consequence of the expansion of markets within a global political hierarchy" (D. S. Massey et al. 1998, 36; Sassen-Koob 1981). Thus, while core countries (i.e. developed countries) expand their capitalist markets to the periphery (i.e. developing countries), migration movements appear in the counter direction because the traditional way of living and self-supply cannot compete with modern economic forces (D. S. Massey et al. 1998, 36–37). These movements are often directed toward global cities and are seen in connection to colonial heritage and ideological links between core and periphery regions (D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998). International migration processes thus follow "the dynamics of market creation and the political structure of the global economy," but have little to do with actual differences in wages or employment rates in different countries (D. S. Massey et al. 1998, 41). While all these theories apply a different analytical perspective (micro, meso, macro), they all have in common, that they focus on economic factors as causes for migration movements.

3.1.2 Moving Away from an Economic Understanding of the Causes of Migration

Research, however, has shown that other factors also need to be taken into consideration when explaining migration movements. This is particularly important for studying highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent movements as studies highlight that economic (and political) factors do not, or at least not primarily cause these migration processes. Much rather, they are determined on a more individual and personal level (Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice 2008; Moravek 2008; Uebelmesser 2006; van Dalen and Henkens 2007). Consequently, over the past

few years, research on highly skilled migrants has increasingly moved away from a purely economic understanding of this phenomena that portrays highly skilled individuals as rational actors. Instead, studies increasingly examine highly skilled migrants from a human perspective that promotes "a more culturally centred and informed understanding" of these migration processes by paying attention to their social relationships, the experiences they make while being on the move and the different strategies and processes they utilize (Halfacree 2004, 240; Mulholland and Ryan 2017; M. P. Smith and Favell 2006). This focus is also suggested by research on lifestyle migration (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014b) and lifestyle mobilities (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015) which has blurred the traditional understanding of migration and the reasons lying behind international movements. Lifestyle migration is generally understood as the migration of "relatively affluent individuals, moving either part-time or full-time, permanently or temporarily, to places which, for various reasons, signify for the migrants something loosely defined as quality of life" (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, 621). As such, economic factors, such as, for example, income differentials which are often identified as the determining drivers of migration processes, do not seem to take a central role in the movements of individuals participating in lifestyle migration. Much rather, scholars exploring these kinds of movements need to focus on the "socio-cultural dimensions" that are involved in the decision-making processes as well as in the actual lived experiences of these individuals (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a, 1). In the remainder of this section, I explore the non-economic factors that are highlighted by research as also impacting migration movements in further detail.

3.1.2.1 Self-Realization, Adventure, Curiosity and Self-Development

Several studies emphasize the importance of factors such as self-realization, adventure, curiosity, and self-development as being determinant for the migration movements of highly skilled and privileged migrants. Research on expatriates, for example, has started to pay attention to these factors by differentiating between "assigned expatriation" (AE) and "self-

initiated expatriation" (SIE) (Andresen et al. 2014; Biemann and Andresen 2010; Inkson et al. 1997; Richardson and Mallon 2005; Suutari and Brewster 2001). While AEs are individuals who are sent to another country by their employer for a pre-determined time period to accomplish certain jobs or tasks and repatriate at the end of their assignment all the while they are being supported financially and otherwise by their company (Andresen et al. 2014; Peltokorpi 2009; Richardson and Mallon 2005), SIEs are individuals who do not have any organizational support, as their movement abroad is triggered by their personal wish for self-development and to life and work in another country (Andresen et al. 2014; Biemann and Andresen 2010; Inkson et al. 1997; Peltokorpi 2009). Similar findings were made by Eich-Krohm (2012) and Richardson and McKenna (2002; 2003) who conducted studies respectively on the immigration experiences of highly-skilled Germans in the US and British academics working abroad. These studies show that the wish to go abroad was not triggered by career reasons or the wish to obtain a higher salary. In fact, in Richardson and Mckenna's (2003) study, several interviewees, especially those in New Zealand, even stated that they were actually making less money than they had done in their home countries before. Rather their decisions to move abroad were explained by the wish for new "cultural and professional experience[s]" (Eich-Krohm 2012, 15), their wish for "personal fulfillment and development" and a desire to "explore more of the world" and experience something unfamiliar (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 70). Mosneaga and Winther (2013) also found that experiencing another culture was an important factor in the decisions of international students to study abroad. The desire to explore the world can also be linked to notions of adventurism which are, among others, highlighted by research on lifestyle migration. As such, the ideas of searching for a better life or moving elsewhere to achieve an increased quality of life are closely linked to the "notion of escapism or adventure" which in turn can be linked to ideas of "self-authenticity" or "the project of the self" (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a, 7), authenticity and living in authentic places (Bruillon 2007; Osbaldiston 2011) as well as self-transformation and self-realization (Hoey 2010;

Scheibelhofer 2009). While these notions are often positively connotated, it is important to also consider that for some moving abroad might present an opportunity to escape "from situations, relationships or experiences" in their home countries and finding "a better personal and/or professional life" that aligns better with their expectations for their lives (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 71). Likewise, Dietz (2011, 52) found that "freedom and independence", e.g., the pursuit of careers they wanted, were important factors motivating many of her interviewees who had moved from Italy to Northern Ireland.

3.1.2.2 Lifestyle and Quality of Life

The above described factors can also be linked to ideas of lifestyle and quality of life more generally which Harvey and Beaverstock (2017) highlight as important factors impacting the mobility decisions of highly skilled individuals. In this regard, they specifically talk about "the reputation of countries" which is shaped by the "economic opportunities, lifestyle, quality of life, and other factors" that countries offer (Harvey and Beaverstock 2017, 274). Similar findings were made by Alberts (2017) and Tharenou and Seet (2014) who explore the experiences of international students and highlight that the (perceived) quality of life in the countries where international students were studying was one of the most important factors for them to decide to stay in these countries after the end of their studies. Factors such as lifestyle and quality of life have also been particularly explored in the literature around lifestyle migration (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014b) and lifestyle mobilities (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015). This literature highlights that in contrast to other forms of migration, e.g., labour migration or refugee movements, "lifestyle migration appears to be driven by consumption and is optional and voluntary, privileging cultural motifs of destinations and mobilities" (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a, 3). Benson and Osbaldiston (2014a, 3) highlight three distinctive characteristics that research on lifestyle migration needs to consider: Lifestyle migration a) is "optional and voluntary", b) emphasizes the "lived experiences of life following

migration" and c) is embedded in a context of class structure and the "global context of inequality". Generally, lifestyle migrants move toward places that offer "an improved way of life" (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a, 3), which can, for example, be triggered by "the attraction of particular destinations, the amenities, the weather, and the physical environment" (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a, 9) or the wish to live in a "rural idyll" (Gaspar 2015; Sardinha 2015; Eimermann 2015). Closely connected to this, Dietz (2011, 65), who studies Italian migrants in Northern Ireland, finds that migrants may decide to return or move onwards, "if they should start to feel unhappy". Thus, in these movements, economic and career reasons do not play an important role as motives for moving to another place. However, it is important to mention that specifically for individuals who participate in lifestyle mobilities (i.e. the "ongoing semi-permanent moves of varying duration (…) that may involve multiple 'homes', 'belongings' and sustained mobility throughout the life course"), work can sometimes be seen as a means to attain a mobile lifestyle (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015, 158). Thus, work is needed to sustain the frequent and ongoing movements and being able to life and/or travel abroad as the examples of individuals working in (ski) resorts which allows them to take advantages of living in such an environment, or work and travelers who literally combine working with traveling demonstrate (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015). However, this blurring of the boundaries between tourism, leisure and travel can also be found in academia or among other highly skilled individuals (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015). Most importantly is to keep in mind that these movements are "lifestyle-led" and "can include work and career" but are not driven by the latter (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015, 162).

3.1.2.3 Migration as a Meaningful Part of Individuals' Biographies and Identities

This leads to another important factor motivating such movements, namely, that for some, leading a mobile lifestyle and the experiences they gain during their stays abroad become an important and meaningful part of their biographies and identities (Vorheyer 2016, 59; Ossman

2004; S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015; Nowicka 2007; Gomes 2019). This might be because they interpret their international mobility as a sign "of individual freedom and social success" (Jansson 2016b, 421) or because they "identify as cosmopolitan global citizens" (Gomes 2019, 230). As a result of this, some of these mobile individuals might apply for permanent residence in the places where they are living but not necessarily out of an intention to actually settle there permanently, in fact, often they have the intention of either moving to another country or returning to their country of origin, but rather as it facilitates their lives in these places and provides them with "a safety net" while continuing "their transient journey" (Gomes 2019, 229). Moreover, for some mobile individuals, the destination of their move is not necessarily important but rather the fact that they are actually on the move is (Nowicka 2007). Often, these individuals live with an "'we shall see' option," i.e. they are simply waiting to see where the next opportunity will come up, and, thus, the country/city they move to is frequently the result of "coincidence" (Nowicka 2007, 75). Likewise, Dietz (2011, 54) states that several of her interviewees – Italian migrants in Northern Ireland – had arrived at their destination "by chance". This was specifically the case for those, who participated in EU exchange programs such as Erasmus or Leonardo. These individuals often wanted to move to an "English speaking country" to improve their language skills. In most cases, they were drawn towards England but accepted their placements even if they were allocated to other countries such as Northern Ireland. Finally, Richardson and Mckenna (2003, 780) even highlight that not only the destinations of moves but also the very fact that individuals move in the first place can sometimes be the result of "chance, luck and serendipity". So far, the impact of **chance and chance encounters** has mainly been explored in research on the migration processes and trajectories of individuals moving from developing to developed countries and specifically the movements of refugees (Papadopoulou 2004; Yukseker and Brewer 2011; Collyer 2007; Schapendonk 2011; 2012; Suter 2012; Gladkova and Mazzucato 2017). However, in alignment with the above studies, I would argue that chance also needs to be considered in the migration

trajectories of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants moving between countries of the global North as the studies demonstrate that chance also plays a role in their movements (Nowicka 2007; Richardson and Mckenna 2003).

3.1.2.4 Relational Factors: Family and Relationship Ties and Social Networks

Research also highlights the importance of relational factors, such as family and relationship ties and social networks as factors impacting migration decisions in either direction (leaving, returning, or moving onward). Depending on their personal situation, factors such as their relationship status, the presence of children, family obligations and friendship networks might impact migration decisions. The importance of one's relationship status is, for example, highlighted by Vorheyer (2016, 76) who found that "being in a binational relationship or having a partner who has ambitions to work abroad" can trigger international movements (Vorheyer 2016, 76; see also: Dietz 2011). Moreover, whether or not accompanying spouses are able to find employment and how they adjust to their new living environments might determine if couples or families decide to stay in their countries of destination or return home (Eich-Krohm 2012). Likewise, the presence of children can impact migration decisions. For example, while moving abroad was seen as an opportunity to offer their children the possibility to experience life in another country, learn about different cultures and make new experiences, the presence of children limited the choice of destinations as individuals considered distance to their extended family as well as the quality of the health care and social security system as well as the general perception of safety in a given country (Richardson and Mckenna 2003; Eich-Krohm 2012). In some cases, evaluating these factors also resulted in a decision to not go abroad or to return home (Richardson and Mckenna 2003; Eich-Krohm 2012; Dietz 2011). Decisions to return home were also related to other aspects of their children's life, e.g. their adjustment experiences in the host society, evaluating their different education options in the host society and the country of origin (Eich-Krohm 2012), the "desire to raise their children in a place where

they did not need to prove that they belonged" (Chacko 2017, 222), or "fearing that one's children wouldn't be seen as full citizens of the host societies" (Chacko 2007, 135). However, it is not only migrant's immediate family that impact migration decisions but also other family ties and responsibilities toward family members as well as social networks and friendship circles which impact these decisions (Cairns, Growiec, and Smyth 2013; Mosneaga and Winther 2013; Eich-Krohm 2012). For example, different studies show that the expectations of parents can have a significant impact both on "students' decision to study abroad and migration intentions" (Lu, Zong, and Schissel 2009, 307) and that having a supportive and encouraging environment within ones family as well as knowing friends who moved abroad can also increase the likelihood of actually moving (Van Mol and Timmerman 2014; H. Alberts 2017). Moreover, having strong friendship ties in the receiving society might impact the decision to stay there (Lu, Zong, and Schissel 2009). Whereas family obligations, e.g., taking care of elderly or sick family members (H. Alberts 2017; Eich-Krohm 2012), or the desire to be closer to ones parents, siblings, the extended family or once friendship networks were reasons to return home (H. Alberts 2017; Chacko 2017; Tharenou and Seet 2014; Eich-Krohm 2012). Other studies confirm family and lifestyle considerations, including e.g. quality of life and social security, as the most important factors lying behind the return migration decisions of individuals (Djajić 2008; Dustmann 2003; Haug 2008; Hugo 2009; Konzett-Smoliner 2016; Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015).

3.1.2.5 Place and Place Attachment

While it is often assumed that highly skilled and mobile individuals are detached from place, different studies highlight that place and place attachment do impact migration decisions as well. In fact, in order to grasp the human dimension of highly skilled movements, it is important to consider how these migrants relate to the places and spaces they live in and/or (plan to) move to and how they form attachments to these (Mulholland and Ryan 2017). Beech (2014), for

example, highlights how certain ideas and images that individuals have about the places that they plan to move to impact their migration decisions. As such, the US, remains one of the most attractive countries to researchers and students from all over the world as it continues to produce "high-impact research in almost all scientific disciplines" and enjoys the reputation of having high quality universities and scientific institutions (Veugelers and Bouwel 2015, 363; Veugelers 2010; Harvey 2011; H. Alberts 2017). Different studies also demonstrate that feelings of home and belonging as well as the "social and emotional adaptions" of individuals are important drivers for the decisions to either stay in a host society or return home respectively move onward (Lu, Zong, and Schissel 2009, 307; H. Alberts 2017; Chacko 2017). Homesickness can, for example, result in the wish to return (Dietz 2011). This factor of place and place attachment will be further explored in section 3.4 of this chapter.

3.1.2.6 Education, Career and Professional Reasons

Finally, it is also important to highlight that while economic factors, such as improving the economic situation of oneself or one's family/household by moving somewhere else, are not of major importance for the movements of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent individuals moving between countries of the "global North", other factors, such as professional reasons linked to advancing one's career or education, e.g., by moving to places that offer better research facilities, still remain important drivers at least for some. These aspects are particularly important for academics and international students who often initiate their moves abroad on their own and are "motivated by accruing prestige and credibility", and, thus advancing their academic careers or future career prospects (Bauder 2015, 85; Raghuram 2013; H. Alberts 2017; Van Mol and Timmerman 2014). Academics and students alike are often attracted by established research facilities which allow them to conduct research they would not be able to do elsewhere or the prospect of working together with certain well-know professors/researchers (Bauder 2015; Vysotskaya 2015; Raghuram 2013; H. Alberts 2017). These experiences abroad

are seen as a means to acquire habitus and accumulating social and cultural capital, such as a degree from a foreign university, learning the rules and norms of international academic life, improving one's language skills and building international networks and affiliations (Bauder 2015; Thorn and Holm-Nielsen 2008). This is why international mobility is often more common during the early stages of an academic career (Bauder 2015; Jöns 2006). Similar findings were made for AEs whose inter-company transfers are often related to a chance for them to advance their careers and gain international experience (Inkson et al. 1997; Peltokorpi 2009; Suutari and Brewster 2001). Dietz (2011, 52-53) also found that "job opportunities" were a reason for moving to Northern Ireland, especially for those who had experienced unemployment in Italy. Moreover, her findings indicate that having been able to "accomplish a level of success in terms of work that they would not have achieved in Italy" impacted the decisions of Italian migrants in Northern Ireland to remain there. However, in certain cases, better professional advancement possibilities and the impression that these were less attainable in the host society were also named as reasons for individuals who decided to return back to their countries of origin (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015; Tharenou and Seet 2014).

3.1.2.7 Overlapping of Different Reasons and Factors

To conclude this section, it is important to highlight that most studies emphasize that there is not one reason that determines the migration decisions of highly skilled and/or privileged individuals, but rather that different reasons and factors overlap and impact each other and that the importance that is given to these reasons and factors might also depend on an individual's characteristics as well as the stage that they find themselves in their life course (Chacko 2007; Nowicka 2007; Vorheyer 2016; Richardson and Mckenna 2003; Chen 2017; Chacko 2017; Vysotskaya 2015; Steiner 2019; Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Based on previous research, Steiner (2019, 226), for example, divides the factors that impact migration decision-making processes into five categories, namely a) "demographics" (e.g., age,

marital status, family situation, education etc.), b) “life course events” (e.g., transitioning from school to working life), c) “transnational ties” (e.g., having a partner who lives abroad, owning property) , d) “feasibility and preparedness (including prior migration settings)” (e.g., previous mobility experiences, access to financial capital), and, e) “embeddedness in the host country” (e.g., social, cultural, economic integration, satisfaction with life in receiving society). Likewise Chen (2017, 8) highlights that the decisions of Chinese academics to return to their home country are not solely impacted by economic or political reasons but also, by “social and cultural reasons including social attachment, cultural belonging, self-realization, and family considerations”. Consequently, the decision-making process is very complex and “involves both personal choices and negotiations of various conditions and regions—family, workplace, and the nation-state” (Chen 2017, 8), or, in other words, “the return decision is situated in individual contexts, yet at the same time the individual’s choice is shaped by economic, political, social, and cultural conditions” (Chen 2017, 61). Finally, Yanasmayan (2015) explores the decisions of whether to prolong their stays or whether to return to their country of origin among highly skilled Turkish migrants in three European cities. She identifies three different sets of factors which often overlap and impact their decisions, namely a) professional reasons, including wage differentials but also such factors as the actual quality of the work, gaining international experiences, uncertainty of career/employment options in the country of origin, b) familial reasons, splitting up with a partner either at the place of current residence or in the home country, the possibility to join a partner and/or meeting a partner in the receiving country, and c) quality-of-life factors, such as the convenience of live in the place of current residence (in comparison to places they lived at before or places they intend to move to), better social conditions (e.g., work-life balance, access to public transportation etc.), opportunities for self-development, weather, or free time activities (Yanasmayan 2015). Thus, it is important to remember that return decisions, and for that matter any kind of migration decisions, are never only determined by one factor but are the result of multiple factors at different internal and

external levels. In this regard it is also important to consider that migration is an ongoing process and that the reasons and motivations that lie behind individuals' decision to move internationally as well as their lived experiences in places of origin and destination may change over time. This conceptualization of migration as an ongoing process is further examined in the next section of this chapter.

3.2 Migration as An Ongoing Process

Migration research often employs a sedentary bias. While migration research actually tries to understand the *movement* of individuals the theoretical and analytical perspectives that researchers use have predominantly drawn on "sedentarist metaphysics" (Malkki 1992; Cresswell 2012). This means that "migration has mainly been studied from the position of fixed locations" which are represented through "the place of origin and the destination" to and from which migrants move and where their experiences are explored (e.g. integration outcomes in the receiving country) (Schapendonk and Steel 2014, 262; Schwarz 2020; Vertovec 2009). However, paying attention to temporality in mobility and "temporary sociability is vital to understand migratory processes" as the journeys of migrants are often fragmented and temporary with short stays in phases of transit (Schapendonk, van Liempt, and Spierings 2015, 58). This is not only true for refugees whose movements are often fragmented and unfold over several years but also for other, more privileged types of migrants and mobile individuals. Over the past decades, for example, motivations (e.g. leisure or experience), geographical origins and destinations, actions, education and skill levels, as well as the ways of travel of migrants have become more diverse and new forms of mobility blur the division between the traditional understanding of migration and other forms of spatial mobility, e.g. "travel, tourism, circulation, commuting" (King 2002, 94). Moreover, several studies have identified that prior mobility increases the likelihood of moving again in the future (Bailey 1989; D. Massey and Espinosa 1997; Deléchat 2001; King and Ruiz-Gelices 2003; Vorheyer 2016). This means that

individuals who have moved once are often likely to move again, emphasizing the ongoing character of migration processes. This section explores how and why migration should be analyzed as an ongoing (social) process rather than a static event. It starts by reflecting on the transnational turn which first started to challenge the static understanding of migration. Then it analyses the blurring of boundaries between migration and other forms of spatial mobility which has resulted in the fact that many migration movements today are temporary and/or can involve return and onward movements. As a result of this, some studies have started to conceptualize migration as an ongoing process which is demonstrated in the last part of this section.

3.2.1 Transnationalism – Challenging the Static Conceptualization of Migration

The static conceptualization of migration was first challenged by researchers applying a transnational perspective. In fact, the transnational turn opened the eyes of researchers for the many connections that migrants maintain between their places of origins and destinations and how their networks span across these places. The concepts of transnationalism and transmigrants have gained increased importance since the beginning of the 1990s and by now represent one of the central ideas in research on migration (Vertovec 2009). It is assumed that with the processes of globalization, which have brought along ever faster ways of transportation and communication, the world has become connected in ways which were not previously possible. Today, frequent travel back and forth between migrants' countries of origin and their new countries of residence is easily possible due to affordable plane tickets. Likewise, with the expansion of telecommunication possibilities and the internet, communication with family and friends has become possible on a daily basis (Vertovec 2009; Hugo 2014). Moreover, modern media and other forms of modern communication make it possible to access news and entertainment channels in one's country of origin, and, thus, to stay informed about the political, economic and social situation there (Vertovec 2009; Hugo 2014). Through these changes,

immigrants are increasingly able to maintain close ties with their home country (Vertovec 2007; 2009),[7] and international migration has become "a central dynamic within globalization" (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014). These changes, it is argued, have resulted in transnational networks and patterns of migration, where it is no longer clear cut between either being here or there, but where the lines are fluid. Immigrants exert an influence both on their sending and receiving countries. Living in their new host society, they make an impact on the social structure and culture there, while at the same time bringing new ideas and concepts back home to their countries of origin when visiting or communicating with individuals from there (Basch, Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). As such, transnationalism is defined as "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. […] [T]hese processes [are called] transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders", whereas the term transmigrant refers to the people creating these transnational fields (Basch, Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994, 7). The terms "transnationalism" and "transmigrants" are often also used in connection to the study of diasporas and how people living in a diasporic community maintain ties with their country of origin. As an in-depth discussion about diasporas would go beyond the scope of this dissertation, here it should only be highlighted that the term "diaspora" has partly been uncoupled from its original meaning and today is often used simultaneously with immigrant communities or societies (Sheffer 1986; Clifford 1994; Agnew 2005a).[8] However, while the transnational turn broke with the notion of migration as being a static, one-time movement that is fixed in locations, a transnational perspective still mainly focuses on the linkages between two places and ignores "experiences

[7] Although easier access to communication and transportation has facilitated the maintenance of close contacts between immigrants and their country of origin, not all migrants take advantage of these possibilities to the same extent. Individuals' participation in transnational activities vary significantly and are highly dependent on their social, economic, and personal situation, both in their country of origin and settlement (Vertovec 2009).

[8] For a detailed discussion on approaches to diaspora, see e.g. (S. Hall 1990; Clifford 1994; Gilroy 1991; 1994; Safran 1991; Tölölyan 1991; Sheffer 1986; 1995; R. Cohen 2008).

of mobility and spatial frictions in mobility processes" (Schapendonk and Steel 2014, 263). Moreover, it does not take into consideration the journey migrants undertake to get from point A to point B (Schapendonk 2012; Schapendonk and Steel 2014). Neither does it consider that migrants might not only move between two countries but that their migration or mobility trajectories can involve multiple long and short-term movements to a variety of different countries. Finally, several scholars have also criticized transnationalism for downplaying the role that localities still play in migrants' lives by only focusing on their cross-border engagements and connectivity (Vertovec 2009; Ehrkamp 2005; Morawska 2004; Nagel 2002; Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999). Rather, to address these gaps, research should examine how migrants' lived experiences are impacted by "complex relationships that are plural, extensible, but nevertheless localised" (Ralph and Staeheli 2011, 522).

3.2.2 Mobility and Blurring the Traditional Understandings of Migration

Some of these factors are considered by research that applies a mobility perspective. The mobility turn which started in the early 2000s and was most prominently driven by John Urry (2000; 2002; 2007), has increasingly risen the awareness that migration is an ongoing process that spans throughout one's lifetime and can involve multiple moves across and between different cities, regions, countries and continents. Urry (2000; 2002; 2007) claims that we are currently living in a world that is becoming increasingly mobile, with new forms of transportation and communication not only increasing the mobility of objects, goods and ideas but also of humans all over the world. This mobility, no matter if it is that of objects, ideas or humans, is made possible through systems which enable movements. These systems can include a variety of different components such as the means of transportation but can also include rules, regulations, or laws about who can move where, when, and how. Access to these mobility systems depends on individuals' positions in society and their economic, social, and cultural capital, among others. Thus, it is important to remember that certain movements might be easier

for some as compared to others and that systems of mobility can facilitate the movement of some while at the same time restricting (forcefully) the movement of others resulting in "substantial inequalities between places and between people in terms of their location and access to these mobility-systems" (Urry 2007, 51). Overall, Urry (2007, 6) argues that the increased mobility we are experiencing requires a new "way of thinking through the character of economic, social and political relationships" (Urry 2007, 6). According to him, this new way of thinking needs to move away from old approaches of studying processes and societies which are often "static, fixed and concerned with predominantly aspatial 'social structures'" (Urry 2007, 6). Much rather, it needs to lead to the "establishment of a movement-driven social science" which allows to focus on the processes of movements which are involved in "economic, social and political practices [as well as] infrastructures and ideologies" (Urry 2007, 18). Research applying a mobility perspective has increasingly contributed to such a social science that is movement driven. This research questions the static conception of social processes and contributes to blurring the traditional understanding of migration as a one-time event.

In fact, at the same time as Urry (2000; 2007) proclaimed the so-called mobility turn or mobility paradigm and the idea of mobility gained increased attention starting in the early 2000s, the concept of lifestyle also gained in importance. This has resulted in the idea that "'being on the move' has become a 'way of life' for many" (Urry 2002, 256). As such, lifestyle mobilities, i.e., the "ongoing semi-permanent moves of varying duration (…) that may involve multiple 'homes', 'belongings' and sustained mobility throughout the life course" have become a crucial part of the lifestyle of some (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015, 158).[9] For

[9] While it is important to remember that access to different types of lifestyles as well as the possibility of being mobile have significantly been improved by ongoing processes of globalization, both lifestyle choices as well as mobility are still mainly reserved to a highly selective group of individuals, namely those, privileged enough to access them because of their socio-economic position, nationality, gender, age etc. and by being able to access the "technology and networks that facilitate the movement across borders and cultures" (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015, 157; Cresswell 2010).

these individuals, who Cohen (2010, 80) calls "lifestyle traveler", travel and being on the move are not seen as a break from regular life but rather traveling becomes their regular way of life. Richards (2015), for example, highlights the increasing importance of youth travel which has resulted in new forms of mobility such as backpackers[10], flashpackers[11] and global nomads[12], which are facilitated by processes of globalization and an increased internationally connectedness. These forms of youth travel often result in semi-permanent stays in different countries allowing to combine leisure with work and travel. This is also confirmed by other studies exploring the mobility patterns and transnational lives of snowboarders (Thorpe 2012) or backpackers (Allon, Anderson, and Bushell 2008). These studies highlight how snowboarders and backpackers are not only tourists but that they might also take on other roles, such as being, "an employee, a student, a visitor, a seasonal worker, holidaymaker, a semi-permanent resident, and potentially many other roles and identities" (Allon, Anderson, and Bushell 2008, 75; Thorpe 2012). Rather than just traveling for pleasure, their mobilities "combine a complex mix of working, holiday and residential experiences" (Allon, Anderson, and Bushell 2008, 75; Thorpe 2012). This blurring of the lines between travel and migration has not only been explored in regard to youth travel and sports enthusiasts but also other groups of migrants such as lifestyle migrants whose movements can be triggered by touristic visits to other places and eventually result in either permanent, but more often temporary or seasonal movements to these places (Oliver 2011). One prominent example of lifestyle migration is that of retirees from countries in the North (e.g., the UK, Sweden, Canada) who move to the Southern parts of Europe or the US during a part of the year to escape the winter months in their

[10] Backpackers are "self-sufficient" travelers whose "travel practices are supported by the regular exchange of information and face-to-face contact with other travelers in backpacker enclaves" (Richards 2015, 349).
[11] Flashpackers are individuals who are less interested in social contact neither with fellow travelers nor with local communities as their "lifestyle is sustained by the Internet" and who are making use of existing "infrastructure and travel systems" to set up "new 'location independent' businesses in order to support their leisured lifestyles" (Richards 2015, 349–50).
[12] Global nomads are individuals who want to escape "the system" and whose mobility is characterized by longer "periods of dwelling" in (a) place(s) of their choice during which they aim to integrate in and socialize "with local communities" (Richards 2015, 350).

home countries (Desrosiers-Lauzon 2011; S. K. Smith and House 2006; Coates, Healy, and Morrison 2002; King, Warnes, and Williams 2000; Williams, King, and Warnes 1997; Gustafson 2008; Ibrahim and Tremblay 2017). Other studies have highlighted the similarities between transient migrants such as refugees, and other mobile individuals such as backpackers (Schapendonk, van Liempt, and Spierings 2015) or lifestyle migrants (Kordel and Weidinger 2019). For example, both transient migrants and backpackers are on a journey, or en route somewhere and both experience personal transformations, have to engage in and are dependent on social networking and have to engage in risk taking behavior while being on the move (Schapendonk, van Liempt, and Spierings 2015). Kordel and Weidinger (2019) highlight that while research on refugees has highlighted the fragmented character of their journeys that often result in onward movements from one place to the next, the migration processes of lifestyle migrants are pretty similar to that as their movements are often characterized by an ongoing process of moving back and forth between places (e.g., seasonally) or negotiating options of moving elsewhere. Moreover, these decisions and negotiations of (im)mobbilities, both among more affluent as well as involuntary migrants, are impacted by "legal structures and individual agency" including "legal rights", "socio-political frameworks" and "individual resources" (Kordel and Weidinger 2019, 12). Thus, research on mobility and migration might benefit from looking at the results, findings and approaches from other researchers who explore different types of mobilities and mobile individuals. Moreover, research on professional mobiles, academics, or the so-called Eurostars (i.e. young and educated workers and students who enjoy the flexibility to move freely between EU member states) shows that the mobility trajectories of these individuals often involve several movements between different countries and places which can involve temporary stays abroad, moving back and forth between two or more countries, as well as semi-permanent (several years) or permanent relocations to other countries (Vorheyer 2016; Bauder 2015; Favell 2008; Dietz 2011). These patterns further question the traditional understanding of migration as a one-time event which automatically results in the

permanent settlement of individuals and rather highlight the fact that today's globalized world, increasingly makes it possible for individuals to move to (a) place(s) temporarily. Finally, several studies also demonstrate how the boundaries between permanent and temporary migration movements are becoming more and more blurred with different types of movements allowing to transition from one status to the other (Yanasmayan 2015, 26). For example, expatriates could decide to prolong their stay after the end of their contract and end up staying in their receiving society indefinitely, thus, becoming migrants. Likewise individuals who obtained permanent residence or even citizenship in their receiving societies might not have the intentions of staying there permanently and/or decide to move elsewhere at a later point despite their secure legal status (Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Richardson and Zikic 2007).

3.2.3 Conceptualising Migration as an Ongoing Process

This blurring of the boundaries between different forms of mobility (i.e., the realization that many migration processes are temporary and involve several movements back and forth and/or in between different places) as well as the blurring between different migration statuses (i.e., from temporary to permanent or the other way round) has risen the awareness that migration and mobility processes are ongoing processes. Therefore, Gladkova and Mazzucato (2017, 2) promote the conceptualization of "migration as a constantly evolving process which needs to emphasize changes in migrants' geographical location, legal, occupational, or marital statuses". Likewise, Rashid et al. (2013), highlight the importance of not seeing migration as a static event that simply involves a point of departure often associated with less desirable conditions and a point of destination where one lives happily after the relocation. Rather, as migration is an ongoing process, the points of departure and destination are connected through a phase of transition that is situated between pre- and post-migration outcomes (Rashid et al. 2013). The circumstances of migrants' "pre-migration life", their experiences, expectations and "decision-making process" prior to their move, as well as their experiences of actually moving and settling

at a place of destination all impact the post-migration outcomes. Therefore, migration needs to be explored from a holistic perspective, taking into consideration the lives of migrants "before, during and after immigration" (Rashid et al. 2013, 190). Seeing migration as an ongoing process and considering pre-, during and post-migration experiences also allows to understand migration "as a 'lived experience'" and making it possible to obtain a better understanding of how and why migrants fare in a certain way at their destinations (Rashid et al. 2013, 200). Research in refugee studies has picked up on the idea of conceptualizing migration as a continuous/ongoing process that does not necessarily end at the first place of arrival but rather might result in the onward movement from the first place of arrival to other locations (Lindley and Van Hear 2007; Schapendonk 2012; Schapendonk and Steel 2014; Schwarz 2020). Likewise, research on lifestyle migration tends to question the static understanding of migration and seeing it as a "one-off event" (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a, 3). Much rather it sees migration as an ongoing process which allows lifestyle migrants to peu-à-peu acquire a better "quality of live" (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a, 3). This means that in order to fully grasp these processes, it is important to not only look at the reasons lying behind these movements and the immediate immigration and settlement processes but also how the lives of lifestyle migrants develop at their places of destinations, during phases of return or circular movements (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a). In other areas of migration research, the idea of conceptualizing migration as an ongoing process is only slowly catching up. Among others, research on the international mobility of students and academics has highlighted that migration and mobility are often ongoing processes that do not only need to consider the emigration and settlement processes but also potential return and/or onward movements (Chen 2017; Gill 2005; J. Lee and Kim 2010; Van Mol and Timmerman 2014; Van Mol 2017). According to Dietz (2011, 71), this was also true for the highly skilled Italian migrants who she interviewed in Northern Ireland. These individuals often moved back and forth between Italy and Ireland multiple times and, thus, their migration decisions were never final "but rather a process".

Yanasmayan's (2015) study on highly educated Turkish migrants in three mayor European cities and their decisions of either extending their stays or returning to their country of origin also highlights the ongoing character of migration movements and decision-making. Her research stresses that these decisions are usually made once migrants have reached the end of their initially planned (temporary) residence period in their host societies and are often connected to life course events, e.g., the end of university studies and obtaining a degree or changes to one's relationship status (Yanasmayan 2015, 23). Moreover, the findings of this study highlight that these migrants often employed a strategy of "year-by-year planning", i.e., setting short term goals and re-evaluating their situation and options of staying, returning or moving elsewhere within these regular intervals (Yanasmayan 2015, 26). This practice of year-by-year planning kept "alive the continuous notion of mobility and the feeling of transience" (Yanasmayan 2015, 26). To capture these kinds of decisions the author suggests to use a "compartmentalized approach to migration, which involves specific decision-making mechanisms in specific moments of agency" (Yanasmayan 2015, 22). This approach questions the one-time character of migration and sees the decision of whether to prolong ones stay or to return back home as another stage of individuals migration trajectories (Yanasmayan 2015, 23). Moreover, it allows for a more in-depth examination of the contexts and conditions that lead to these decisions which makes it possible to not only take into consideration the situation at arrival but also how the situation of migrants change over time and might impact these decisions (Yanasmayan 2015, 23–24). Finally, Gomes, Leong, and Yang (2017, 7) argue that the definition of transient migrants which is typically associated with the temporary status of lower skilled temporary workers or refugees whose movements are "forced by circumstances" needs to be enlarged and should also include individuals who "voluntarily undertake circular and/or temporary migration for a variety of reasons". Thus, they define transient migrants as "individuals who criss-cross provincial, state and rural-urban borders in order to study, work, seek sanctuary, live differently, and be with family and loved ones" (Gomes, Leong, and Yang

2017, 7). Based on this definition, research on transient migrants does not explore migration processes and the experiences of migrants from a point "of permanence and settlement" which still prevails in much of the literature on migration, but, instead explores its temporary and ongoing nature including "arrival, departure and return, circulation, absence, presence, distance, time, space and their ruptures" as well as the experiences that transient migrants make during their mobility trajectories (Gomes, Leong, and Yang 2017, 8). Thus, while research is starting to pick up on the idea of conceptualizing migration as an ongoing process, overall, research on repeat migration, i.e. the "regular movement of individuals between their country of origin and multiple other destinations" (Van Mol 2017, 58) and onward migration intentions and processes (Steiner 2019) remains sparse thus far. One reason for this relative lack in research is that from a methodological perspective it is hard to construct research projects. For quantitative researchers, there are almost no datasets to draw on as transnational mobiles are often simply not captured in statistics (Vorheyer 2016, 62–63). For qualitative researchers, it would require them to collect data at multiple locations and possibly from a longitudinal perspective both of which are challenging due to limited funding possibilities and time restrictions on research projects. However, since migration is an ongoing process and the experiences of migrants change over time and in different phases of their migration trajectories, I argue that studies that apply these kinds of research designs are needed to obtain a more holistic understanding of migration experiences and decision-making processes. The next section further highlights the importance of understanding migration as an ongoing process that can be impacted by the experiences of migrants at places of origin, destinations and upon a possible return by exploring the hidden frictions and the social and emotional costs that are associated with these moves.

3.3 Hidden Frictions and Social and Emotional Costs of Migration

It is often assumed that the international mobility of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent individuals is relatively uncomplicated as they supposedly can move easily between different places not facing any major restrictions when passing borders or living/settling in other countries. Likewise, it is often assumed that their return to their countries of origins is easy too considering they are returning to places they are familiar with in terms of its language, culture, and values. Such a perception, however, ignores the hidden frictions and social and emotional costs that these migrants might face during their migration trajectories. Different studies focusing on the everyday life of transnational mobiles have increasingly contested the assumptions that their lives are free of frictions and that they can easily move from one place to another and adjust to life there without facing any challenges (Ley 2004; M. P. Smith 2005; Conradson and Latham 2005). As a result of this, some scholars advocate for the need to engage with the "still under-researched field of the emotional dimension of globalization", and, specifically, "with the idea that global mobility and subsequent attempts of cosmopolitan reembedding are also maelstroms of unfulfilled utopias, false expectations and slippery belongings" (Dürrschmidt 2016, 506). This section explores these hidden frictions and social and emotional costs that are associated with the migration processes of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent individuals both in their receiving societies as well as upon return to their countries of origin.

3.3.1 Challenges in Receiving Societies

Research on highly skilled and highly mobile migrants highlights that because of the mobile and voluntary character that is typically ascribed to these migrants they do not see themselves as migrants and/or differentiate themselves from other groups of migrants, e.g., those who are forced to leave their homes and have to cut ties permanently (Vysotskaya 2015, 110; Vorheyer 2016). Moreover, this research often assumes that these individuals do not face the same

integration challenges that other groups of migrants usually report (Ossman 2004; Favell 2008; Vorheyer 2016). This might be, as Ossman (2004) highlights, because they have acquired the tools and experiences needed to quickly settle into a place as a result of their multiple movements. While this might be true to a certain extent, other studies emphasize the fact that previous mobility does not necessarily result in an unproblematic adjustment upon arrival as these individuals still have to start over every time they move somewhere else, i.e. they have "to reconstruct virtually every aspect of their lives" which often requires an extensive amount of time, energy and motivation, (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 73; Selmer 2002; Richardson and Zikic 2007). Moreover, while research so far often focuses on the fluid and place detached character of those on the move, studies increasingly highlight the importance of space, practice and routines in the daily lives of these individuals (Jansson 2016b). Such a focus allows to take into consideration "the hidden frictions and social and emotional costs involved in privileged forms of mobility" which so far have been under researched (Jansson 2016b, 421). To take these hidden frictions and social and emotional costs into consideration, it is important to recognize that not all mobility trajectories of the so-called mobile elites, i.e. those who "hold the privilege to enter and exit foreign countries without taking any major risks", are successful and that it neither can be assumed that their experiences are all similar to each other (Jansson 2016b, 422). Much rather, their migration trajectories as well as the outcomes of their migration movements are heterogenous and diverse as their experiences are impacted by their own background and individual characteristics such as age, gender, class, ethnicity, religion etc. (Jansson 2016b; Yeoh and Huang 2000; Harvey and Beaverstock 2017). Likewise, van Riemsdijk and Wang (2017a, 3) argue that the different factors which impact not only the decision-making processes of migrants but also their lived experiences, i.e. individual characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, religion etc.), access to different types of capital (e.g., social, human, cultural, economic etc.), family status (e.g., spouses and children), but also more irrational factors such as "personal preferences", need to be taken into consideration. This is because the experiences

of migrants are divers and differ based on these individual characteristics. Thus, highly skilled migrants are not all "homogeneously 'privileged'" but may, for example, experience difficulties integrating in receiving societies (van Riemsdijk and Wang 2017a, 4). Therefore, "[m]ore research is needed to understand how these personal characteristics shape the experiences of skilled migrants and their migration outcomes," including their processes of integration and settlement (van Riemsdijk and Wang 2017a, 4). Specifically, when having to adjust to their new life abroad, highly skilled migrants often face several challenges in different spheres of their lives including the spheres of employment and work, housing, the social and emotional embedment in their places of destination, as well as family and visa regulations. These challenges are explored in further detail below.

3.3.1.1 Employment and Labor Market Barriers

Drawing on a number of different studies (Alarcón 1999; Iredale 2001; Khadria 2001; Mogalakwe 2008; van Riemsdijk 2013; Williams 2007), Harvey and Beaverstock (2017, 273) highlight that highly skilled migrants might "face labor market barriers" based on their gender, language skills, skin colour, ethnicity, class or the assumptions employers might have about the education systems of the countries highly skilled individuals obtained their education from (Harvey and Beaverstock 2017, 273). Specifically, in their study on highly skilled British migrants in Singapore, Vancouver, and Boston, they found that about 30% of the highly skilled British migrants in Vancouver they interviewed experienced difficulties entering the job market because their skills and education and, in some cases, their foreign work experiences were not recognized. This was particularly true so for engineers and lawyers who first had to go through a process of accreditation and acquire qualifications from Canada (Harvey and Beaverstock 2017, 281). Similar findings were made by Rashid et al. (2013, 198) who explored the experiences of highly educated women who immigrated to Canada and highlight that these women underwent "a cascade of losses" when they moved to Canada including among others,

the "non-recognition of foreign credentials" which made it difficult for them to participate in the working life and/or to continue their careers (Rashid et al. 2013, 195). This is also confirmed by Bélanger, Ouellet and Fleury (2019) who explored the experiences of skilled temporary foreign workers in Québec. In addition to this, they also found that especially for skilled migrants with a temporary status there is a risk of being dependent on their employers because those with a closed work permit are not allowed to switch employers. This results in these migrants tolerating precarious working conditions including, for example, long working hours and lower than average salaries. Moreover, research demonstrates that highly skilled migrants might face difficulties adjusting to their new working environments as a result of, for example, a lack of "support structures" in their working spaces (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 73). Other studies highlight that highly skilled migrants who initiate their moves abroad on their own, and, thus, cannot draw onto the support system of a company or other institutions, often face more challenges and risks when moving abroad than expatriates who are send abroad within the cooperate structures of a company or the military. These challenges include among others having to finance their move and stay abroad independently, having to find employment on their own as well as not having any guarantee for their long-term job security, which was also reflected in experiencing difficulties when negotiating the renewal of their contracts (Biemann and Andresen 2010; Carr, Inkson, and Thorn 2005; Inkson et al. 1997; Peltokorpi 2009; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Richardson and Mckenna 2002).

3.3.1.2 Housing

Research demonstrates that, highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants might face challenges with finding appropriate housing, especially if they lack the support of companies as they initiated their moves abroad on their own (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 73). Plöger (2017), for example, explores the housing practices of highly skilled migrants who originated from non-EU countries and moved to the city of Dortmund in Germany. His findings show that

highly skilled migrants often start by staying in temporary housing arrangements right after their arrival. This is seen as "a phase that needs to be overcome, merely constituting a stepping stone" and during which they try to find a permanent place of living that corresponds to their quality criteria and, in some cases, prepare for the arrival of other family members (Plöger 2017, 163). Over time they try to find permanent housing solutions which can proof difficult at times as many housing possibilities do not match their specific needs as temporary sojourners (e.g., finding furnished apartments), or because they encounter "explicit or implicit discrimination" from landlords and/or experience language difficulties in communicating with potential landlords which can lead to frustration and stress (Plöger 2017, 164).

3.3.1.3 Social and Cultural Integration in the Receiving Society

In addition to experiencing difficulties finding housing, several studies highlight the difficulties that highly skilled migrants might face when integrating into their receiving countries. Some studies, for example, explore the integration and acculturation outcomes of international students (Hotta and Ting-Toomey 2013; Tan and Liu 2014; Rienties et al. 2012; R. Smith and Khawaja 2011; Guo and Chase 2011; Calder et al. 2016; Hendrickson, Rosen, and Aune 2011; Ozer 2015). These studies highlight the difficulties that international students face in their receiving society, including among others, alienation, marginalization and discrimination, loneliness and difficulties making friends, adjusting to a new culture, language difficulties, finances and finding affordable housing. Moreover, these studies highlight the importance of the social embeddedness of international students for their social and academic integration and acculturation outcomes. They also emphasize that international students belonging to a visible minority group usually tend to fare worse in these regards as opposed to international students who share the physical characteristics of the majority population in a country. Other research explores the experiences of difference that highly skilled migrants might go through when moving to another country which requires them to adjust to new situations and acquire

intercultural competencies (Mulholland and Ryan 2014). Some of this research also highlights factors such as having to adjust to different eating habits, food products and weather conditions (Dietz 2011). Moreover, different studies emphasize that even those, who move to countries that are culturally and linguistically close to their home countries might face challenges in their attempts to "integrate into local communities" (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 73; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Hardwick and Tremblay 2013). As part of the challenges highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants faced with integrating into their new host societies was the difficulty of establishing social networks and forming close friendship ties, especially with locals (Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Ryan and Mulholland 2014; Rashid et al. 2013). These difficulties sometimes resulted in feelings of "[l]oneliness and isolation," (Rashid et al. 2013, 194) or the feeling of remaining an "outsider" (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 74). In some cases, the difficulty of making local friends resulted in the fact that individuals either decided to mainly socialize with co-nationals or with fellow transient migrants who are in the same situation (e.g., international students from other countries) (Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Gomes 2019; Dietz 2011). Other studies (Bélanger, Ouellet and Fleury 2019; Dietz 2011) suggest that a lack of language skills or not being able to understand the local accents can limit the possibilities that individuals have to interact with their local environment and to build social networks. This can then result in frustrations and feelings of non-belonging. Moreover, different understandings of friendship, caused by cultural differences between home and host country, can make it harder to establish close friendships with locals (Dietz 2011). Overall, being away from their friends and families and, thus, without a proper support network made their lives precarious to a certain extent (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 74).

3.3.1.4 Family Life

This leads to the next point, namely that moving abroad also affects the family life of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants. Studies show that it can be challenging for individuals who are working abroad and/or who have to move to different international locations on a regular basis as part of their working careers to combine their working and family lives (Jansson 2016a; Richardson and Zikic 2007). Fast and Lindell (2016) highlight the emotional and affective costs that are associated with such a lifestyle and frequently being away from ones family as well as having to balance the requirements put forward to them by both their family (e.g., as a partner and parent) and professional life. Moreover, there is a risk for conflicts within families or couples which might particularly arise if partners/spouses are also pursuing their own careers but are "unable to find suitable employment" in the receiving societies (Richardson and Zikic 2007, 175; Jansson 2016a). For some, the mobile lifestyle attached to their careers which results in frequent moves every couple of years also makes it difficult or impossible to stay in long-term relationships, form families or even just to form and maintain close social ties and friendships (Jansson 2016a). Other studies have explored the difficulties that internationally mobile families experience during their transient lifestyles, especially with regard to how these families help their children adjust to this challenges (Mclachlan 2007). For children, relocating to another country is often associated with "stress and emotional pain" and a loss of stability as they are ripped out of their social networks and the society they are used to, have to adjust to lifestyles and new environments including schools and their own homes etc. (Mclachlan 2007, 239). Seeing their children struggle often causes feelings of guilt in the parents and "fear that children may not live long enough in one place to develop emotional security" (Mclachlan 2007, 239).

3.3.1.5 Legal Status

Another difficulty highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants might face is the precariousness of their legal status in their receiving societies. At least for those with a temporary status, their visas are, for example, often dependent on having a valid employment contract and might be terminated if they loose their jobs or are unable to renew their contracts (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 74; Bélanger, Ouellet, and Fleury 2019). This results in the fact that they find themselves in a status of transience which only allows them to stay in a country for a specific amount of time ultimately requiring them to look for new opportunities in the near future and make decisions on where to move to next (Richardson and Zikic 2007). Moreover, just as for lower skilled migrants, highly skilled migrants who only hold a temporary status might face challenges in accessing social rights, such as "access to health insurance, financial services, education and the freedom in the labour market and [to move] in the country" (Bélanger, Ouellet, and Fleury 2019, 57). The impact of visa regulations and one's legal status is also highlighted by research on lifestyle migrants. It is assumed that these individuals, who are relatively affluent, have the possibility to more or less go wherever they want to go and are not restricted by outer circumstances. However, it is important to remember that even these individuals face structural barriers, e.g., visa and work-permit regulations, that frame their decision-making processes and limit the choices and options they have (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a, 17). Thorpe (2012, 326), for example, highlights that even for relatively affluent, middle-class snowboarding lifestyle migrants, "work and travel visas, travel and accommodation costs, employment opportunities and wages, languages and exchange rate" may impact and restrict their possibilities to be transnationally mobile. Moreover, Bélanger, Ouellet and Fleury (2019, 58) found that skilled migrants often faced difficulties in accessing information on how to renew their statuses and that for many this resulted in an "administrative fight" to deal with their status renewal. Finally, the fact that many countries are increasingly falling back on the use of two-step immigration (i.e., admitting highly skilled migrants first on

a temporary basis with the option of eventually transferring their status to a more permanent one) even for highly skilled migrants is seen critically by many scholars. This is because it can result in worker exploitation (e.g., accepting low salaries, long working hours or precarious working conditions) and dependency on one's employer (Lowell and Avato 2014; Bélanger, Ouellet, and Fleury 2019; González 2020; Crossman, Hou, and Picot 2020; Gates-Gasse 2010).

3.3.1.6 Challenges as Part of the Adventure of Living Abroad?

Finally, it is interesting to mention that while highly skilled and/or privileged migrants might face several challenges when moving abroad and living in their receiving societies some studies emphasized that in the accounts of the migrants themselves, these challenges are often portrayed in a positive light. As such, they are seen as being a part of the adventure of living abroad, or, in other words, the challenges are seen as a side-effect that one needs to indulge in order to be able to go on this adventure (Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Richardson and Zikic 2007).

3.3.2 Challenges upon Return to the Country of Origin

Like the assumption that highly skilled and/or privileged migrants do not face any major difficulties when they move abroad, it is also often assumed that returning to their home countries should be a relatively frictionless process as they return to an environment that they are familiar with. As a result of this, there are only relatively few studies that look at the return experiences of these individuals. Different studies exploring the reintegration processes of highly skilled returnees found that their experiences vary significantly with some experiencing no problems at all, while others face major challenges (Morano-Foadi 2005; Scheibelhofer 2005; Sussman 2007). Some of the challenges experienced by individuals upon their return to their home countries relate to organizational aspects, their employment and bureaucratic reintegration, experiencing cultural chocks as well as their social and emotional embeddedness.

3.3.2.1 Re-Integrating into the Labour Market

Several studies highlight the difficulties of finding adequate jobs and being able to use their acquired skills from abroad that many highly skilled migrants face when re-integrating into the job market upon their return from abroad (Chen 2017; A. White 2014b). Konzett-Smoliner (2016) highlights the importance of being prepared for the return home to succeed with the economic reintegration. She found that highly skilled Austrians who had maintained professional contacts during their time abroad, were well prepared and already had a job lined up for them upon return did not face any challenges, while others who were not as well prepared were struggling in finding adequate jobs that matched their foreign qualifications upon return to Austria. Often those individuals who were struggling in finding employment decided to accept jobs that did not match their criteria and did not offer the level of security and payment they were hoping for, simply to be able to financially supply their families (Konzett-Smoliner 2016, 1106). Moreover, the success or lack thereof, of partners to find employment and integrate into the labour market impacted the family situation and their reintegration processes. When both partners were able to secure jobs they were able to focus "more on their own and their family member's social and cultural reintegration", whereas if partners were not able to find jobs (that matched their qualifications and work experience), e.g. due to difficulties of getting their foreign credentials recognized, this caused stress and dissatisfaction (Konzett-Smoliner 2016, 1107). In the latter situations, interviewees "either decided to physically separate" so that one partner stayed in Austria, while the other moved elsewhere to work there and only came for visits e.g. during the weekends or holidays, "or to renegotiate family roles and change the division of family labour" so that the unemployed person took care of the household and family while the other person was earning their livelihood (Konzett-Smoliner 2016, 1107–8). Both of these scenarios resulted in frustration as well as emotional and physical exhaustion (Konzett-Smoliner 2016, 1108).

3.3.2.2 Bureaucratic Re-Integration and Organizational Distress

In addition to the challenges faced by highly skilled returnees with regard to their economic reintegration, returnees might also experience difficulties with reintegrating into their country of origins from an organizational or bureaucratic position (e.g., with regard to pension, health care or other social securities) which can hinder their social integration as they experience a "devaluation of the[ir] global life experience" which in turn "leads to contempt and resentment rather than integration" (Dürrschmidt 2016, 501). Moreover, Konzett-Smoliner (2016) who explores the return experiences of highly skilled Austrian migrants and their families found that while most interviewees interpreted their return as successful they nevertheless experienced distress upon their return which was caused by "(1) organizational distress in re-building their family lives" which meant that they themselves didn't have a lot of time in the beginning to settle back in and, for example, to rebuild their social network, "and (2) dealing with different feelings within the family about the return", e.g. having to navigate negative experiences or feelings of their partners or children who were either homesick, missed their friends or experienced discrimination (Konzett-Smoliner 2016, 1103). However, in some cases, the opposite could also be the case, i.e. while the interviewee was struggling to readjust to the new situation, their partners were able to help them through this time by having a positive attitude (Konzett-Smoliner 2016, 1105).

3.3.2.3 Social Re-Integration and Reversed Cultural Chock

This devaluation of their international experience might also be experienced by returnees in more informal settings where relatives, friends, neighbors or colleagues only show little interest in their experiences abroad and/or cannot relate to these or the new worldviews and values returnees picked up during their time abroad (Dürrschmidt 2016; Dietz 2011). This can result in conflicts with family members or friends (Dietz 2011) and might require returnees to "distance" themselves "from a few layers of identity" that they obtained abroad in order to fit

back in at home (Dürrschmidt 2016, 504). Konzett-Smoliner (2016) reiterates these findings by highlighting that the social reintegration of highly skilled Austrian returnees was more difficult than most of them had expected and often resulted in feelings of alienation and non-belonging. She also found that social reintegration was often facilitated when the interviewees had small children who were easily able to adjust to the new situation, while older children made this process more complicated (Konzett-Smoliner 2016, 1105). Finally, the nationality of the interviewee's partner also impacted social reintegration in that partners who were also Austrian often already had some contacts as well making it easier to rebuild a social network, whereas non-Austrian partners did not possess such contacts and had more troubles establishing new contacts because they often lacked knowledge of the German language (Konzett-Smoliner 2016, 1106). The importance of the social and emotional embeddedness is also highlighted by other studies which emphasize that returnees might go through a phase of reversed cultural shock upon their return as they face difficulties in re-establishing their existing or forming new social networks, in some cases face loneliness or experience a lack of understanding from their peers for the experiences they have made abroad as well as new values, work ethics and ways of thinking that they have taken up during their time abroad all of which makes it difficult for them to re-adjust to life back home (Tharenou and Seet 2014; Andreason and Kinneer 2005; Morano-Foadi 2005; Barrett and Mosca 2013; A. Butcher 2004).

3.3.2.4 Re-Integration Difficulties and Re-Migration Intentions

Thus, in contrast to what is often assumed – i.e. that return to ones country of origin will be easy because one is familiar with the culture, language, values and geographies of this country – return migration often actually is unsettling and results in involuntary marginalization because these individuals "have missed out on the crucial process of an onrolling local everyday life" (Dürrschmidt 2016, 495). Thus, the desire "or search for a singular home and stabled identity" which sometimes is the reason for returning to one's country of origin (Ralph and Staeheli 2011,

522) can rarely be fulfilled, as individuals often realise upon their return that not only have they changed but also the place that they are returning to has changed and that the images and memories that they had from this place do not hold true any longer (Constable 1999; Ní Laoire 2008a; 2008b). This realization as well as the difficulties that some returnees face can often lead to a feeling of non-belonging and the decision or wish to re-migrate (Abdelhady 2008; Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Tsuda 2003; A. White 2014b; Ralph 2009). Moreover, the decision of whether to stay in their countries of origin, return to their previous country of residence or move elsewhere might also be assessed by evaluating the overall well-being of one's family (e.g. do partners or children face difficulties in finding a job, establishing a social network, or experience discrimination) and whether or not remigration goals were met (Konzett-Smoliner 2016). However, in some cases the non-fulfillment of certain remigration goals can be outbalanced by achieving others and the fact that adjusting to the one's new life and circumstances in the country of origin upon return got easier the longer individuals stay there with distress being "highest in the first months and for up to two years" while it decreases afterwards (Konzett-Smoliner 2016, 1108). Overall, it is thus important to remember that for highly skilled returnees the process of re-embedding their lives and establishing ties and feelings of home and belonging after their return can only be achieved over time and often takes several years, if it is ever fully completed (Dürrschmidt 2016). Therefore, Dürrschmidt (2016, 506) argues that "reembedding is an ongoing project" that brings together "three dimensions" namely, the need "to re-establish recurrent relationships within the social milieu left behind", "the need to reintegrate into the institutional cluster that provides the matrix of nation state belonging", and, "the need to reassemble all of this into the narrative of a seamless biography". This further underlines the importance of seeing migration and integration as ongoing processes that change and develop over time as highlighted in section 3.2. Moreover, the findings of this section on the hidden frictions and social and emotional costs that are involved in the migration processes of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants demonstrates the importance

of the social and emotional embeddedness of these migrants at their local places of residence in their destination countries as well as in their countries of origin upon return. Thus, it seems as if place and specifically local places remain important in the migration trajectories of these migrants. The next section examines the role of place and place attachment for this group of migrants in more detail.

3.4 Place and Place Attachments

Research often assumes that highly skilled and/or privileged migrants are detached from place and that, as a result of increased processes of globalization, they can simply float between different places without forming any major ties to these places. Meier (2015a, 5), for example, highlights that research on migrant professionals which he defines as "those whose formal high skill is accepted and that allows them to hold a relatively high status with an attractive social position in the host country", has so far mainly focused on their transnational lifestyles and their embeddedness in transnational networks which results in the fact that they are "often conceptualized as a placeless elite" (Meier 2015a, 1). However, as highlighted in the above section on the hidden frictions and the social and emotional costs that are involved in such movements, highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants are also experiencing challenges in the places they move/return to and where they settle. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the places where people live, work, socialize etc. (irrespective of whether these people are highly skilled or low skilled, belong to the middle/upper class or the working class etc.) still impact the experiences they will make and, thus, impact their perception, identification and relations in and to these places (Mulholland and Ryan 2017, 137). Moreover, because highly skilled migrants do not form a homogenous group but are very diverse in terms of their "economic resources and social identities such as gender, ethnicity, sexuality or class" the experiences they make in different localities may differ significantly based on their own individual situation and characteristics (Meier 2015a, 6). Thus, Meier (2015a) claims that more

research is needed which, on the one hand, explores the different characteristics of migrant professionals as well as their social positions, and, on the other hand, focuses on their local lives and the experiences they make in specific localities. For example, "local politics and economic regulations have an impact on social and spatial structures of […] cities" (Meier 2015a, 8). As migrant professionals live in these cities, they are confronted with these politics and regulations which in turn impact their social identities, outlooks and values (Meier 2015a). Likewise, Van Riemsdijk and Quingfang (2017a, 2) emphasize that the lived experiences of highly skilled migrants and specifically their "place-based behaviours" have so far mainly been ignored in the research literature. Therefore, they argue that in order to obtain a better "understanding [of] the relationship between place, space, and international migration" the reasons and factors impacting migrants at different stages of the migration trajectories, i.e. "from the decision-making stage to settlement and possible onward or return migration" need to be explored and described in more detail (van Riemsdijk and Wang 2017a, 3). In what follows, I first explore research which highlights the importance of place for highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants. I then examine the literature around home, homemaking and belonging for these individuals.

3.4.1 The Importance of (Local) Places for People on the Move

So far, research on mobile professionals has mainly focused on their international working conditions, experiences and networks (Beaverstock 2005). However, relatively little research has been published on the lived experiences of these individuals (Nowicka 2007). These lived experiences often take place in the local places where they are living. Consequently, factors such as place, place attachment, home and belonging remain important even for these individuals. Several studies highlight this importance of place specifically by underlining that the everyday life of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants to a large extent still takes place and is experienced in local places (Meier 2015a; K. Walsh 2006; Fast and Lindell

2016; Plöger 2017). As such, localities remain important for their "everyday practices, encounters and for [their] identities" (Meier 2015a, 1). Specifically, "[p]ractices of belonging are [usually] enacted and therefore become evident, at a very localized scale" (K. Walsh 2006, 124). In fact, it is often easier to participate "in the host society […] on the local than on the national level" which means that migrants often identify with their local places of living "rather than with their host country" as such (Dietz 2011, 82). This does not mean that migrants cannot form identities or feelings of belonging that surpass their local places of living and, in fact, connect them to other places around the world. Yanasmayan (2015, 34), for example, highlights that the "continuous notion of mobility does not instinctively imply a lack of place attachments" for the highly educated Turkish migrants which she studies. Rather, the participants in her study demonstrate that they create feelings of home and belonging to various places (Yanasmayan 2015). What it does however mean is that their negotiations of these identities as well as most of their everyday lives still take place in the local environments of the places where they live and work. This is even true for other types of mobile individuals such as students and working holiday makers as well as other groups of backpackers who are often seen as simply passing through places. These individuals often combine being on the road with instances of staying at one particular spot and "for some periods of time at least adopt the regular routines of other more permanent locals and residents" (Allon, Anderson, and Bushell 2008, 78). Similar findings were made for so-called global nomads who are increasingly living a live that is independent of location, i.e. without a fixed place of living, employment that is not tied to one specific place and social networks that are not localized in one specific place (Kannisto 2017). While global nomads live a mobile life on the road without one fixed place of living, this does not mean that their lives are completely detached from places and locations as they do dwell in places temporarily and sometimes even for longer periods of times (Kannisto 2017). Thus, as Germann Molz (2008, 326) highlights by drawing on a number of ethnographic studies (Ahmed 2000; Brah 1996; Castles and Davidson 2000; Duval 2004; Hage 1997; Rapport and Dawson

1998b; P. White and White 2005) "home remains materially and emotionally significant, even (perhaps *especially*) to people on the move".

The fact that place matters in the experiences of highly skilled individuals is also highlighted by a study on highly skilled British migrants in three different locations, i.e. Singapore, Vancouver and Boston (Harvey and Beaverstock 2017). This study demonstrates that highly skilled British migrants in Singapore were much more likely to build social networks around expatriate communities while those in Vancouver and Boston were more or less avoiding any contact to other British migrants and tried to integrate as much as possible into their respective receiving societies (Harvey and Beaverstock 2017). The authors explain these differences based on the linguistic and cultural differences of the three places and conclude that the cultural and linguistic closeness of a place impacts the ways in which highly skilled individuals participate in social networks, i.e. the closer the place where highly skilled migrants are moving to is culturally and linguistically from their home country the less likely they are to participate in so-called expatriate enclaves and social networks (Harvey and Beaverstock 2017). Thus, although the composition of the group under study, i.e., highly skilled British migrants, was the same in all three locations, their experiences differed nonetheless based on the places they moved to. Place also becomes important when it comes to the choice of housing of highly skilled migrants (Meier 2015b). Often highly skilled individuals, especially if they are part of an inter-company transfer, move into temporary housing at the beginning of their stays and only over time decide on a permanent place of residence (Meier 2015b). These choices of the areas and the type of housing they want to move into in a city are carefully made and impacted by factors such as, the "[p]ersonal ideas of the places, information from social networks and [most importantly] the direct experiences on location" (Meier 2015b, 59). Moreover, their choices were also impacted by their "family situation" with individuals making different choices depending on whether they were alone or whether their spouses and/or children accompanied them (Meier 2015b, 66). This ultimately means that even highly skilled migrants who are often

seen as belonging to a "seemingly placeless transnational elite" are "grounded" in their "everyday practices" and experiences and, moreover that their "social identities", e.g., class, gender, age etc., do matter as they impact these experiences in a significant way (Meier 2015b, 60). Likewise, in his study on the housing practices of highly skilled migrants who originated from non-EU countries and moved to the city of Dortmund in Germany, Plöger (2017) highlights the importance of housing for feeling at home at a place. On the one hand, housing allows for the formation of social ties (e.g., with neighbours or by inviting people over), and, on the other hand, it also represents the place where actually much of the lived experiences of migrants as well as their home-making practices take place (Plöger 2017, 159). Moreover, he found that only once adequate housing was found and they had settled into their day-to-day activities and new routines, the interviewees started to feel as if they had fully arrived at their place of destination and were able to start efforts of incorporating into the local places where they were living (Plöger 2017). From these findings, we can conclude that housing does play an important role in the mobile lives of migrants and is important for understanding their lived experiences in places of destinations as well as their feelings of belonging to these.

In addition to this, different studies have also shown the importance of place-attachment and belonging which usually results from everyday experiences and practices, to justify ones choice of migrating with regard to the place one moved to and/or negotiating future movement options (Haartsen and Stockdale 2018; Leung 2008; Mulholland and Ryan 2017; Dietz 2011). In their study on highly skilled French migrants in London, Mulholland and Ryan (2017) specifically highlight that practices of contrasting places or using "comparative epistemologies" impacted peoples experiences and perceptions of their lives in London (Mulholland and Ryan 2017, 143). For example, many of their interviewees emphasized that London was a lot more open and friendly, that people were more law abiding, that it offered a high variety of affordable cultural events, that they perceived London as a safe and secure place which represented (personal) freedom, specifically for women, or that it was perceived as a particularly green

space which made life there a lot better as compared to, e.g., Paris (Mulholland and Ryan 2017). These practices of contrasting resulted in the construction of "moral geographies" which in turn were used to form "a sense of their place of settlement" demonstrating that London was perceived as the place that offered the qualities they were looking for and were also used to justify their choices of living there (Mulholland and Ryan 2017, 150). Other studies demonstrate among others that strong ties to a place are usually associated with a higher likelihood of staying there (Haartsen and Stockdale 2018; Leung 2008). Thus, place remains important even for the mobility processes of highly skilled and mobile individuals. Therefore, it is also important to explore not only their everyday lives in these locations but also how these individuals form place attachments and negotiate the notions and feelings of home and belonging during their migration trajectories, or, to put it in the words of Mulholland and Ryan (2017, 136) researchers should pay "attention to the place-centric dimensions of the mobility, dwelling, and settlement practices of" these individuals.

3.4.2 Home and Belonging – Home-Making Practices

The concept of home can be understood in different ways. From a traditional and more static viewpoint, home is usually seen as the physical place where one is living and gaining shelter (Douglas 1991). Thus, home is understood as "a fixed, bounded and discreet place" that ties individuals to a specific place (Ralph and Staeheli 2011, 518). Beyond this, the term is often related to ideas such as "'family', 'community' or 'homeland/nation'" (Al-Ali and Koser 2002, 6). Therefore, it represents the place to which one belongs and where one finds "security, safety, comfortability, [and] familiarity" (Duyvendak 2011, 27). Home and belonging are thus often used together, as belonging – the "emotional attachment" of individuals to something or someone (Yuval-Davis 2006, 197; Guibernau 2013) – is often related to a feeling of being at home. For example, the group one belongs to "offers a 'home', a familiar space – physical, virtual or imagined – where individuals share common interests, values and principles"

(Guibernau 2013, 28). As such, it creates an environment in which individuals obtain meaning, are valued and are perceived as important (Guibernau 2013). In recent years, this relatively stable conception of home has been undermined by globalization and increased international movements (Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Brettell 2006). The possibilities to maintain transnational ties and participate in transnational networks and activities increases the feeling of multiple identities, e.g. different identities while visiting family and friends at home and while traveling (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015). It is thus recognized that migrants can maintain close ties and feelings of belonging to more than one place and that home could be the place of birth, or of current residence (Brah 1996; Basch, Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). This has also brought into play understandings of home as "an idea, a feeling (of being at home), or the practice of home-making" (Plöger 2017, 156), as well as the "momentary" character of home which is not fixed but changes over time (Dietz 2011, 95). Such a mobile understanding of home could generate the idea that for migrants, home is completely dissociated from places and locations. This is not true though, as migrants might simply feel at home at several locations or employ home-making practices in different localities while being on the move. Thus, rather than seeing home as one or the other, it is important to conceptualize home as both static and mobile. One way of achieving this is seeing home as an "emplacement of practices and objects that are attached, yet mobile" (Ralph and Staeheli 2011, 519). It follows, that "[t]he construction of home is […] not necessarily tied to a fixed location, but emerges out of the regular, localising reiteration of social processes and sets of relationships with both humans and non-humans (Jacobs and Smith 2008; D. Miller 1998; 2001). Home is thus located, but not limited to a particular locale; it is sedentary and mobile" (Ralph and Staeheli 2011, 519–20). Nowicka (2007) argues in a similar way. While she highlights that home is often seen as a static place that is fixed in one location (Rapport and Dawson 1998a; Agnew 2005b), she argues that home needs to be examined as a mobile conception that is embedded in networks (Nowicka 2007). Likewise, Walsh (2011, 516) highlights that the different meanings of home (i.e. as a "site

where everyday life is lived" versus "a space of belonging") are not exclusionary of each other but can exist next to and impact one another. These notions of home are shaped in a continuous process that involve "practices of home-making" (K. Walsh 2011, 516).

Home-making practices can generally be defined as the "affective, embodied response to an assessment of a place as 'like home/not like home'" (M. Butcher 2010, 33). They have the function of generating feelings of "[s]imilarity and familiarity" (Nowicka 2007, 80), "security, comfort, and continuity" (Germann Molz 2008, 329) as well as "cultural fit" which, in a way help to "re-place home" in an unfamiliar environment (i.e. the host society) that challenges migrants' identity and sense of belonging (M. Butcher 2010, 33). Thus, they are important because a house or a (temporary) place of living does not automatically represent a home. While a house or a (temporary) place of living offers shelter, it "only becomes a home as meanings and feelings – in other words, a certain symbolic value – become attached to it" (Duyvendak 2011, 37). Overall, home-making practices can take a variety of different forms and include, for example, "[s]ocial and material practices, memory and imagination" (M. Butcher 2010, 33) as well as "various embodied practices, rituals, and material objects" (Germann Molz 2008, 329). Often, home-making practices are shaped through the interaction with others which creates an emotional connection to places and other "'entities'" such as communities or groups (Plöger 2017, 156). Nowicka (2007) and Dietz (2011), for example highlight the importance of being at the same place as one's close family (i.e. partner/spouses and children) and establishing social networks (e.g. connecting with people who have the same interests as oneself and doing familiar activities together) at the places where one is living. For example, being in a relationship with a 'local' can help facilitate "integration into the host society" and, thus, contribute to a stronger sense of belonging and feeling at home at the place of destination (Dietz 2011, 129). Likewise, other studies stress the importance of establishing social networks as well as the importance of being able to stay connected with family and friends with the help of the internet, which gives them stability and continuity while being on

the move (Germann Molz 2008; M. Butcher 2010; Gomes 2019; Dietz 2011). Holding on to respectively carrying around certain personal belongings and objects (e.g. pictures, paintings, pieces of furniture or other objects of emotional value) while living in other places can also help with creating a feeling of familiarity and comfort as well as (re)creating the feeling of being at home (Nowicka 2007; Germann Molz 2008; K. Walsh 2006; 2011; Dietz 2011). Walsh (2011) also found that placing such objects and furniture in the exact same way as individuals have done in their previous places of residence helped them in their home-making efforts. Furthermore, Dietz (2011) highlights the importance that food can play for migrants' sense of belonging. Being able to find certain food products and cooking traditional meals from one's home country can help with feelings of homesickness and allow individuals to establish a sense of home even while being far away from one's country of origin. Likewise, performing daily routines and everyday practices that can be performed irrespective of the place where one is are also identified as home-making practices for those who live abroad or are on the move (S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015). These routines can include daily rituals from back home as well as establishing new (short-term) routines in the places of destinations and can vary from working routines, reading the news from one's home country, visiting restaurants that prepare traditional foods, work out routines or sports, practicing one's religion, to practicing certain shores and domestic tasks such as gardening and watering the plants (Germann Molz 2008; Nowicka 2007; M. Butcher 2010; K. Walsh 2011; Gomes 2019). Such routines and practices can provide "a fundamental anchor" for the everyday lives of individuals who (temporarily) live abroad (Gomes 2019). Finally, Nowicka (2007) and Dietz (2011) underline the importance of familiarity or feeling familiar with the place where one is living. This familiarity can be created by infrastructure (e.g., having access to the same facilities and amenities that one is used to, including among others, restaurants and cafés, sports grounds or parks) as well as by being familiar with "culture and with social contacts" in one's place of living (Dietz 2011, 97).

These home-making practices, which could also be interpreted as “small, localized acts of habitability” which are not necessarily tied to one specific place but rather can be accessed anywhere in the world allow individuals to feel at home pretty much anywhere in the world (Germann Molz 2008, 337; Nowicka 2007). This, however, does not mean that these home-making practices are completely detached from places. In fact, social relations and objects are experienced or kept in very concrete localities, e.g. neighbourhoods or cities, however, these localities represent “spatial extensions” or “focal points” of networks only which are moveable and, thus, can be found in other places too (Nowicka 2007, 82–83; S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015). Homemaking practices thus allow to be “dwelling within, and in spite of, mobility” (K. Walsh 2006, 138). Material objects and routines or practices allow to make connections between past and current homes and in this way connect the transnational with the local (K. Walsh 2006). As such, home becomes an entity that is performed and reflected in objects, “regular patterns and social connections” rather than solely a concrete entity tied to a particular location (Germann Molz 2008, 330; Nowicka 2007; M. Butcher 2010). This has resulted in an understanding of home that is no longer solely seen as a physical place, but also as a symbolic space in which meaning is created (Al-Ali and Koser 2002). As such, home often has a personal connotation and is created in “dynamic processes, involving the acts of imagining, creating, unmaking, changing, losing and moving ‘homes’” (Al-Ali & Koser 2002: 6). Moreover, it “brings together memory and longing, the ideational, the affective and the physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global, the positively evaluated and the negatively” (Rapport & Dawson 1998: 8).

Finally, in all this, it is important to remember that the ways in which home is experienced and seen also depend on power relations and the role a person, in this case a migrant, holds in society (Germann Molz 2008). Thus, different types of migrants (e.g., refugees versus mobile professionals) might experience and define home in different ways and this experience might also be impacted by their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, physical

abilities, social class/socioeconomic status, the political, social or economic situation in both places of departure and destination, as well as the reasons and motivations that caused the move among others (Ralph and Staeheli 2011, 520; K. Walsh 2011; M. Butcher 2010; Germann Molz 2008). As such, experiences of home and belonging might not only differ from person to person but also the ways in which home are defined might change, for example, over time (i.e. the longer an individual lives in the host society, the more they identify with this place) or based on the context they find themselves in (i.e. struggling to relate to certain processes or social norms during return visits to their countries of origin) (M. Butcher 2010). Moreover, they are impacted by experiences of inclusion and exclusion which individuals experience in their interactions with members of the society they live in (Ralph and Staeheli 2011). These experiences in turn depend on how the majority population or those who hold power define who belongs and who does not (Yuval-Davis 2006; Valentine, Sporton, and Nielsen 2009). For example, immigrants are often identified as being different, as outsiders and, thus, as not belonging, or at least not belonging fully (Ehrkamp 2006; Noble 2013). As such, Noble (2013) argues that even if immigrants can leave the status of being perceived as an immigrant behind them and over time become a member of their host society, they often cannot become "a citizen who experiences their [the majority populations'] belonging unconditionally" (Noble 2013, 351). Thus, even if immigrants feel that they belong to their new host society, they often remain "inside outsiders" who, because of the way they are seen by the majority society can never become quite equal to individuals of the majority population (Noble 2013). Therefore, belonging is not only produced through processes of "self-identification" but also through processes of other-identification (Yuval-Davis 2006, 199; Guibernau 2013). Like home, belonging is not a stable category, meaning that group-memberships, as well as feelings of attachment can change over time depending on different individual and social circumstances. Thus, belonging, just as home, is shaped in dynamic processes, it is always fluid and open to

change (Calhoun 2003; Yuval-Davis 2006; 2011; Oliver 2011) To summarize in the words of Ralph and Staeheli (2011, 525):

> If we conceptualise home as being constructed through the interactions of relationships and networks that are extensible, that are both place dependent and interconnected with other places, other homes, it follows that identities and feelings of belonging are also likely to be both place dependent, even as not constrained by a specific place or a specific scale. The syntax of belonging, therefore, is structured by relationships and practices in a variety of locations, be they local, national, cosmopolitan or, more likely, a combination of all of those locations, as migrants move through their daily lives. The analytical task in any given case is to understand how they are combined and interact to construct homes and to understand how these homes are interpreted, understood and given meaning by migrants.

3.5 Migration and the Life Course

The previous four sections have highlighted that migration cannot be explained by solely focusing on economic factors but that other, more emotional, affective and relational factors also need to be considered (section 3.1); that migration is an ongoing process that spans throughout individual's life courses (section 3.2); that even for highly skilled and/or privileged migrants there are hidden frictions and social and emotional costs attached to their movements (section 3.3); and that these individuals are not completely detached from place as their everyday life and practices are still very much grounded in local environments to which they develop feelings of home and belonging (section 3.4). All four of these sections have demonstrated how migration decisions and experiences are impacted by the individual characteristics of migrants (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, social class, family status etc.) as well as outer circumstances and how these decisions and experiences can transform and evolve over time with changes to these outer circumstances or the position in life one finds oneself in. This brings the question of migration and the life course into play which is examined in more detail below.

3.5.1 The Interconnection of Migration and the Life Course

Several studies highlight the importance of considering the life course in the decision-making processes as well as the lived experiences of migrants. Although not directly related to international migration, different studies on residential mobility have, for example, highlighted how the life stages in which individuals find themselves significantly impact their mobility decisions (Coulter, Ham, and Findlay 2016; Mulder 2013; Cook and Cuervo 2020). Kley's (2011) research on the migration intentions and behaviors (to move beyond the city boundaries) of inhabitants of two German cities (Magedburg and Freiburg) that was collected through telephone surveys, for example, confirms the impact that the different phases of the life course in which individuals find themselves in impact which factors are important for them in considering, planning and actually moving. As such, the instrumental goals for her participants change over the course of their lives, for example, for young adults "opportunities for pursing own interests are more important", whereas for individuals who have families "the opportunities for family life are most important" (Kley 2011, 483). Thus, while perceived career opportunities were important factors triggering "considering and planning to leave" it was only a determining factor to actually put this plan into action for those who were in their young adulthood and did not have any children (Kley 2011, 483). Applying a biographic or life course approach allows to explore these changes as it allows to study mobility not just at a single point in life but over individuals' life courses and, in addition to that, it does also allow to take into consideration non-economic factors that impact these decisions, and, thus offers the possibility to obtain a more accurate picture of these processes (Cook and Cuervo 2020). Applying a life course perspective when studying mobility thus allows to take into consideration both material and non-material (i.e., relational and affective) factors and how these factors as such, as well as the evaluation of these factors change over time. While certain factors might be more important for young adults, the importance of these factors might decrease over time and other factors might become more dominant (Cook and Cuervo 2020). This highlights the importance of

"interdependent lives" for the study of mobility and migration which represents one of the five principles of life course research as established by Elder (1994, 6). This idea of the interdependence of lives as well as the interplay between material and non-material factors impacting migration decisions and experiences is also highlighted by other studies that focus on international movements.

In regard to the former – i.e., the idea of interdependent lives – research has, for example, shown that the mobility decisions of international students (i.e., to leave, stay, return or move elsewhere) are impacted by a variety of different factors to which individuals assign different levels of importance and that might change depending on the context or the life stage individuals find themselves in (H. Alberts 2017; Findlay et al. 2012; Lu, Zong, and Schissel 2009; Mosneaga and Winther 2013). Likewise, Chacko (2017) found that the return decisions of highly skilled Indians were also impacted by considerations linked to their life-course. As such, for example, being at "an early stage of the family life cycle" was considered to be a good time for return as it was thought that this would make it easier for their children to readjust to the culture and way of life in their home countries and to build strong emotional connections to it (Chacko 2017, 222). Alternatively, others decided to move later during their lives, e.g., when they had achieved a certain level of expertise and made a name for themselves in their fields and thought they could no longer advance their careers in the countries that they were residing in but also their children had reached an age where they were moving away from home, which gave parents more flexibility again (Chacko 2017, 224). Vorheyer (2016) also emphasizes the importance of analyzing the interdependence of lives of migrants and mobile individuals. Conducting narrative interviews with transnational mobiles, i.e. individuals who continue to be mobile throughout their lives and have lived in several countries, she finds that individuals who grow up in transnational family structures, are socialized in a transcultural environment and are exposed to mobility early on in their lives are more likely to become mobile themselves later on in their lives (Vorheyer 2016, 76). Moreover, individuals who have been transnationally

mobile are more likely to move again in the future irrespective of their initial reasons for moving (Vorheyer 2016, 76). These studies highlight that future mobility decisions might be impacted by previous experiences of mobility which can only be explored when looking at it from a life course perspective. In this regard, it is also important to highlight that international mobility does not only provide individuals with habitus but also that belonging to a certain social class or experiencing the "habitual reproduction of mobility predispositions" makes it more likely to being internationally mobile (Cairns, Growiec, and Smyth 2013, 559; King et al. 2011; Findlay et al. 2012).

In regard to the latter – i.e., the interplay between material and non-material factors impacting migration decisions and experience – research on lifestyle migration among others has underlined that the subjectivities of lifestyle migrants are usually "formed in and through the interplay of structure and agency" which means that these migration processes are usually the result of "various contingencies – biographies, individual agency, historical and material conditions, internal and external constraints, as well as culturally significant imaginings" (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a, 9). Applying a life course approach, allows to grasp these different dimensions and contingencies. Likewise, in a study on highly skilled Singaporean migrants in London, Ho (2011, 117) suggests that in order to gain a better understanding of the migration decisions and experiences of this group, a trajectory perspective should be applied which considers both "policy developments and personal events" during the phases of emigration and immigration. This is because these movements are often self-initiated, or the accidental result of one's personal trajectories (Ho 2011; Scheibelhofer 2009). For instance, individuals who initiated their migration on their own with the goal of future career advancement, might experience difficulties in integrating into the job market, which might eventually lead to them returning to their home country or changing their migration aspirations, whereas other individuals who had initially only planned to stay abroad for a certain amount of time, might change their mind, and extend their stay due to new life circumstances they are

facing, e.g., having a foreign partner (Ho 2011). In other cases again, the migration laws in the sending or receiving country might change, encouraging individuals to change their status and either prolong their stay and making it more permanent, moving elsewhere or returning back home (Ho 2011; Chacko 2017). Analyzing among others the reasons motivating Chinese academics to return from abroad, Chen (2017, 62) highlights that while the outer context forms "the framework within which return takes place", it is important to consider that these "political economic conditions" are not the only ones impacting return decisions but that they are also majorly shaped by the personal situations of individuals including their "age, career stage, discipline, gender, and family conditions". In order to grasp this personal and individual component and it's interplay with outer circumstances, Chen (2017, 62) and other scholars such as King (2002), highlight the importance of placing and examining these movements in the "wider life-course of" these individuals.

3.5.2 Applying a Life Course Perspective to Studying Migration

Based on the above observations of the interconnectedness of migration and the life course, several authors argue that in order to obtain a better understanding not only of the decision-making processes lying behind migration movements but also of the experiences that migrants make during their migration trajectories applying a biographical approach or life course analysis is essential. Halfacree (2004), for example, criticizes the focus on economic factors in research explaining migration and portraying migrants either as rational actors or as victims of market forces. He advertises that research should understand migration as a cultural event, an ongoing process for which admittedly economic factors are important, but other, non-economic factors are equally important (Halfacree 2004). He argues that applying a biographical approach to study migration allows exactly this, namely a) to explore migration as a process and also b) to understand the connectedness between economic and non-economic factors (Halfacree 2004). Thus, while economic factors might very well be of importance, it is important to contextualize

and explain these economic factors (Halfacree 2004, 242). Rather than seeing economic and non-economic factors as a dualism they need to be seen from "a relational or contextual" perspective which can then be used to understand migration in a better way (Halfacree 2004, 244). Likewise, others stress that as the reasons lying behind the movements of highly skilled migrants are not, or at least not primarily caused by political or economic reasons, but are rather determined on a more individual and personal level, employing a biographic or life course approach seems particularly pertinent as it allows to understand them as a means of "self-realization" in which self-realization can be interpreted in different ways, depending on the situation of each individual, e.g. in terms of job or career advancement, or in relation to family/relationship ideas (Scheibelhofer 2009). In addition to capturing the interplay between economic and non-economic factors, applying a biographic or life course approach also allows to capture the different phases and stations of migration that transnational mobiles undergo as well as the experiences they make during these phases (Kennedy 2016; Vorheyer 2016). Such an approach allows to see migration as a process that changes and evolves over time and during which individuals transition through different phases of their lives. Specifically, it allows to capture "the structures of meaning, orientation patterns and cosmopolitan self-transformation that are underlying continuous migration movements" (Vorheyer 2016, 66). In addition to that, such an approach also allows to understand the political and historical context in which these mobilities take place and how these outer circumstances impact the experiences made by individuals. Therefore, applying a biographic or life course perspective to the study of highly skilled and/or privileged migrants seems particularly useful as their movements are often ongoing and involve several moves back and forth between different places. Thus, to conclude this section, applying a life course perspective or at least taking into consideration the importance of the life course for migration decision-making and the lived experiences of migrants seems to be a pertinent strategy to obtain a better understanding of these processes.

3.6 Moving Toward a Conceptualization of Migrants by Choice

This chapter provided a comprehensive literature review on the state of research on highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent immigrants. It started by highlighting that the movement of these migrants has been explored, to some extent, by a variety of different sets of literatures (i.e., the literature on academic mobility, international students, expatriates, mobile professionals, lifestyle migration and lifestyle mobility, as well as travelers, backpackers, tourist, and global nomads). Rather than examining each of these sets of literatures on their own, I argued that combining them and looking for similarities among them would be more beneficial, as the boundaries between different types of mobile individuals are becoming less distinct. In fact, often individuals do not only represent one of these categories but several different ones and/or transition from one to the other. Based on this literature there were five main points that were addressed and explored in more detail. Section one focussed on the reasons and factors impacting migration processes. It demonstrated that while classical migration theories typically draw on economic factors to explain migration movements, research, specifically research on highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants, has stressed the importance of also considering non-economic factors. These non-economic factors may include: Self-realization, adventure, curiosity and self development, lifestyle and quality of life, migration as a meaningful part of individual's biographies and identities, chance, relational factors (family and relationship ties and social networks), place and place attachment, as well as education, career, and professional reasons. Most importantly, however, this section highlighted that migration is often caused and impacted by several of these reasons and that these reasons might change over time depending on the outer circumstances as well as individual characteristics. The second section explored the necessity of conceptualizing migration as an ongoing process. It began by examining the ideas of transnationalism which first started to question the static conceptualization of migration as a one-time event. It then went on to present research on mobility and how new forms of mobility increasingly blur the

traditional understanding of migration with many movements today being temporary and involving back and forth movements between different places as well as individuals changing from one status to another. For example, in today's globalized world, even obtaining the status of a permanent resident (PR) or citizen in their destination country does not mean that they necessarily intend to settle there permanently. Consequently, research is increasingly become aware of the fact that migration needs to be conceptualize as an ongoing process rather than as a static event. Section three further underlines the importance of seeing migration as an ongoing process by exploring the hidden frictions and social and emotional costs that even highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants might face both in their receiving societies as well as upon return to their countries of origin. While it is often assumed that the migration processes of this group of migrants are relatively uncomplicated, this section emphasized that even they face challenges and frictions. These challenges may include finding employment, housing, negotiation family/relationship ties as well as (re-)establishing social networks, experiencing difficulties with the cultural integration at places of destination or going through a phase of reversed cultural chock upon return to one's country of origin, and facing bureaucratic hurdles or difficulties with one's legal status. Experiencing these challenges might also trigger the wish or the necessity to re-migrate again in the future. Thus, it seems as if the lived experiences of migrants which are often made in local places do impact their migration processes and need to be explored in more detail. This fact was highlighted in section four of this chapter which analysed the role of place and place attachment for highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants. It showed that although it is often assumed that these migrants are detached from place and that localities do not play an important role in their lives, in fact, they do, as much of their day-to-day life and their lived experiences still take place in local places. Moreover, the concepts of home and belonging remains important for them even while they are on the move. Specifically, they often employ so-called home-making practices which help them to recreate familiarity and continuity even while living in (an)other place(s). This does not mean that these

individuals cannot form attachments to more than one place or have ties in several places, however, it does show that the localized everyday life remains an important factor to understand their migration experiences as well as their migration decision-making processes. Lastly, based on the observations made in the previous sections of this chapter, the fifth section explored the connection of migration and the life course. It demonstrated that migration experiences and decision-making processes are often interlinked with individual's life courses. Moreover, it showed that applying a life course perspective allows to capture the linkages between structure and agency, e.g., the outer (economic/political) circumstances and the individual characteristics and situations of migrants, which impact migration processes. Finally, applying a life course perspective also makes it possible to conceptualize migration as an ongoing process which might change and evolve over time, and, thus, to consider the different stages through which migrants go during their migration trajectories.

To summarize, based on this literature review it can be concluded that the migration processes of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants are ongoing processes that constantly change and evolve over time depending on the outer circumstances as well as the individual characteristics and the life stages individuals find themselves in. These migration processes are caused and impacted by both economic and non-economic factors and, because they are ongoing processes, they do not only need to consider the actual act of moving but also the phases of settlement and possible return or onward migration movements during which migrants might face several challenges in their localized everyday life as well as they have to negotiate feelings of home and belonging. Therefore, I argue that in order to obtain a better understanding of the experiences of these migrants as well as their migration trajectories research needs to apply a holistic approach to their movements which a) takes into consideration the different phases of their migration trajectories (i.e., emigration, immigration, settlement, return or onward movements) and b) explores both the reasons that might have caused them to move in the first place as well as their lived experiences in their day-to-day life (including

experiences of settlement and integration) as well as the place attachments they form during the different stages of their mobility trajectories. This is because, on the one hand, their pre-migration experiences, expectations and wishes may impact how they fare in their places of destination. On the other hand, it is because their migration processes are constantly renegotiated and the perception of their everyday lived experiences in their (local) places of destination (or return) as well as how they develop feelings of home and belonging to these places may impact their decision of whether to stay there or leave to either return home or to move onward to a significant degree. However, studies applying such a holistic perspective, i.e., that examine both the causes of migration as well as migration outcomes and take these factors into consideration for future mobility prospects are rare. Moreover, when examining the publications used in the above review it becomes apparent that only few studies have explored the migration processes of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants moving between countries of the "global North". Most studies focus either on the movements of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants from countries that are outside of the "global North" to countries within the "global North", or on the movements of individuals belonging to this group and who originate in countries of the "global North" but move to countries outside of the "global North". Thus, we know relatively little about the migration and decision-making processes of individuals moving between countries of the "global North". This warrants a further investigation into "North-North" movements. From the latter studies as well as those that actually do look at "North-North" movements we can conclude that these movements are usually undertaken voluntarily and determined on a personal level, i.e., they are neither forced to leave their countries of origin by outer circumstances such as war or natural catastrophes, nor by an unfavourable situation in their country of origin, e.g., social or political crisis. Moreover, although these studies explore a variety of different movements, they mainly focus on lifestyle migrants, expatriates as well as tourist, travellers, backpackers, or global nomads and only some of them reflect on academic and student mobility as well as mobile professionals.

Nevertheless, this demonstrates that the group of the highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants originating in countries of the "global North" represents several different categories of mobile individuals. Often these categories overlap and/or individuals' transition from one to the other, e.g., travellers might also be students and students might become mobile professionals. Thus, to capture both the variety of different categories of mobile individuals who participate in "North-North" movements as well as the voluntary character of their migration movements, in this dissertation I refer to these individuals as *migrants by choice*. Based on my reading of the aforementioned studies and other observations of the migration processes of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants presented in this and the previous chapter, I define migrants by choice as highly skilled individuals, i.e., individuals who have obtained tertiary education in a variety of different domains and/or are in the process of obtaining tertiary education (e.g., international students). As mentioned in the introduction, I also include those individuals who Florida (2002, 8) defines as the creative class, i.e. individuals who more generally work in "science and engineering, architecture and design, education, [or] arts, music and entertainment". As their migration processes are understood as being voluntary, migrants by choice self-initiate their mobility and they have control over where they move to. Lastly, their migration is not understood as a one-time event that necessarily results in the permanent settlement in the countries they move to. Much rather permanent settlement is only one possible option as their migration is understood as a process that continuously evolves and where the prospects of leaving, staying, returning, or moving onward are negotiated in an ongoing manner. Based on these observations and to address the above outlined research gaps, this dissertation first of all strives to obtain a better understanding of how migrants by choice experience the different phases of their mobility trajectories, specifically with regard to the local environments they live in. In doing so, the research is also interested in how these experiences might impact mobility decisions. Which leads to the second research aim, namely, to gain a

better understanding of the decision-making processes lying behind the mobility decisions of these migrants by choice. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How do migrants by choice experience the different stages of their migration trajectories and how do they negotiate processes of belonging and integration to their local environments during these phases?
2. How do migrants by choice decide whether to leave, stay or return/move onward, i.e., to be internationally mobile?

To explore these questions, my research uses the example of highly skilled Germans who are moving to and from Canada as a case study. Drawing on the findings from this literature review, the next chapter (chapter 4) outlines and presents the theoretical foundations that guided the methodological construction of this dissertation research and the subsequent analysis of the material. The chapter thereafter (chapter 5) explains the reasons for choosing the case study of German migrants by choice who are moving to and from Canada.

4 Theoretical Conceptualization of the Research Project

As I argued in the previous chapter, to obtain a better understanding of the experiences of migrants by choice as well as their migration trajectories, a holistic approach to study this phenomenon is needed. Such an approach needs to fulfill two criteria: First, it needs to understand migration as an ongoing process, i.e., it needs to take the different phases of migration trajectories (e.g., post-movement phase, phase of settlement and integration, and phase of return and/or onward movements) into account as well as the possible twists and turns that individuals might experience during these different phases. Second, it needs to explore both the reasons that caused these movements in the first place as well as the everyday lived experiences of migrants by choice (including experiences of settlement and integration) and the place attachments they form during the different stages of their mobility trajectories. Based on these observations, this chapter outlines two theoretical approaches which allow to achieve this, and, thus, guide the methodological and analytical construction of my dissertation research. These approaches are the trajectory approach which is explored in the first section of this chapter, and the approach of translocal geographies which is presented in the second part of this chapter.

4.1 The Life Course Perspective and the Trajectory Approach: Exploring Migration as an Ongoing Process

Migration is often understood as being a static, linear, and one-time event that ultimately results in the long-term settlement and integration in a receiving country. However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, migration decisions and experiences change and evolve over individuals' life courses and therefore, migration needs to be examined as an ongoing process. The trajectory approach (Grillo 2007; Schwarz 2020; Schapendonk 2015) allows for such a conceptualization of migration as an ongoing process and is therefore explained in more detail below. Because the idea of trajectory is closely linked to research conducted within the realm

of the life course perspective, this section starts by briefly presenting the principles and analytical tools of the life course. It then specifically focuses on the trajectory approach which I deliberately chose to guide the design, the methodology and the analysis of this dissertation.

4.1.1 The Life Course Perspective

Since the early 1960s, the life course perspective has become an important theoretical and analytical model in the social sciences that has been applied and further developed in various disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, demography, and psychology (Hutchinson 2011). The goal of the life course perspective is to obtain a better understanding of how the life of individuals unfold in specific social and historical contexts and specifically to understand the interplay between the subjective reality of individuals, their biological reality, and the historical context (Gaudet 2013). As such, the life course can be understood "as consisting of age-graded patterns that are embedded in social institutions and history" (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003, 4) and specifically focuses on explaining the regularities and contingencies within these patterns and the processes that lead to these (Gaudet 2013). By paying attention to both the subjective reality of individuals and their actions as well as to how these actions "are embedded in societal structures and framed by institutions" the life course perspective presents an interesting theoretical approach which allows researchers to consider both structure and agency (Wingens et al. 2011, 2).

Research applying the life course perspective is guided by five principles. The first principle, "Life-Span Development", stiuplates that humans develop throughout their entire life and that important changes to their trajectories thus can happen at any moment during their lives (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003, 11). The second principle, "Agency", emphasizes that while individuals are embedded in specific social and historical contexts which impact the "opportunities and constraints" they have access to, they can still make their own choices and take actions within these contexts. As such, individuals are not passive victims of the times and

places in which they live but can "construct their own life course" within these (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003, 11). The third principle, "Time and Place", is closely linked to the aforementioned principle. It underlines that the life course of individuals can only be understood in the historical and geographical context in which it takes place (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003, 12). The fourth principle, "Timing", refers to the fact that depending on when individuals go through certain transitions, experience certain events or develop certain behavioral patterns, the impact and consequences that these "transitions, events and behavioral patterns" have can differ from individual to individual (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003, 12). Moreover, the meaning that individuals assign to these transitions, events, and behavioral patterns might change over time depending on the life stage that individuals find themselves in. The fifth and final principle, "Linked Lives", directs the focus to the importance of the interconnectedness and interlinkages of individuals' lives (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003, 13). This means that the lives of individuals are impacted through their different relationships and social networks in which they are embedded, i.e., a change in the life course of an individual will automatically impact other individuals with whom they live their lives interdependently (Gaudet 2013, 23). These five principles are often identified as a research paradigm that presents "conceptual guideposts for empirical studies" (Wingens et al. 2011, 11; Gaudet 2013).

In addition to these principles which help guiding the development of research projects and research questions that apply the life course perspective, such research also draws on several concepts which allow the researcher to explore the life course and its different dimensions in more detail. These concepts include "cohorts, transitions, trajectories, life events, and turning points" (Hutchinson 2011, 11). These concepts are briefly discussed and defined in what follows. Drawing on several studies (e.g., Alwin & McCammon 2003; Bjorklund & Bee 2008; Settersten 2003), Hutchinson (2011, 11) defines cohorts as "a group of persons who were born during the same time period and who experience particular social changes within a given culture in the same sequence and at the same age". These cohorts are not only impacted by the

social change that is characteristic for the time in which they live but their experiences may also be impacted by the size of a birth cohort which can impact access to education, work, and other resources among others (Hutchinson 2011). Transitions refer to the phases when individuals go through a change in their "roles and statuses", for example, entering adulthood, parenthood, or retirement (Hutchinson 2011, 11; Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003). In contrast to that, life events are the actual occurrences that happen and trigger transitions (Hutchinson 2011). As such, a life event would, for example, be the birth of one's first child, whereas becoming a parent would be the transition that results from this life event. Turning points are closely linked to life events and transitions. In fact, they refer to the very same, however, only if these life events and transitions produce "a lasting shift in the life course trajectory" of an individual (Hutchinson 2011, 12). This change to the life course can either be "subjective or objective" (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003, 8). Turning points can be related to predictable events in individuals' life cycle but they can also refer to partially or completely unpredictable events such as the sudden death of a family member due to a car accident (Gaudet 2013; Grossetti 2006). Finally, trajectories "involve a longer view of long-term patterns of stability and change in a person's life" (Hutchinson 2011, 15). These trajectories are often related to one specific aspect of individuals' lives, e.g., family trajectories, education trajectories, housing trajectories etc. and can involve multiple life events, transitions and turning points. As such, trajectories are "made up of event sequences". While trajectories often focus on one specific aspect of an individual's life only, it is important to keep in mind that different trajectories impact each other (Gaudet 2013, 36). In fact, as Gaudet (2013) argues, it is the interaction between these different trajectories and how they impact each other that is at the core of much of the research conducted within life course paradigm.

4.1.2 The Trajectory Approach in Migration Studies

The trajectory approach, which I chose to utilize in this dissertation, is closely linked to the ideas of the life course perspective in that it is interested in understanding the twists and turns of these trajectories and how they are impacted by different social networks or structural constraints among others. However, in contrast to the life course approach, it specifically puts the migration experiences and the different phases of migration processes center stage. Therefore, following other migration researchers (Grillo 2007; Schapendonk 2012, 2015; Schapendonk and Steel 2014; Schwarz 2020), I decided to utilize the trajectory approach. Nevertheless, the above explanations of the five principles of the life course, as well as the different concepts that the life course perspective utilizes will be helpful in understanding the results presented later on in this dissertation as many of the ideas and the terminology used overlap.

The trajectory approach focuses on the migration trajectories of migrants, i.e., the journeys and different stages and phases that they undergo. These trajectories do not necessarily have a clear endpoint and should therefore not simply be understood as the journey from point A to point B but rather as a continuous process that can involve multiple movements across and between different countries, regions and cities. As such, the trajectory approach challenges the traditional understanding of migration as being a static, linear and a one-time event that ultimately results in the long term settlement and integration in a receiving country (Grillo 2007; Schwarz 2020; Schapendonk 2015). Much rather it sees migration as an ongoing process that is constantly evolving and changing and might result in a "multiplicity of potential trajectories" (Grillo 2007, 199). These different trajectories can include (a) the long term and permanent settlement during which one obtains citizenship and has no intentions to return, (b) return movements where contact to the receiving society is eventually lost, (c) return movement where contact to the receiving society is kept, (d) permanent settlement while remaining in contact with the homeland and eventually obtaining dual citizenship, (e) permanent settlement with a

"secure 'denizenship'" status, or (f) situations of continuous circular or shuttle migration (Grillo 2007, 209). To this list, I would add onward movements, i.e., moving to another country from the country one initially migrated to as well as re-migration after a return to one's country of origin. However, it is important to keep in mind that even the outcomes of these trajectories might change over time depending on the social, political, economic as well as personal situation of migrants. This means that it is important to contextualize the situation of migrants to be able to obtain a better understanding of their migration processes, their situatedness and their outcomes. In fact, Grillo (2007, 209–10) argues that in order to be able to understand these differences in migration outcomes:

> an understanding (historically and at a given moment) of the dialectical relationship between, *inter alia*, the global political economy and the political economies of sending and receiving societies; the local political, economic, environmental and demographic situation 'there' and 'here'; the economic and social niches which exist and/or might be created (ditto); the cultures of emigration and immigration; ideas about, and ideologies of 'race' and ethnicity; legal systems and regimes of rights and duties; the (changing) nature of systems of kinship, land and property, and gender relations; and, last but not least, religious beliefs, values, practices and institutions

needs to be obtained. The trajectory approach allows to obtain such information and to follow the journeys and different steps that individuals take during their movements including "their changing geographical, legal, political, social and economic circumstances" (Schwarz 2020, 218). Consequently, it breaks with the idea of fixed localities in migration research that only focuses on one "specific regional or national setting[]" but acknowledges that migration movements can include a multitude of different locations, places of residence, sojourn, transit, etc. In addition to obtaining a better understanding of how migrants' trajectories evolve, change, and sometimes stay the same over time, employing this approach also allows to understand the interplay between structure and agency that impact migrants' trajectories. Indeed, migrants' trajectories are not only guided by their own agency but also impacted by the social, political, economic and legal structures that surround them (Schapendonk 2018, 665; Schwarz 2020). As such, for example, "social networks, brokering services, helping hands, un/expected encounters and policy interventions" may all impact the directions and outcomes migration trajectories

may take (Schapendonk 2018, 665). For example, migration processes might at times get interrupted or change due to changes in immigration laws and regulations or border controls (Baumann, Lorenz, and Rosenow 2011; Schwarz 2016; Schuster 2005). The trajectory approach allows to grasp this interplay between the agency of individuals and the impact that the structures of the mobility regime(s) within which they are moving have on migrants' journeys and their outcomes (Schwarz 2020).

Moreover, such a conceptualization of migration as an ongoing process allows to take into consideration so-called "'small events'" such as "an unexpected new encounter leading to a specific migration opportunity" which can have a major impact on an individual's decision of whether to stay or move (Schapendonk 2015, 817). In addition, it allows to explore "other non-rational aspects of migration and networks, such as good and bad luck, love, and unexpected opportunities" (Schapendonk 2015, 817; 2018; Gladkova and Mazzucato 2017; Wissink, Düvell, and Mazzucato 2020). In this way, conceptualizing migration as an ongoing process or trajectory highlights how certain movements which initially are meant to be temporary, such as that of being a tourist, visitor or worker, can transition into more permanent situations and statuses (Schapendonk, van Liempt, and Spierings 2015, 52; King 2002; Liempt van 2007; Casado-Díaz, Casado-Díaz, and Casado-Díaz 2014; O'Reilly 2003). However, it also allows to examine the opposite, namely how (planned long-term) stays end up in onward migration to other cities or countries (Liempt 2011; Ahrens, Kelly, and Van Liempt 2016; Mas Giralt 2017; Ortensi and Barbiano Di Belgiojoso 2018), or circular migration, return migration, or return visits to the home country (Tezcan 2018; Triandafyllidou 2013; Parreñas 2010; A. White 2014b; Barrett and Mosca 2013; Mcmichael et al. 2017; Lulle 2014; Oeppen 2013). Thus, to put it in the words of Schwarz (2020, 218), the trajectory approach "puts in perspective the rationality and linearity of migration processes by gaining direct insights into the multiple and changeable plans, directions and destinations of migrations".

In order to obtain a better understanding of migration as an ongoing process, Schapendonk, van Liempt and Springs (2015, 61) argue that research does not only need to explore the transformation of social processes and ties over time, but also pay more attention to the "embodied experiences of the journey" of migrants. These embodied experiences can be divided into three different categories: (1) personal transformation, i.e., experiences and perceptions of being on the move. This does not mean to ignore migrants' networks and portraying them as individual decision makers but rather "to be more sensitive to narratives of personal change, spatial reorientation, unfamiliarity and other emotions attached to individual mobility processes" (Schapendonk, van Liempt, and Spierings 2015, 62). (2) Social networking, i.e. development of temporary "social relations and networks" while being on the move and their impact on possible mobility outcomes (Schapendonk, van Liempt, and Spierings 2015, 54). This will allow to highlight that migrants' networks are not static structures but rather are temporary, dynamic and change and evolve over time (Schapendonk 2015, 62). (3) Risk taking, i.e., dealing with the uncertainties and dangers of being on the move. While the uncertainties and dangers that particular types of migrants face might be very different from each other, all of them usually employ some type of "strategy to handle [this] risk and uncertainty during their mobility phases", e.g., by obtaining information or varying forms of help (Schapendonk, van Liempt, and Spierings 2015, 62). Regardless, these journeys can also be exciting, fun and full of new experiences and adventures, and, thus, research not only needs to explore the risk taking behavior but also these more positive experiences of being on the move (Schapendonk, van Liempt, and Spierings 2015).

From a methodological perspective, the trajectory approach can consist of two different components: 1) in-depth interviews that reconstruct the "migrants' mobility histories" and reflect on their "future aspirations" (Schapendonk 2018, 666). These interviews can be combined with "informal conversations" and "observations" (Schapendonk 2018, 666). 2) Following "the actual twists and turns of migration trajectories by way of translocal

engagements (e.g., telephone calls and Internet conversations) and follow-up visits to […] respondents in different places and during different times of their trajectories" (Schapendonk and Steel 2014, 263). While the trajectory approach allows to explore migration as an ongoing process and, thus, is making an important contribution to conceptualizing migration in a more realistic way, there are some disadvantages that come with it. First, applying a trajectory approach is "time consuming and expensive" (Schwarz 2020, 219). While researchers are able to reconstruct migrants' trajectories through in-depth interviews, they hardly ever have the financial means to personally follow/accompany the migrants they are studying on their entire journeys and/or to organize follow-up visits. Moreover, research projects are often limited to a certain timeframe only, which makes it difficult to follow the migration trajectories, which often evolve over several years, longitudinally. Second, by focusing on one specific group of migrants that perform one "specific form of migratory mobility," i.e. movements of asylum seekers, there is a "risk of fostering 'migrant exceptionalism' (Hui 2016)" (Schwarz 2020, 219). Third, researchers might face difficulties in defining the starting and end point of migration journeys/trajectories because these are theorized and understood as evolving processes. However, portraying migrants in this way risks to see them "as being permanently uprooted and always on the move" (Schwarz 2020, 219) which is not necessarily true as migrants, for example, could reside in places of transit for several years and develop roots and connections to these places before they move onward. Despite these challenges, this approach seems to be a fruitful and interesting expansion to the study of migration as it moves away from a static conceptualization of migration as well as a mono-causal explanation of migration movements. The strength this approach has, specifically for the study of migrants by choice, is further explored in the last section of this chapter.

4.2 Translocal Geographies

The conception of translocal geographies was developed by Brickell and Datta (2016, 4) and highlights "a simultaneous situatedness across different locales which provide ways of understanding the overlapping place-time(s) in migrants' everyday lives". The concept of translocal geographies presents an expansion of the notion of translocality.

Translocality was originally developed as a criticism of the "deterritorialized notions of transnationalism" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 3) which assume that transnational migrants are freed from place and space and which mainly examine the construction and experiences of migrants' "social, cultural, political and economic networks" across and between different countries (Brickell and Datta 2016, 8). In contrast to that, translocality focuses on the individual agency of migrants as well as their transnational experiences and highlights "the importance of local-local connections during transnational migration" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 3). Thus, translocality emphasizes that mobility does not simply result in rootlessness but there is a need to also explore the "situatedness during mobility" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 3). According to Brickell and Datta this call for being situated or grounded while at the same time being mobile was particularly driven by authors such as Appadurai (1996a; 1996b) and Mitchell (1997) during the late 1990s and resulted in a notion of grounded transnationalism. In fact, based on these observations, research started to recognize that while transnational networks span from one country to another, they often connect two specific localities in these countries. As a result of this, these transnational networks and relations are shaped through and impacted by the specific situation of the local places and times in which the people who are part of these networks are situated in. Thus, essentially transnational connections depend on "local-local connections across national spaces" and transnational migrants are never completely detached from space and place but are situated in these local points of connection in which they perform their transnational practices (Brickell and Datta 2016, 9). Research on translocality then captures these local-local connections. However, what Brickell and Datta (2016, 10) criticize

with this conception of translocality is that it has become "situated within the transnational" and, as such, the translocal is merely seen as "a 'subset' of transnationalism". Thus, while translocality explores local-local connections it remains embedded within an understanding of transnationalism and has mainly ignored "movement within national boundaries or across localities that are situated within the nation" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 10). As such, it has also ignored other scales/units of analysis, i.e., spaces and places that are embedded in individuals' everyday lives and are not transnational in nature.

To challenge this understanding of translocality, Brickell and Datta (2016, 10) argue that translocality, i.e. local-local connections, need to be examined "in their own right and without privileging the national". Therefore, translocality needs to also consider other spaces and places – which they refer to as "translocal geographies" – as well as "their situatedness and their connectedness to a variety of other locales". This is because the everyday life of migrants is not only situated in their relationships to their home country and their country of destination but rather in sites that go across and beyond these national and transnational scales, e.g. "regions, cities, neighbourhoods, buildings and bodies" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 7). Translocal geographies then become "a set of local-local negotiations across these different scales" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 10) which allow to consider different kinds of movements (transnational, national, regional, local, etc.) and make it possible to take into account the "everyday materiality [and] corporality" that can be linked to these different spaces, places and scales (Brickell and Datta 2016, 4).

To explore translocality from such a perspective, the authors suggest that "three axes", namely "[s]pace, places and connections" need to be taken into consideration (Brickell and Datta 2016, 5). First, spaces refer to both the "local-local connections across transnational spaces" but also, and more importantly, to a variety of "more everyday mundane spaces of public transport, residential mobility, bodily and sensory perceptions that are negotiated during particular moments of migration movement" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 5). These spaces relate

"to translocality at different scales that exist on a continuum from the corporeal body of the migrant to transnational spaces" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 5). Second, as a result of this, places also need to be considered as spaces transform into places only once they obtain meaning for individuals. Thus, through experiencing their situatedness in certain spaces, these spaces become places as individuals are able to encounter and explore "the material, embodied and corporeal qualities of the local" in them (Brickell and Datta 2016, 5). However, this situatedness or groundedness in places is not only dependent on the individuals who move there but also on their interconnection and encounters with other people in these places as well as with these places as such. Thus, third and finally, "connections across spaces, places and scales" form the third axis of Brickell and Datta's (2016, 6) understanding of translocal geographies. These connections gain meaning through "their corporeality, texture and materiality" as it is only then that they can be interpreted "as the physical and social conditions of particular constructions of the local" and, as such, "become significant sites of negotiations in migrants' everyday lives" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 6).

Finally, to explore translocal geographies the authors argue that research from a methodological perspective needs to "focus on the personal experiences and narratives of migrants during their movements across nations, cities, neighbourhoods, homes and regions" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 6). As such, they need to focus both on their transnational movements as well as those movements that are part of their everyday life and the linkages of time and place that these movements create. Moreover, research needs to take the personal characteristics of migrants, e.g., their "gender, class, age, ethnicity and migrant status", into account as these characteristics impact the experiences that migrants make as well as the stories that they tell (Brickell and Datta 2016, 6). This in turn can be achieved not only by collecting migrant's narratives, but also by analysing their "biographies, [conducting] participant observations [or collecting] diaries and [other] textual accounts" (Brickell and Datta 2016, 7). In addition to that, researchers might also want to employ other methods such as "videotaping, photo

documentation and participant directed photography" as they allow to obtain information on places of migrants' everyday life which are usually hard to access otherwise and are typically not considered in research applying a transnational perspective (Brickell and Datta 2016, 7). By doing this, researchers are then able to obtain information on the multi-scalar spaces and places to which migrants form attachments or with which they identify.

4.3. Combining the Trajectory Approach with an Analysis of Translocal Geographies

The first part of this chapter started by outlining the life course perspective and by highlighting its five principles (i.e., life-span development, agency, time and place, timing and linked lives) and common concepts (i.e., cohorts, transitions, life events, turning points and trajectories) that are used in life course research. It then explained the trajectory approach which is closely linked to ideas of the life course perspective, and which sees migration as an ongoing process that can result in a multitude of different outcomes. This is because, on the one hand, migration decisions are negotiated in ongoing processes and, thus, can change and evolve over time depending on the outer circumstances and one's personal situation. On the other hand, this is also because unexpected encounters or events can impact migration decisions in unforeseeable ways. Instead of exploring migration from a static perspective, e.g., exploring how migrants integrate into their new host society once they have arrived there, the trajectory approach follows migrants on their journeys to understand how the experiences they make along the way as well as the context in which these take place impact where they move to, when and why as well as how they fare at the places their trajectories take them to. This means that the exploration of migration processes does not simply stop once migrants have arrived at certain places, but that it also takes into consideration the experiences that migrants make at these places and how these experiences impact future movements (e.g., to return, to move onward, to circulate between places, to re-migrate) or decisions of immobility. In this sense, applying a trajectory approach

then allows to analyse how migration processes evolve as ongoing processes over the course of one's life and are impacted both by outer (i.e., structural and material) as well as personal (i.e., individual characteristics and agency) and non-rational (i.e., ideational, relational and affective) factors. Thus, the trajectory approach makes it possible to obtain a more holistic understanding of migration processes as well as the reasons and factors which impact them. Therefore, I argue that applying a trajectory approach to the study of migrants by choice seems to be particularly pertinent as it allows to examine the different stages in their migration trajectories, which often involve multiple moves back and forth between different countries. Moreover, as the movements of migrants by choice are caused and impacted by a variety of different factors, including among others outer circumstances, individual characteristics, stage in life course, their everyday lived experiences and the attachments they form to different places and spaces, applying the trajectory approach allows to take these factors into consideration as it does not simply apply a mono-causal explanation (e.g., migration is caused by economic factors) but emphasise the evolving (inner and outer) contexts in which migration movements take place and evolve over time.

The second part of the chapter explored the conceptualization of translocal geographies which highlights the "multi-sited and multi-scalar" character of the spaces and places through which migrants move and in which they experience their everyday life, form attachments, and negotiate belonging. These different spaces and places can range from the (trans)national to the regional, to cities, or even more local scales such as neighbourhoods or homes. In doing so, it explores these different sites and scales in their own right as well as their connections without necessarily prioritizing one of them. Moreover, it highlights the "embodied and material practices and experiences" of migrants within them (Brickell and Datta 2016, 20). As the examination of the literature review in the previous chapter has demonstrated, migrants can experience a variety of different challenges that relate to multiple different spatial scales and places in their lives, such as housing, social integration into their local communities, adjusting

to the cultural values and norms of the host country or navigating family life and social networks which often span transnationally (e.g., with one's partner/spouse and potentially child(ren) residing in the receiving society while the extended family remains in the country of origin). Likewise, the review on the literature on place and place attachments demonstrated how notions of home and belonging as well as the actual act of home-making practices are linked to a variety of different spatial scales and places, e.g., material objects, routines and practices in one's home, workplace or city, social ties in local communities, the accessibility of certain infrastructure at the place where one is living, but also more abstract notions of the homeland. To capture these different dimensions, their relation to each other and how they ultimately impact the lived experiences of migrants, the conceptualization of translocal geographies seems fitting as it takes these different spaces, places, and scales into consideration. Utilizing this approach then allows me to obtain a better understanding of the (local) embeddedness of migrants by choice. Moreover, it allows me to explore how the connections between the different spaces and places that impact their everyday lives/lived experiences, including their homes, neighbourhoods, workplaces, and cities but also their home countries and countries of settlement, impact each other, and, ultimately also, how they negotiate processes of integration and belonging to and between these different spaces and places of their everyday life which may impact their future mobility decisions.

To conclude, based on these observations, I argue that combining the trajectory approach with an analysis of translocal geographies seems to be a promising undertaking in coming closer to a holistic approach to the study of migration in general and the migration processes of migrants by choice specifically. The combination of these two approaches allows to explore migration as an ongoing process and, thus, to gain a better understanding of the different phases (e.g., pre-movement phase, phase of settlement and integration, and phase of return and/or onward movements) through which migrants pass during their migration trajectories as well as the factors (both structural and agency related) that impact these

movements. Moreover, by specifically focusing on an analysis of translocal geographies during these different phases of their migration trajectories it becomes possible to obtain a better understanding of their everyday lived experiences and their practices of place attachments which both can relate to multiple different spaces and places at different scales and might impact their migration behaviour. Overall, combining these two approaches thus leads to a more holistic approach to the study of migration movements.

5 Contextualization

To explore the central research questions of this thesis, my research uses the example of highly skilled Germans who are moving to and from Canada as a case study. There are three reasons for this: Firstly, Canada's immigration policy increasingly focuses on attracting the best and most qualified individuals to the country (Griffith 2013; Root et al. 2014). Secondly, Germany is one of the most important source countries of highly skilled emigrants worldwide (OECD 2015). Thirdly, Canada is one of the most attractive OECD countries for highly skilled immigrants and has long been one of the preferred destinations of Germans and, in recent years, specifically of highly skilled Germans (OECD 2015; OECD/Bertelsmann Stiftung 2019). This chapter explains the reasons for this choice in greater detail by providing an in-depth contextualization of the research setting. To this end, this chapter is divided into two sub-sections. The first section explores the Canadian context with a specific focus on immigration policies and nation building in Canada. It highlights the neoliberal turn that Canada's immigration policy has gone through over the past few years underlining the increasing focus on attracting the "best and brightest" to the country. It also examines the different immigration streams that are available for highly skilled individuals to enter the country. The second section explores the German context and examines Germany's role as one of the most important source countries for highly skilled migrants. As such it analyses recent trends of outmigration from Germany including the major destinations and the population profile of those who move as well as the reasons why they move. It then specifically zooms in on recent trends of highly skilled Germans moving to Canada and finishes by examining the relatively limited research on German returnees as well as the possibilities for onward movements.

5.1 Immigration to Canada – A Neoliberal Turn? Historical Development and Current Trends of Canada's Immigration System

While "[b]oth Canada and Germany are liberal democracies with 'Western' political traditions and principles and highly-advanced capitalist economies," their understandings of nationhood and attitudes towards immigration are vastly different (Bauder 2014, 12). Along with the US and Australia, Canada is often identified as a "settler society" and a "'classical' immigration country" (Bauder 2014; Knowles 1997). Here it is important to highlight that while research often refers to these countries as "settler societies" or "immigration countries" these terms deny the reality that these countries were in fact colonialized and force-fully settled by Europeans. Therefore, in this thesis these countries are referred to as settler colonial states to capture this reality in a better way (Veracini 2010; 2015; Battell Lowman and Barker 2015). As a result of this settler colonialism, immigration and settlement processes form an inherent part of Canadian national identity and are closely linked to the ideas of economic growth and demographic development (Bauder 2014; Knowles 1997). In fact, according to a telephone survey conducted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) in 2016, 82% of Canadians "agree that Canada has a history of welcoming immigrants" (Government of Canada 2016). Moreover, according to this same survey, 67% of Canadians "agree that immigrants benefit Canada economically by working or creating jobs", 61% agree that immigrants benefit the country "by fostering innovation", and 65% are of the opinion "that immigration is necessary to sustain economic growth" (Government of Canada 2016). Thus, in contrast to many Western European countries, where the immigration and settlement of newcomers is seen critically, these processes have a positive connotation in Canada (at least for the non-Indigenous population) and newcomers are welcomed and integrated into the national community (Bauder 2014; Root et al. 2014).[13] This aspect is also reflected in Canada's relatively open immigration and

[13] In fact, according to a survey in 2016 50% of the Canadian population agreed that Canada's annual immigration levels were "about right" and an additional 12% thought that there should be more immigration while only 32% thought that the levels were too high (Government of Canada 2016). Compared to that, among the Indigenous

naturalization policies which for most parts of its history have allowed new immigrants to acquire citizenship after a relatively short amount of time in the country and automatically grants citizenship to children born on Canadian soil based on jus soli principles (Bauder 2014). Despite this fact, Canada's immigration policies were for a long-time racialized and favoured immigrants from Europe. In fact, starting in 1885 Canada tried to restrict immigration of non-white people by implementing "its 'White Canada' legislation" which specifically targeted people from China (Boucher and Gest 2018, 48). Later, in 1910, this legislation was not only reinforced but the scope of its target was broadened allowing the country to refuse or restrict the immigration of people based on their race, class, occupation or the state of their character (Boucher and Gest 2018). It was only in 1967 that racial criteria were removed as selection criteria and a points-system was introduced which evaluated immigrants on their skill level rather than on their ethnic or racial origin (Bauder 2014; Boucher and Gest 2018, 55). During the same time, Canada also started to focus more on family reunification programs (Boucher and Gest 2018). The introduction of multiculturalism policy in 1971 and the transformation of this policy into law in 1988 continued to strengthen Canada's identification as a diverse settler colonial society that strongly encourages the uptake of citizenship for newcomers and relies on the inflow of immigrants in order to achieve nation-building (Bauder 2014; Bloemraad 2012). During the 1990s, Canada undertook certain changes to its points-system and moved away from an "occupation-based model," instead focusing on a "human capital model" which valued education more by assigning this category a higher number of points (Koslowski 2014, 29; Pellerin 2011). In the years that followed, the distribution of points assigned to each category changed slightly but the general idea of being able to select migrants based on certain criteria remained the same. Thus, while Canada's immigration policies have originally fulfilled the purpose of populating the vast country which had been taken away from Indigenous people and

population 43% thought that Canada's annual immigration levels were too high, with only 41% thinking that these levels were "about right" and 9% thinking that they should be higher (Government of Canada 2016).

was colonialized, as well as addressing economic and labor demands, in recent years neoliberal ideologies have increasingly been implemented into these policies (Flynn and Bauder 2015; Pellerin 2011). In fact, Boucher and Gest (2018, 140) argue that along with Australia, New Zealand and the UK, Canada can today be described as a neoliberal immigration regime. These neoliberal immigration regimes are characterised "by high labor-focused selectivity and high Naturalization Rates" (Boucher and Gest 2018, 141). Often these neoliberal immigration regimes implement policies that try to avoid ethnic- and racial-biases by selecting immigrants based on a points-system. Moreover, while these countries allow for family and humanitarian immigrants, their main focus is the admission of economic immigrants both in the temporary visa and permanent residency categories in order to secure their competitiveness in the global economy. Recently, these countries have increasingly focused on more temporary admissions of workers which presents a shift away from their traditional understandings and practices of settler colonial societies (Boucher and Gest 2018, 141–42). To address specific labour needs of a country's economy temporary admission programs for both low and high skilled workers are implemented more and more and big companies and other employers are increasingly included in the selection process of migrant labour to address their specific needs (Martin, Abella, and Kuptsch 2006; Boucher and Gest 2018, 142; Pellerin 2011). Moreover, in an attempt to "accumulate human capital, engage global markets, and ensure migrants are self-sufficient and will contribute economically without burdening social programs or domestic taxpayers", a shift towards focussing on the attraction of highly skilled individuals can be observed in these countries (J. Walsh 2014, 589; 2011). How these characteristics and trends play out in Canada specifically is explored in the next section.

5.1.1 Canada's Immigration System

In alignment with the above described characteristics of a neoliberal immigration regime, the Canadian immigration system does foster "the reunification of families and provides protection

to those at risk", however, it's main focus is to strengthen its economy and making it competitive in the globalized world market by maintaining "the size of the working age population at a time when Canada's overall population is aging and the need for skilled talent is increasing" (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 5). Overall, Canada's Immigration system can be divided into two larger streams. On the one hand, there are immigration categories which allow individuals to settle permanently. These categories include economic immigrants, the family class, and refugees. On the other hand, there are those immigration categories that do not come with the (automatic) right to permanent residency in Canada, these categories include a variety of different options for temporary work permits. The focus on attracting highly skilled immigrants to Canada to react to economic and labor demands can be observed both in the structure of permanent and temporary admission streams. To reflect on these streams specifically, here, I only examine the economic immigration streams of the Express Entry system, those temporary admissions streams that are targeted at highly skilled individuals as well as the family class stream as these are the streams that are of importance for the target group of my dissertation research.

5.1.1.1 The Express Entry Stream – Bringing Highly Skilled Individuals to Canada on a Permanent Basis

Regarding permanent admission streams, the ***Express Entry stream,*** which was launched on January 1st, 2015, is particularly targeted toward skilled workers who want to move to Canada on a permanent basis. The stream is divided into 3 different programs: a) the Federal Skilled Worker Program (for skilled workers with foreign work experience)[14], b) the Federal Skilled

[14] The ***Federal Skilled Worker Program*** requires individuals to fulfill a minimum set of selection criteria to be admitted to the selection pool. These criteria include: 1) "skilled work experience" for at least one year in the last ten years in a "[m]anagerial […] (skill type 0)," "[p]rofessional […] (skill level A)," "[t]echnical" job or a "skilled trade[] (skill level B)" as outlined in the National Occupational Classification (NOC); 2) "Language ability" demonstrated through the successful completion of an approved language test in English and French with "a minimum score of Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 7 in all 4 abilities," these being writing, reading, listening and speaking; and 3) Education which is evaluated based on "a certificate, diploma or degree from a Canadian secondary institution (high school) or post-secondary institution" or the equivalent document of a foreign learning institution which must be supported by "an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) for immigration

Trades Program (for skilled workers who are qualified in a skilled trade)[15], and c) the Canadian Experience Class (for skilled workers who have Canadian work experiences)[16] which all operate with a points-system to determine who will be granted access to the country and who will not (Government of Canada 2018b). All three programs are the same in the sense that applicants always must fulfill certain minimum requirements to be allowed to apply through the programs. Once individuals are admitted to one of the three pools of the Express Entry stream, the applications are then sorted based on their overall points. At present individuals can obtain up to a maximum of 100 points in six categories: English and/or French language skills (maximum 28 points), education (maximum 25 points), work experience (maximum 15 points), age (maximum 12 points), arranged employment in Canada (maximum 10 points) and adaptability (maximum 10 points) (Government of Canada 2019o). It is only those with the highest scores that are actually invited to submit their application for permanent residency and

purposes" demonstrating that the degree obtained abroad is equivalent to a Canadian degree (Government of Canada 2019l). If individuals fulfill these minimum requirements, they will then further be assessed on six factors (age, education, work experience, valid job offer, English and of French language skills and adaptability) which "are part of a 100-point grid" (Government of Canada 2019l). Only if individuals achieve a score of 67 points, they will be put in the Express Entry selection pool and are eligible to apply through the Federal Skilled Worker Program. It is however only those applicants with the highest scores that will actually be invited to apply for permanent residency from the pool (Government of Canada 2019l). In line with the idea of recruiting the young and highly skilled individuals it is individuals aged between 18 and 35 years who get most points in the age category, as well as individuals holding a doctorate degree who earn the most points in the education category (Government of Canada 2019o; 2019h).

[15] In contrast to the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the **Federal Skilled Trades Program** does not require a certain level of education, however, a proof of education can help to gain a better place in the ranking system. While there are no educational requirements, individuals applying though this program still need to fulfill certain minimum requirements, including: 1) language ability in English and/or French as demonstrated through an "approved language test[]" with a "minimum score of Canadian Language Benchmark 5 for speaking and listening, and Canadian Language Benchmark 4 for reading and writing;" 2) work experience for "at least 2 years of full-time […] (or an equal amount of part-time work experience in a skilled trade within the 5 years before" applying; 3) "meet the job requirements for that skilled trade as set out in the National Occupational Classification;" 4) having "a valid job offer of full/time employment for a total period of at least 1 year or [a] certificate of qualification in that skilled trade issued by a Canadian provincial, territorial or federal authority" (Government of Canada 2019n).

[16] To be considered for the **Canadian Experience Class**, applicants need to fulfill two sets of minimum requirements: 1) demonstrate "language levels" that the job individuals apply for requires (required language levels might vary depending on the job category); and 2) "have a least 1 year of skilled work experience in Canada, in the last 3 years before" applying (skilled work experience refers to "managerial jobs (skill level 0), professional jobs (skill type A) [and] technical jobs and skilled trades (skill type B)" as defined by the Canadian National Occupation Classification) (Government of Canada 2019m). While a certain level of education is not required to apply through the Canadian Experience Class, a proof of education from a secondary or post-secondary institution in Canada or "an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA)" for a degree earned abroad, can increase the number of points you receive for the ranking system, and, thus, increase your overall chances of moving to Canada (Government of Canada 2019m).

it is only once the application for permanent residency has been approved as well as the application fee of $1,040 has been paid that applicants will receive their PR status and are allowed to enter Canada (Government of Canada 2019j). Ultimately, by selecting and inviting skilled individuals to apply for permanent residence based on their likelihood "to succeed in Canada" rather than assessing candidates based on a first-comes-first-served basis (i.e. when they entered the pool for the economic immigration programs to Canada), it has been possible to reduce the processing times for these applications to six months or less and, thus, to get them to Canada in a quicker and more efficient way (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2015). In 2018, economic immigrants represented the largest group of PRs that were admitted to Canada. In total they "accounted for 58% of the 321,035 permanent residents admitted to Canada" (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 8). According to IRCC "software engineers and designers, information systems analyst and consultants, computer programmers and interactive media developers, financial auditors and accountants, and administrative assistants" were "the top 5 invited occupations" in 2018 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 8). These numbers further highlight Canada's focus on admitting economic immigrants that represent a highly skilled work force and, thus, benefit the countries' economy. However, Canada is not only interested in getting these individuals to Canada but also in retaining them in the country on a long-term basis. Therefore, once these individuals have entered Canada as new PRs, they have access to certain settlement services, "such as information and orientation, language training or employment related services" which are funded by IRCC and are supposed "to help with their successful integration into Canadian society" (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 5)[17]. Moreover, after they have lived in Canada as PRs for a certain amount of time and have fulfilled other requirements (e.g., a language test) they can apply for citizenship in Canada and become full citizens of the country

[17] These services are available for all individuals who become PRs in Canada not just those who enter through the Express Entry stream.

(Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019). Thus, individuals admitted through the Express Entry stream do not only have the right to permanent residency but are also presented with a clear path toward citizenship. Here, it is important to mention that the Express Entry streams work for all provinces but Quebec which has its own selection system for skilled workers who want to become PRs in the province, i.e., the ***Quebec-selected Skilled Workers*** program. Like the Express Entry streams, applicants are evaluated based on a points-system ranking individuals, for example, on their level of education and their work experience.[18] However, the criteria for selection also specifically consider the applicant's "potential for integration into the Québec labour market and Québec society" (Gouvernement du Quebec 2019).[19] Similar to the evaluation of points for the Federal Skilled Worker Program, individuals applying to the Quebec-selected Skilled Workers program can obtain most points for their education (level and area) and language skills (Gouvernement du Quebec 2018). While the province of Quebec holds its own agreement with Canada – the so-called "Canada-Quebec Accord" – which gives the selection power, for economic immigrants as well as for individuals who are admitted through the family class and the refugee stream, entirely to the province of Quebec, all Canadian provinces and territories have gotten more involved in the selection process of economic immigrants as part of the neoliberal turn Canada has gone through in recent years (Flynn and Bauder 2015).

[18] In order to be put in the pool for the Quebec-selected Skilled Workers program, individuals need to apply directly to the province and obtain a score of at least 50 out of 103 (or 59 out of 120 if they are being accompanied by a spouse) (Gouvernement du Quebec 2018). If selected, applicants will receive a Quebec Selection Certificate which then allows them to apply for permanent residency through IRCC (Government of Canada 2019b).

[19] These criteria include: a) "training (level of education and area of training);" b) "work experience;" c) "age;" d) "knowledge of French and English;" e) previous "stays in Québec and family relationship with a Canadian citizen or a permanent Québec resident;" f) a valid "employment offer;" g) "[c]haracteristics of (…) [an] accompanying spouse or de facto spouse, if applicable;" h) "number of children under the age of 22" and who are also moving to Quebec under the guardianship of the principal applicant; and i) "capacity for financial self-sufficiency" for the three first months in Quebec (Gouvernement du Quebec 2019).

5.1.1.2 The Provincial Nominee Program – Addressing Regional Labour Demands

Thus, overall, in Canada there has been a trend to transfer the responsibilities for selecting and recruiting suitable immigrants, as well as services aiming to facilitate settlement processes, which were formerly held by the federal state, to third parties in an attempt to "strengthen Canada's economy and global competitiveness" (Flynn and Bauder 2015; Koslowski 2014, 29). For example, policies have made it easier for employers to chose and pick which foreign workers they want to take in and consequently, acquiring residency in Canada has become much more employer dependent (Baxter 2010; Carter, Pandey, and Townsend 2010; Dobrowolsky 2013; Flynn and Bauder 2015; Moss, Bucklaschuk, and Annis 2010; Seidle 2013). This change was particularly enforced by the introduction of so called Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) in the late 1990s (Flynn and Bauder 2015; Baxter 2010; Carter, Pandey, and Townsend 2010), which today have "become the second largest route to economic immigration to Canada" (Flynn and Bauder 2015, 543). PNPs allow the provinces and territories to "address short-term labour shortages that are not currently being met through the federal skilled worker program" (Carter, Pandey, and Townsend 2010, 4). As a result of this, provinces and territories have the possibility to regulate immigration based on their respective economic or immigration needs. The PNPs offer provinces and territories two different options for recruitment. On the one hand, they can access the Express Entry pool and "are able to nominate candidates who meet their regional labour market needs" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2015). This can be done in one out of two ways: They can either nominate applicants who have contacted them directly (these individuals then have to "create an Express Entry profile" and indicate that they "have been nominated" (Government of Canada 2019c)), or they can send those applicants who have indicated in their Express Entry profile that they are interested in certain provinces or territories "a 'notification of interest'" and individuals can then "apply to their [i.e. the province's or territory's] Express Entry stream" and will finally be notified if the province or territory actually nominated them (Government of Canada 2019c). For both options, the process after nomination

is identical to the application process through the different Express Entry streams. On the other hand, they can also nominate individuals who apply for streams that are not part of the Express Entry stream (Government of Canada 2019c). In that case, applicants are required to meet certain conditions that are set out by the specific province or territory (these may vary or change over time). This has, for example, made it possible for "employers to sponsor TFWs as provincial nominees through either the skilled or semi-skilled streams," thus allowing these employers to keep their TFWs on a long term basis (Flynn and Bauder 2015, 543). In addition to that, the PNPs also include so-called international graduate student streams which make it possible for international Master's and PhD students to apply for permanent residency within two years of graduation in Canada (Flynn and Bauder 2015). Although the criteria for these international graduate student streams vary by province or territory, they all strive "to supply a young and educated population of immigrants to the provinces" (Flynn and Bauder 2015, 544).

5.1.1.3 International Students – Highly Skilled and Easily Integrated Future Citizens

Overall, international students are not only an important target group of the PNPs but also of Canada's federal immigration program. This is because they are seen as "easily integrated immigrants" and potential future citizens by the Canadian Government (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012; Scott et al. 2015). After having lived in Canada for a certain amount of time during their studies, they are not only already familiar with how the Canadian society works but also how the Canadian labour market is organized and operates (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012; Scott et al. 2015). Therefore, international students cannot only apply for study permits in Canada to conduct their studies at a Canadian designated learning institution (DLI)[20], but, if they have obtained a degree from a Canadian DLI and have

[20] ***Study permits*** allow "foreign nationals to study at a designated learning institution (DLI) in Canada" and allows these students to stay in Canada "for the length of [their] study program, plus an extra 90 days" (Government of Canada 2019k). The additional 90 days are thought to give international students the possibility to either "prepare to leave Canada or apply to extend [their] stay" (Government of Canada 2019k).

maintained full-time student status during their entire studies they can also apply to the ***Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP)*** which provides them with an open work permit and allows them to gain work experience in Canada. The PGWPP is part of the International Mobility Program (IMP) which does not require Canadian employers to obtain a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). The length of the work permit is usually equivalent to the length of the program of study but is limited to three years maximum and cannot be renewed. The PGWPP also allows for spouses and common-law partners of the principal applicant to apply for an open work permit (Government of Canada 2019g). The work experience gained with the post-graduation work permit may help "graduates to qualify for permanent residence in Canada through the Canadian experience class, within Express Entry" and, thus, provides a clear path to permanent residence (Government of Canada 2019a). In 2018, Canada hosted "more than 721,000 international students" of which 356,000 had been issued in 2018 alone (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 7). Moreover, in the same year, "53,805 individuals who ever held a study permit in Canada were admitted as permanent residents" (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 7). Out of these 10,949 individuals had studied in Canada in 2018 and most of them were admitted as economic immigrants (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019). This demonstrates how international students in Canada can transfer their status from a temporary to a permanent one over time.

5.1.1.4 Temporary Admissions Streams for Highly Skilled Individuals – An Option for "Two-Step" Immigration?

This brings the strategy of the so-called "'two-step migration'" into play in which migrants transition "from temporary to permanent resident status" (Nakache and Dixon-Perera 2015, 3). (Highly) skilled individuals, for example, often use temporary admission streams as a steppingstone to obtain a more permanent status in a country (J. Walsh 2014; Hawthorne 2010). Thus, it is not only important to look at the division of permanent and temporary admission

streams but also to examine the differences that exist within the many temporary admission streams where some of these streams allow individuals to transform their status into a permanent one while others do not. The line of this division often runs between temporary admission streams for low(er) skilled workers who are mainly excluded from the possibility to transform their status into a more permanent one and temporary admission streams for (highly) skilled workers who often have the opportunity to do so. This is also the case in Canada, where lower skilled TFWs (e.g., those entering the country on a temporary basis through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program or the Agricultural Stream are excluded from these opportunities whereas those with higher skills often do have the opportunity to transform their temporary into a more permanent status over time. By renewing and/or prolonging their work permits they are often able to gain enough skilled work experience in Canada to eventually transform their status into a more permanent one, for example, by applying for permanent residence through the Canadian experience class or one of the PNPs. In 2018 alone "56,369 individuals who had previously [i.e. that same year] held a work permit" in Canada were "admitted as permanent residents" (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 7). Indeed, Canada has a variety of temporary admission streams that are specifically targeted toward (highly) skilled individuals to meet the specific demand of employers and address economic needs of the country. Examples of this are the Express Entry, the Academics stream, and the Global Talent stream. While the Express Entry stream, as highlighted above, usually allows skilled individuals to enter Canada with a PR status Canadian employers can also make use of this stream to support the application for permanent residency of "higher-skilled foreign workers" and in this way "meet their skilled labour shortages" (Government of Canada 2019q). This makes it possible for skilled foreign workers to enter Canada and start working on a temporary work permit while they are waiting for their PR application to get approved (Government of Canada

2019q).[21] Ultimately, this has made it easier for employers to choose their foreign employees and get them to Canada and into the labor market more quickly (Flynn and Bauder 2015). The ***Academics*** stream allows Canadian universities and university colleges to hire foreign academics, i.e. "an individual with at least one postgraduate degree (following a Bachelor's degree) who earns the majority of their income from teaching or conducting research", to their institutions to "meet their staffing and teaching needs and attract new knowledge and expertise to Canadian campuses" (Government of Canada 2017a).[22] Finally, the ***Global Talent Stream*** which is part of Canada's Global Skills Strategy is particularly targeted toward "innovative firms in Canada" and those "firms in Canada that need to fill an in-demand highly-skilled position on the Global Talent Occupations List" (Government of Canada 2019r). This stream makes it possible for Canadian employers to "access highly-skilled global talent" to react to client needs and services in a "timely, responsive and predictable way" and, in this way, to ensure that their companies are able to grow and stay competitive in the global market (Government of Canada 2019r).[23] The Global Talent Stream is particularly attractive for Canadian firms as it allows to bring highly skilled labour to Canada in a short amount of time as, in 80% of the cases, processing times for the general application are kept to "10-business days starting on the business day after the application has been received" and work permits are

[21] To make use of this option, the Canadian employer needs to demonstrate that they are unable to find an employee who has Canadian citizenship or PR status, and, in addition to this, they also need to apply for a "dual intent Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA)" and pay a fee of 1,000$ for the application to be processed (Government of Canada 2019q). It is only after the employer has obtained a positive LMIA that the employee is able to apply for a temporary work permit with IRCC, which, if granted allows them "to work for a specific employer, under established working conditions, and for a particular duration in Canada" (Government of Canada 2019q). Parallel to this, their application for permanent residency will be processed through the Express Entry stream.

[22] Similar to the Express Entry stream, the Academics stream requires Canadian employers, on the one hand, to demonstrate that they are unable to find an employee who has Canadian citizenship or PR status, and, on the other hand, to obtain (and pay for) a LMIA which, among others, ensures the eligibility of the employer "to participate on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TWFP) as well as the credibility of the job offer (Government of Canada 2017a). However, the Academics stream does not support the simultaneous application for a PR status. Thus, the employee is only able to apply for a temporary work permit and not for a PR status after they have received the positive LMIA from their future employers.

[23] In contrast to the Academics stream, the Global Talent Stream does not require a LMIA but instead a "Labour Market Benefits Plan" which highlights the "employer-specific commitment to activities that will have lasting, positive impacts on the Canadian labour market" which will be evaluated every year to ensure that companies fulfill their commitments (Government of Canada 2019r).

being "processed in two weeks by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada" (Government of Canada 2019r). Since this program was launched in 2017, a total of 21,000 individuals have made use of it, among them "nearly 17,000 highly skilled workers" (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 14). In addition to these three streams of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) which particularly enable the temporary entrance of (highly) skilled workers to Canada, the **IMP** offers a variety of different streams which allow Canadian employers to hire international temporary workers without having to apply for a LMIA. These streams are organized around the categories of "[i]nternational agreements" (e.g. the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement), "Canadian interests" (e.g. entrepreneurs, intra-company transferees, youth exchange programs, post-grad employment or post/doctoral PhD fellows), "[n]o other means of support" (e.g. refugee claimants), "[p]ermanent residence applicants in Canada" (e.g., through the live-in-caregiver class or the spouse or common/law partner in Canada class), "[v]ulnerable workers" (e.g., migrant workers who experience abuse), and "[h]umanitarian reasons" (e.g., destitute students (Government of Canada 2019f). Of interest for my target group are mainly those LMIA exempt categories of the IMP that fall under the Canadian interests' stream, such as the PGWPP which was already explored above and the **International Experience Canada (IEC) program**[24]. This program includes three different pools, namely a) *International Co-op (Internship)*, b) *Young Professionals*, and c) *Working Holiday*. While the first two are specifically targeted

[24] German citizens must "be between the ages of 18 and 35 (inclusive)" to be eligible to participate in the IEC and they can participate in the program up to two times which means they can apply to participate in two different categories of the IEC, e.g. first participate in the Working Holiday category and later apply for the category of Young Professionals (Government of Canada 2019p). None of the three categories allows individuals to bring along their dependents to Canada (e.g. partner, spouses or children) (Government of Canada 2019p). Moreover, the validity period of the work permits that can be obtained through these three categories is limited to 12 months for German citizens (Government of Canada 2019p).

toward respectively students[25] and young, (highly) skilled individuals[26], the third one is open to anyone who wants to travel through Canada and finance their travels by working temporarily[27]. As a result of these various temporary admission streams to Canada temporary admissions to the country have increased in recent years, and, in fact, now outnumber those of permanent immigrants arriving to the country. In 2018, there were 321,035 individuals who were admitted to Canada as PRs. Compared to that, in the same year, a total of 696,139 temporary work and study permits were issued (84,229 through the TFWP, 255,034 through the IMP, and 356,876 for international students) (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 13).

5.1.1.5 Highly Skilled Individuals and the Family Class

Finally, it is also important to mention that ***family sponsorship*** is likewise an option for highly skilled Germans to come to Canada on a permanent basis (i.e. with the status of a permanent resident), at least, if they have a common-law partner or spouse who is "at least 18 years old" and either a "Canadian citizen or [a] person registered in Canada as an Indian under the Canadian Indian Act or [a] permanent resident of Canada" who is willing to sponsor them (Government of Canada 2019i).[28] While the family class is obviously not used as a direct

[25] The *International Co-op (Internship)* category allows students to gain work experience in Canada that are "directly linked to [their] field of study" (Government of Canada 2019p). In order to apply, individuals need to be enrolled in a "post-secondary institution", "have a job offer for a work placement or internship in Canada," and need to demonstrate that "this work placement or internship" is a mandatory requirement of their degree (Government of Canada 2019p). If granted, students receive "an employer-specific work permit" which only allows them to stay with "the same employer in the same location" while in Canada (Government of Canada 2019p).

[26] The *Young Professionals* category is thought for those individuals who want to "[g]ain Canadian professional work experience to better compete in a global economy" (Government of Canada 2019p). Individuals who apply for this category have to demonstrate that they "have a job offer in Canada that contributes to [their] professional development" (Government of Canada 2019p) which means that the job offer needs to be for a management job, a professional job that requires a university degree or "technical jobs and skilled trades that usually call for a college diploma or training as an apprentice" (Government of Canada 2018a). Moreover, they are only allowed to "work for the same employer in the same location" while staying in Canada which means they are granted "an employer-specific work permit" (Government of Canada 2019p).

[27] The *Working Holiday* category allows individuals to come to Canada with an open work permit, i.e., they can work anywhere in Canada and for any employer (though there are a few restrictions). This category does not require individuals to "have a job offer" when applying (Government of Canada 2019p).

[28] In order to be approved by IRCC, sponsors need to agree to an "undertaking" which means that they must demonstrate that they are able to financially support their spouse or partner for three years and "make sure they

strategy for attracting highly skilled individuals it does offer those who enter Canada with a temporary status and fall in love with a Canadian the opportunity to transform their status into a more permanent one. However, even within family sponsorship there seems to be an increasing trend toward neoliberal practices which has resulted in restraining those who can be sponsored as family members to predominantly only include those who belong to the core family as well as an overall decline of immigrants through family admission as highlighted by Ellermann (2020).

5.1.2 Canada's Role in the Race for the Best and Brightest

To conclude, in alignment with the trends in immigration policies on a global level as highlighted in chapter two, over the past few years, Canada's immigration policy is increasingly focusing on securing Canada's competitiveness in the global economic market, or, to put it in the words of the IRCC: "Immigration has strengthened, and will continue to strengthen Canada as it helps to keep our country globally competitive by promoting innovation and economic growth through its support of diverse and inclusive communities" (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2019, 12). As part of this aim, Canada has increasingly focused on economic immigrants and has participated in the global race for talent by implementing (permanent and temporary) immigration streams that aim to attract highly skilled individuals. This is, on the one hand, because Canada, like other developed countries, is experiencing the

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don't need social assistance from the government" (Government of Canada 2019s). While the sponsor agrees to "provide for the basic needs" of the persons they are sponsoring, the sponsored person needs to agree that they "will make every effort to support themselves" for the three-year period of the undertaking which is agreed upon both partners signing a "sponsorship agreement" (Government of Canada 2019d). Sponsors who live in Quebec need to first be approved as a sponsor by IRCC and then meet specific requirements set out by the province of Quebec (Government of Canada 2019d). Sponsors can be of the same or the opposite sex and must be either "legally married" to the person they are sponsoring or in a common-law relationship with them, which means that they have "been living together continuously for 1 year in a conjugal relationship, without any long periods apart" which they will have to deliver proof of to IRCC (Government of Canada 2019e). While the person who wants to sponsor their spouse or partner needs to apply to become approved as a sponsor, their spouse or partner must simultaneously apply for permanent residency in Canada and the couple has to pay a fee of $1,040, in addition to having to pay for fees for medical exams, police certificates and translation of documents (Government of Canada n.d.).

aging of its population resulting in a shortage of (highly) skilled workers which "will have adverse effects on the Canadian economy by impeding productivity and business growth" (Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada 2019, 10). On the other hand, the focus on highly skilled individuals can also be explained by the fact that they are considered to contribute to social cohesion in the country not only because they can contribute to Canada's economy in quick and efficient ways, but also because they are perceived as both being able to quickly integrate into society as well as unlikely to rely on public resources (Duncan 2012; Root et al. 2014). Thus, while low skilled TFWs are still attracted to Canada as they are needed to fill labour demands, mainly in blue collar positions and farming, they are increasingly excluded from naturalization (Root et al. 2014). In contrast to that, highly skilled immigrants are favoured and encouraged to move to Canada on a permanent basis (see the Express Entry stream) and to naturalize in Canada as the country wants to transform them into future citizens to retain them in the country and secure successful nation-building and social cohesion. This is even true for those highly skilled immigrants who enter Canada through one of the temporary admission streams as they often have the possibility to transform their status into more permanent ones over time, and, thus, have a relatively clear path toward permanent residence which ultimately also allows them to apply for citizenship. In addition to this, the immigration selection process is also increasingly driven by companies and employers who have more and more opportunities not only to bring the human capital that they need to Canada but also to help these individuals to become permanent residence, for example, by sponsoring their application.

This trend towards neoliberalism has not only impacted Canada's immigration policies but also the perception of multiculturalism in Canada in recent years (Griffith 2013). Similar to the neoliberal changes in Canada's immigration policy, multiculturalism has been "reconfigured toward a more neoliberal orientation" which is in alignment to the changes in immigration policies (Root et al. 2014, 6). Overall, these changes have resulted in an increased focus on the adaptation of and adjustment to Canadian values and Canadian society at large by newcomers,

rather than focusing on their multicultural rights (Griffith 2013; Root et al. 2014). As such, fulfilling ones "duties and obligations" as a "productive member[] of society" are the main characteristics against which immigrants are evaluated (Root et al. 2014, 6; Griffith 2013). As a result of this, immigrants are evaluated and perceived along a binary construction of "good" or "failed" respectively "alien non-citizens" (Anderson 2013; Root et al. 2014). While the former are represented by those immigrants embodying "the neoliberal ideals of self-sufficiency, hard-work, and effective and efficient labour market participation" and, thus, are portrayed as desirable, the latter are represented by those immigrants who do not conform to these neoliberal ideas, or those who do not have acquired "full legal status" yet, and thus pose "a challenge to the cohesion and uniformity of the neoliberal state" and consequently are identified as "undesirable migrant[s]" (Root et al. 2014, 5–6; Anderson 2013). These neoliberal trends of Canada's migration policies and perception of multiculturalism are also reflected by the public opinion in Canada. Overall, Canadians are supportive of these trends in as they recognize the importance of attracting international talent to Canada to secure the country's competitiveness in the world market as well as to address the challenges associated with an increasingly aging population. As a result of this, Canadians are, for example, particularly supportive of bringing individuals with STEM skills into the country. However, the support for other types of workers, e.g., international students, entrepreneurs, service workers and investors, is also relatively high (Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada 2019). In attracting these individuals Canadians, nevertheless, think that not only the skill level should matter for selecting these individuals but also immigrants' English or French language skills as well as their likelihood of being able "to adopt to Canadian culture easily" (Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada 2019, 8). This neoliberal approach both to immigration and multiculturalism policy signifies a break with Canada's traditional "linkage between migration, citizenship, and nation-building that has served as the foundation for Canadian immigration policy for many decades" (Root et al. 2014, 13; Griffith 2013). Furthermore, it leads to "a very narrow view of what

constitutes social cohesion, which is articulated as one of the core goals of contemporary immigration reform in Canada" (Root et al. 2014, 6; Griffith 2013). After having laid out the Canadian context, the next section focuses on presenting the German context by analysing Germany's role as an emigration country of highly skilled individuals as well as outlining recent trends of the international mobility of highly skilled Germans.

5.2 Emigration from Western European Countries – Emigration from Germany

At the same time as Canada is increasingly focusing on the attraction of highly skilled individuals, the emigration of the highly skilled national-born population from Western European countries has increased and has gained more and more attention in both the academic and public debate. On the one hand, this is the result of increasing emigration rates of these individuals from Western European countries. When looking at emigration rates from nine European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, UK, Norway, Switzerland) in the period from 1990 to 2005 for example, it can be seen that more nationals are leaving these countries than entering them on an annual basis (van Dalen and Henkens 2007). On the other hand, it is particularly the increase of the international competition for the most educated and highly skilled individuals that has triggered these debates. Several surveys, such as the *Eurobarometer* and the *European Internal Movers' Social Survey*, for example, show that the likelihood to migrate is much higher among the young and well-educated population, and that the probability to migrate increases with the height of income and already existing social networks in the receiving society (Braun and Arsene 2006; European Commission 2006; Vandenbrande et al. 2006). Recent studies on emigration from France (Biacabe and Robert 2014) and the UK (Murray et al. 2012), as well as studies on the movement of (highly skilled) individuals within the EU (Ackers 2005; Favell and Recchi 2009) further underline the actuality of this phenomenon. During the last couple of years, the fear of losing its young and highly skilled population has been particularly present in Germany, as emigration

rates of the national-born and highly skilled population have increased significantly since 2005 (Ette and Sauer 2010; OECD 2015). Therefore, below a closer look at recent trends of the emigration processes of highly skilled German migrants is taken.

5.2.1 Numbers of Emigration from Germany

Whereas there was a slight increase in emigration rates of German nationals after the reunification of Germany in 1990 – reaching a high of 138,280 in 1994 – numbers of emigration started to decline again after this and reached around 109,507 in 2001 (L. Sauer and Ette 2007). It is important to note that during the whole time these numbers never rose above those of immigration (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). However, since 2005, the rates of out-migration of German nationals have increased significantly again (around 140,000 per year). At the same time, the number of German returnees has remained relatively stable (115,000 to 120,000 per year), leading to a migration deficit for the first time since the end of the 1960s (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). Since 2016 this migration deficit has further increased as the number of German nationals leaving the country has surpassed the 200,000-mark significantly (281,411 in 2016; 249,181 in 2017; and 261,851 in 2018) while the rate of German returnees remained around the 150,000 (146,047 in 2016 and 166,703 in 2017) with the exception for 2018 when there were 201,531 Germans returning to Germany that year (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). Thus, a migration deficit remains and currently lies at around 60,320 German citizens per year (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). This negative rate of net-migration of German nationals, which has been the case since 2005, has led to an increased debate about emigration in Germany. One of the main foci of these discussions is the fear of losing the young and highly educated and qualified population (Diehl and Dixon 2005; Erlinghagen and Stegmann 2009; Ette and Sauer 2010; Mau et al. 2008). As a result of this, Ette and Sauer (2010, 4) for example highlight: “It is especially against the background of a foreseeable shortage of skilled and highly skilled personnel due to demographic changes, and the importance of knowledge-based services for

future economic development, that the disproportionately high percentage of highly qualified individuals among the internationally mobile Germans becomes the reason for frequently raised concerns".[29] But who is actually leaving Germany, why, where are they moving to and what do we know about German returnees? These questions are addressed in the following sections.

5.2.1.1 Profile of German Emigrants

When looking at the socio-demographic characteristics of those Germans emigrating some trends can be observed in terms of age, gender, family status, region of origin, and qualifications: Overall, German emigrants are predominantly highly qualified, young, single men coming from the urbanized western parts of Germany (Erlinghagen and Stegmann 2009; Ette and Sauer 2010; Liebau and Schupp 2011; OECD 2015; Uebelmesser 2006; Statistisches Bundesamt 2020; Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). In 2018, for example, about 61% (163,089 out of 261,851) of the German nationals who left the country were male and the majority of those who left (male and female) were between 20 and 35 years old and single (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). Overall, the average age of those leaving Germany was 34,3 years which is significantly lower than the average age of the non-mobile population in Germany at 45,8 years (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020; Ette et al. 2019). Moreover, most Germans who left the country lived in the states of North Rhein-Westphalia (60,225), Baden-Württemberg (36,744) and Bavaria (34,535) (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020) and research conducted for the time period between 2005 and 2007 showed that twice as many people were leaving from the Western parts of Germany compared to the Eastern parts and the same is true for urban over rural areas (Ette and Sauer 2010; L. Sauer and Ette 2007). It is also interesting to mention that the share of individuals who have a migration background is higher among the Germans who emigrate as compared to the non-mobile German population

[29] Quote translated from German by the author of this dissertation.

(Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015; Ette et al. 2019). Finally, German emigrants are also higher qualified than the average population in Germany, both regarding educational and professional skills. Different studies show that German emigrants are more likely to have a university degree than the non-mobile population (Erlinghagen and Stegmann 2009; OECD 2015; Saint-Paul 2004; Uebelmesser 2006; Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). The recent German Emigration and Remigration Panel Study, for example, highlights that 75,5% of the Germans who emigrated held an academic degree compared to only 24,7% of the non-mobile population (Ette et al. 2019). Moreover, emigrants are also more likely to come from a family that has a higher education level than the non-mobile population (48,3% compared to 13,8%) (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Examining employment positions, it shows that over half of the Germans leaving the country are either employed in a leading position, or work within academia, whereas this is only true for about one quarter of the non-mobile population in Germany (Ette and Sauer 2010; OECD 2015; Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). As a result of that, German emigrants have a higher socio-economic status compared to the non-mobile population (Ette et al. 2019). Finally, these observations are not only true in comparison to the non-mobile German population but also compared to German returnees (OECD 2015; Ette et al. 2019).

5.2.1.2 Why are Germans Emigrating?

So far, there are only few studies that explore the reasons lying behind the emigration decisions of German nationals. Most of these studies draw on quantitative data while only few apply a qualitative approach. In accordance with the above presented profile of German emigrants, Niefert, Ott and Rust (2001), Uebelmesser (2006), and Schupp, Söhn and Schmiade (2005), for example, analyze data from a survey done by the Socio-economical Panel (SOEP) on the intentions of Germans to move abroad. The results showed among others, that age (negative), income rate (positive) and level of education (positive) seemed to be determining factors in the

decision-making process (Niefert, Ott, and Rust 2001). Moreover, better income and working opportunities, better living conditions after retirement, better education possibilities, and family and friendship ties were named as some of the most important reasons for emigrating (Uebelmesser 2006). The reasons mentioned by Uebelmesser (2006) are in accordance with the reasons highlighted by Santacreu, Baldoni and Albert (2009) who examine migration processes within the EU. They identify work, study, family/love, and quality of life as four main reasons lying behind migration decisions. Furthermore, they show that "German movers are mostly drawn by 'quality of life' wherever they settle down" (Santacreu, Baldoni, and Albert 2009, 70). A recent study by *The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration* conducted among 853 German emigrants and 739 German returnees, highlights that cultural reasons, such as making new experiences and broadening one's horizon were the main reasons named for an emigration decision (72.2%) (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). These reasons were followed by professional reasons (66.9%), social reasons related to one's partner and family (50.9%), expected standard of living (46.9%), dissatisfaction with one's life in Germany (41.4%), and study purposes (17.1%) (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). The study further stresses that most of the respondents named several reasons for leaving Germany, thus, showing that emigration is not a monocausal process (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). This data supports the findings presented in chapter 3, namely that even though economic reasons, which are at the center of classical migration theories, remain an important component to consider, other more personal factors also need to be taken into consideration. This is also emphasized by the few qualitative studies that exist on German emigrants so far (Moravek 2008; Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice 2008; Eich-Krohm 2012). These studies demonstrate that in addition to economic considerations other factors, such as a) the individual motives and hopes (e.g., relationship to one's country of origin, expectations towards the new host society, and the importance of the migration step for one's personality, a desire to experience a new culture or professional

environment) (Moravek 2008; Eich-Krohm 2012), b) certain values and characteristics which were shaped during one's life (e.g., "high levels of curiosity and fantasy" shaped by a "love of reading and travelling, and [an] interest in other people and cultures transmitted by parents", or "valuing independence, freedom, intense and meaningful relationships, cultural/intellectual stimulation and connectedness to nature") (Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice 2008, 114), as well as c) family considerations and social ties (e.g., family planning, having children, career of the spouse/partner, distance to the (extended) family and friends) (Eich-Krohm 2012) need to be considered. Furthermore, different studies found that Germans with previous experiences of living abroad and/or traveling as well as those who had international friendship networks were more prone to leave Germany or at least to consider emigration as an option (Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice 2008; Liebau and Schupp 2011). However, these studies found that other factors also needed to be fulfilled in order to result in a positive migration decision. Often, there was a dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the life in Germany, e.g. not being able to achieve self-realization in Germany, a feeling of distance to Germany/Germans as a result of intensive traveling, not identifying with the German mentality and values, dissatisfaction with ones' housing situation, job, or the environmental and political situation among others (Bürgelt, Morgan, and Pernice 2008).

5.2.1.3 Where are Germans Moving to?

Overall, Germany is not only the third most important country of origin of emigrants in all OECD countries and the fifth most important country of origin for emigrants worldwide, but also one of the most important countries of origin of highly skilled emigrants for both regions (OECD 2015). According to data from 2010/11, most Germans living abroad (90%) are distributed in only twelve of the OECD countries (OECD 2015). The largest numbers can be found in the US with 1.1 million Germans living there, followed by the UK and Switzerland with around 270,000 Germans living in these countries respectively (OECD 2015). In France,

Italy and Spain there are around 200,000 Germans, while Canada, Austria and Turkey show numbers of around 150,000 Germans (OECD 2015). Finally, Greece, Australia and the Netherlands with approximately 100,000 Germans living in these countries, are also included in the top twelve destination countries (OECD 2015). While these numbers include the total amount of Germans living abroad, they do not necessarily represent recent trends of immigration. Thus, when looking at the numbers of Germans who have left the country to settle elsewhere over the past five years, it becomes obvious that increasingly there is a trend to move to other countries of the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), while the settler colonial countries such as the US and Canada have lost in importance (OECD 2015). This is also demonstrated by recent data from the Federal Statistical Office Germany which show that in 2018 most of the 261,851 Germans who left Germany moved to their neighbour countries Switzerland (16,430) and Austria (10,852). Nevertheless, the US was still the third most popular country of emigration for Germans with 10,447 moving there and Canada ranked 11th with 2,392 who moved there in 2018 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). Here it is important to highlight that these numbers only include those German emigrants who reported their country of destination to the registration office in Germany when they deregistered. However, among the 261,851 Germans who left, there were 136,167 who did not indicate their destination countries. Moreover, there is no requirement to deregister in Germany when individuals move abroad. Therefore, especially when individuals intend to only move temporarily, they might not register their moves. Thus, the above numbers might not reflect the entire reality as they do not include the number of unreported cases. Looking at data from the receiving societies might help to address this issue and, therefore, below data available on Germans in Canada is explored in more detail to provide more information for the case study of this dissertation research.

5.2.2 Germans in Canada

Germans represent one of the largest groups of immigrants in Canada with a total of 145,840 permanent immigrants from Germany who currently live there (Government of Canada 2017c). Out of these 69,520 are male and 76,320 are female and the majority of them are 65 years and older (Government of Canada 2017d). Most of these older Germans, however, entered the country before 1981 and when looking at those Germans who entered more recently, i.e. since 2006, the majority of them are between 25 and 44 years old (Government of Canada 2017d). In this same time period, the provinces of Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta were the most popular places of destinations for these permanent German immigrants to Canada (Government of Canada 2017b). When looking at the most recent period for that data is available from the Canadian census – 2011 to 2016 – there were 6,300 Germans who entered Canada as permanent immigrants (Government of Canada 2018c). Out of these, the majority, namely 4,350 individuals entered as economic immigrants with individuals entering under the skilled workers stream (1,110) and as nominees of one of the provinces or territories (2,050) forming the largest groups within this economic immigration class (Government of Canada 2018c).[30] Compared to that 1,805 became PRs through family sponsorship with the majority (1,585) being sponsored by their spouses or partners (Government of Canada 2018c). For the years after 2016 IRCC provides information on the number of PRs that were admitted to Canada based on their country of birth, however, this data does not differentiate between the different categories of PR applicants. In total there were 4,140 Germans who entered Canada as PRs between January 2017 and February 2020 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2020a). In that same period there were also a total of 22,840 Germans who obtained a work permit in Canada as part of the IMP, 895 Germans who obtained a work permit under the TFWP and 6,820 Germans who obtained a study permit to study at a DLI in Canada (Immigration,

[30] These numbers include principal and secondary applicants, e.g., the principal applicant would be the person who submitted the application and was invited to come to Canada as a PR based on their skills and merits whereas a secondary applicant refers to the principal applicant's partner or spouse and children.

Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2020c; 2020d; 2020b). As these individuals entered Canada on a temporary basis, they are not included in the numbers presented above on the German permanent immigrant population in Canada. These numbers on the temporary admissions of Germans to Canada highlight that the overall number of Germans who are moving to Canada on an annual basis is probably much higher than the numbers that the Federal Statistical Office Germany presents.[31] Finally, it is also important to look at the skill level of those Germans who move to Canada. This data is only available for the permanent immigrant population. Canada is overall, one of the most attractive OECD countries for highly qualified workers and this is also true for highly skilled and qualified workers from Germany (OECD/Bertelsmann Stiftung 2019). While most, 35.5%, of the highly skilled Germans can be found in the US, Canada ranks fourth (after Switzerland and the UK) with 6.2% of the highly skilled emigrants living there which resulted in over 40% of the German immigrants in Canada being highly skilled in 2010 (OECD 2015). Germans with a tertiary education currently form the majority of individuals in the age group between 25 and 64 years residing in Canada. In total, there were 55,500 individuals residing in Canada in 2016, who were born in Germany, are permanent immigrants in Canada and are between the ages of 25 to 64. While 32,465 (~58.5%) of these have a tertiary education, 8,030 (~14.5%) obtained a trades certificate or diploma respectively did an apprenticeship, 11,500 (~20.7%) have a secondary education and only 3,510 (~6.3%) have no certificate, diploma or degree (Statistics Canada n.d.). Especially in recent years, the share of Germans with a tertiary education has increased, as such, the majority of those Germans who came to Canada between 2000 and 2010/11 has a tertiary education level (OECD 2015). Moreover, the share of Germans with a PhD diploma has increased by over a thousand – from 2,200 to 3,500 – between 2000/2001 and 2010/2011 (OECD 2015). But Canada is not only

[31] If we, for example, look at the latest data that is available from the Federal Statistical Office Germany for the year 2018 which states that 2,392 Germans left the country to move to Canada and compare that to the total count of Germans who entered the country (combining permanent and temporary admissions) the number becomes significantly higher and reaches 10,975 in total.

attractive to PhD-students, but also for university and college professors. In fact, after the US and Switzerland, Canada shows the highest numbers of German professors in any of the OECD countries (OECD 2015). The high level of education and qualification of Germans residing in Canada is also reflected when examining their fields of employment: The majority is working in both manual and non-manual occupations that require a high level of qualification, with the highest share being employed in academic professions (OECD 2015). Moreover, 90% of German immigrants in Canada who are of working age are employed (OECD 2015). Apart from these numerical overviews, research on German immigrants in Canada remains sparse. While there are some studies looking at Germans living in Canada these studies mainly focus on Germans who entered Canada before 1990 and, thus, are less helpful in understanding current migration patterns and behavior (Isajiw 1981; 1998; Koch-Kraft 1990; O'Bryan, Reitz, and Kuplowska 1976; Prokop and Bassler 2004; A. E. Sauer and Zimmer 1998; McGahan 1982; Reitz 1985).

5.2.3 Return Migration to Germany

Finally, when looking at research done on return migration to Germany hardly any publications can be found. However, a study by Prognos (2008) showed that more than half of the German emigrants who participated in the survey were considering to move back to Germany. Data from the Gallup World Poll further underline these findings, highlighting that most Germans (40%) residing abroad who are considering to move to another country, are actually thinking about returning to Germany (OECD 2015). Likewise, a recent study by the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration found that 41% of the Germans in their sample who were living abroad were intending to return to German, while about 33% were intending to stay in their host society and 26% were still undecided (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Thus, the propensity of a return to Germany seems to be relatively high among Germans residing abroad. In fact, in 2018 about 201,531 Germans

returned to Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). Out of these 1,831 returned from Canada (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). However, like the numbers presented for German emigrants, these numbers are relative as a total of 87,963 individuals did not declare where they were returning from (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). Overall, similar to the numbers of emigration, there were more males (124,360) who returned as compared to females (77,171), the majority of those who returned were between the age of 20 and 40 years old and were single (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). These findings are also supported by other studies which found that the share of younger individuals who were either single or in a relationship but without children among German returnees was higher as compared to the average population in Germany (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015; Ette et al. 2019). Like in the case of emigrants, these studies also found that the share of Germans with a migration background was much higher as compared to the average population in Germany (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015; Ette et al. 2019). In addition to that, these studies also found that returnees were higher skilled than the average population with 64% respectively 68,9% who have obtained tertiary education as compared to 24.7% in the average population (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015; Ette et al. 2019). While this is significantly higher than the average population these numbers are slightly lower than among the Germans who emigrate. Returnees are also more likely to come from a family that has a higher education level than the non-mobile population (46,3% compared to 13,8%) (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Finally, returnees also seem to be more likely to be unemployed (6.3%) and/or still pursing their education or training (16.2%) as compared to both emigrants (1.4% respectively 7.8%) and the average population in Germany (3.7% respectively 6%) (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015).

5.2.3.1 Why are Germans Returning?

When looking at research done on return migration to Germany hardly any publications can be found. Return migration in the German context has mainly been touched upon in terms of so called “Spätaussielder”, meaning ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, who as a result of the German legislation have the right to return to Germany (Bade and Oltmer 2003). The above named study by Prognos (2008), however, showed that reasons for a potential return were family and friends, personal well-being, as well as employment opportunities (Prognos 2008). These results are also echoed by the above mentioned study “International Mobil” by *The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration* (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). According to this study, the main reasons of the German returnees were reasons related to one’s family and partner (63.9%), e.g. wanting to live closer to one’s (extended) family in Germany; professional reasons (56.5%), e.g. better professional advancement possibilities in Germany; and a dissatisfaction with their life abroad (40%), e.g. missing family and friendship networks or a better attitude towards life in Germany (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Compared to these reasons, expected income, respectively the expected living standard, university studies and temporary residence titles proofed to be of minor importance (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Similar to the survey among the German emigrants, this survey showed that most of the returnees named several reasons for their return (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Furthermore, the results reveal that returnees do not primarily decide to return because of financial reasons but that rather personal motives, e.g., the wish to be closer to one’s family or the feeling that Germany offers a better attitude towards life, are more important. While these two studies draw on survey data, other studies applying a qualitative perspective provide a few more details on the return decisions. Bürgelt, Morgan & Pernice (2008), for example, found that even Germans who were well adopted in New Zealand and experienced their migration as a successful step in their life histories decided to return to Germany. Thus,

no direct connection between an outwardly successful migration and the desire to stay could be found, but other reasons need to be considered as well. Eich-Krohm (2012) examined highly skilled Germans and their families in the US and upon return to Germany while paying particular attention to the role of women and families in emigration, settlement and return decisions. Like the quantitative studies, her results highlight that family ties and responsibilities towards family members in Germany, e.g., sick or ageing parents or missing relationships to parents and siblings, sometimes was one of the reasons for returning "home". Evaluating the different education options for their children and wanting them to graduate with the "Abitur", the Germany high school diploma, to secure that they would be able to attend German universities was another. The spouse's career was also an important factor determining return. Thus, "if spouses had a successful career in Germany a return was more likely for the whole family" whereas, when both partners were able to establish new careers in the US the families often decided to stay (Eich-Krohm 2012, 15). Moreover, valuing the higher level of social security in Germany impacted return decisions for some families. As did the level of comfort with their new lives in the US, the emotional connection to Germany as their homeland, as well as the wellbeing of the whole family were also reasons impacting return decisions.

5.2.4 Onward Migration Movements

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that both Germans who are living abroad as well as those who have returned to Germany might participate in onward mobility, i.e., move to another country but Germany or their current country of residence. While recent studies are starting to acknowledge this fact, barely any data is available on the onward intentions and mobility patterns of Germans (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015; Ette et al. 2019). To the best of my knowledge the only data on onward migration intentions of German returnees available is that of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration. Their results show that about 50% of the returnees are considering to re-migrate again with the

majority of these being young male (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Moreover, these onward migration intentions seem to be independent of already existing social networks, as most people intend to move to a different country than where they lived previously (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Rather, they are impacted by an evaluation of the (expected) standard of living in Germany and the possible destination (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Finally, it also seems as if individuals who already lived abroad twice are more likely to consider moving again than those who have not (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015).

5.3 Moving from the Context to the Methodological Design of the Research

This chapter has outlined the reasons for choosing the migration processes of highly skilled Germans moving to and from Canada as a case study for obtaining a better understanding of the migration trajectories and the lived experiences of migrants by choice which is at the core of this dissertation research. To do this, it provided an extensive contextualization of both Canada as reception country for highly skilled immigrants as well as Germany as one of the most important source countries of highly skilled emigrants worldwide. Specifically, the first part of this chapter explored the neoliberal turn that Canada's immigration policy went through in recent years as well as its role in the international competition for the best and brightest. By outlining Canada's current immigration system, it was highlighted that the country is increasingly focusing on the attraction of highly skilled individuals both through its permanent as well as through its temporary admission streams. Moreover, it was demonstrated that these highly skilled individuals are presented with a clear path towards citizenship and that even those who enter Canada on a temporary basis often face less challenges to transform their temporary to a permanent status as Canada wants to retain these highly skilled individuals to their country on a long-term basis. Finally, this presentation of the Canadian immigration system and the recent changes it has gone through will allow to situate and understand the different routes that

the participants of my study took to move to Canada as well as the rules and regulations that come with their different statuses. The second part of the chapter analyzed Germany's role as an important source country of highly skilled emigrants. In fact, it was highlighted that young and highly skilled individuals are significantly overrepresented among those Germans that are leaving the country as compared to the average population. This trend is also reflected in the German immigrant population in Canada that is of working age (25 to 64 years) of which the majority holds a tertiary education and is employed in positions that require a high level of qualification, specifically in academic positions. While this data reflects on the permanent immigrant population in Canada it was also shown that Canada is a particularly interesting destination for highly skilled Germans who move there on a temporary basis such as international students or individuals entering under the IEC program, for example, as young professionals. Finally, the chapter also highlighted that Germans, but specifically highly skilled Germans, were particularly prone to participate in return and/or onward movements and that overall, the reasons for Germans both to leave and return or move onward were determined on a personal level rather than based on economic or political considerations. As such, they present the perfect example for migrants by choice whose migration processes are often characterized by ongoing movements that are self-initiated with the possibility to – more or less – decide where they want to move to and evolves over the course of their life span. Canada as a destination country was chosen as Germans cannot simply move there without going through an immigration process and either obtaining the right to permanent residence or a temporary status through a study or work permit. Therefore, Canada seems to be a better example in the context of the global race for talent as compared to countries in the EU and EEA which have become the most popular destination for highly skilled Germans in recent years, but do not have to implement certain immigration policies to attract highly skilled Europeans because of the free movement agreement within the EU. To conclude, while this chapter presented the context of the case study chosen to explore the topic under study in this dissertation, the next chapter

explains the methodological design of the study. As such, it provides further information on the methodological approach that was chosen, the data collection and analysis process as well as the limitations and short comings of the research.

6 Research Design and Methodology

The previous two chapters explained the theoretical conceptualization of this research project and provided a contextualization of the case study used to explore the research questions as well as the reasons for this choice. This sixth chapter presents the research design and the methodological choices that were made during the research project. Overall, the research applies qualitative methodology and is placed within an interpretive epistemology which assumes that reality is constructed through social interaction. Conceptualizing the migration movements and experiences of German migrants by choice within the framework of the trajectory approach as well as the approach of translocal geographies, it draws on narrative interviews that were inspired by the life story approach developed by Daniel Bertaux (2016). These interviews were conducted with German migrants by choice at different stages of the migration trajectories. The chapter starts by explaining these methodological choices in further depths. It then outlines the sampling strategies, the interview process (structure, recruitment, conducting the interviews) as well as the profile of my interviewees. After this, it presents the analytical framework and tools that were chosen, highlighting the process of the analysis which was divided into three steps: a) the vertical analysis, and b) the horizontal analysis, and c) the theoretical analysis of the material. Finally, it also critically reflects on the research project by examining ethical considerations, my own position as a researcher as well as the shortcomings and pitfalls of the research.

6.1 Research Philosophy and Conceptualization of the Research Project

My research is placed in the qualitative research paradigm. As such, it applies qualitative methodology which is based on "an iterative process of knowledge production" meaning that "there is a continuous dialogue between research material and theoretical aspects of the research project" (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 1–6). This can be explained by the fact that this research project can be placed within a constructivist ontology and an interpretive epistemology which

assumes that reality is constructed through social interaction (Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba 2011). Thus, reality is perceived as something that is subjective, fluid and changes over time. In this sense, research which is placed in this epistemological field is interested in understanding social processes, and the meanings that people give to the world in which they live (Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba 2011).

This is also the case for my research which strives to obtain a better understanding of the mobility, integration, and settlement patterns of German migrants by choice. Specifically, by examining how these individuals experience the different stages of their migration trajectories and how they negotiate processes of belonging and integration to their local environments during these phases (research questions one) the ultimate goal is to obtain a better understanding on how these individuals decide whether to leave, stay or return/move onward, i.e., to be internationally mobile (research question two). As outlined in chapter four, to do so, the research needs to analyze migration as ongoing processes which can involve different phases (e.g., pre-movement phase, phase of settlement and integration, and phase of return and/or onward movements) as well as possible twists and turns during these phases. Moreover, it does not only need to explore the reasons that caused these movements in the first place but also the everyday lived experiences of migrants by choice and the place attachments they form during the different stages of their mobility trajectory. This is because their initial reasons and motivations might change over time depending on the experiences they make.

I argued that this can be achieved by exploring my research questions through the frames of the trajectory approach and the conceptualization of translocal geographies. The first conceptualizes migration as an ongoing process which requires to follow migrants on their journeys which often change and evolve over the course of their lives. By doing so, it allows to obtain a better understanding of how these journeys are impacted by outer (i.e., structural and material) as well as personal (i.e., individual characteristics and agency) and non-rational (i.e., emotional, ideational, relational and affective) factors. The second allows to explore the “multi-

sited and multi-scalar" character of the spaces and places through which migrants move and in which they experience their everyday life, form attachments, and negotiate belonging. This allows to obtain a better understanding of migrants' everyday lived experiences and how they negotiate processes of belonging and integration at the places where they reside. Thus, rather than just focusing on the national or transnational dimensions which are often explored in migration studies, this approach makes it possible to consider places and spaces that related to other scales but likewise influence migrants' experiences.

From a methodological perspective the trajectory approach can either draw on in-depth interviews with which the mobility histories of migrants can be reconstructed, and which also allows to determine future mobility intentions (Schapendonk 2018). Alternatively (or in addition to this), researchers can follow individuals on their migration journeys, for example, "by way of translocal engagements (e.g., telephone calls and internet conversations) and follow-up visits to respondents" (Schapendonk and Steel 2014, 263). Likewise, from a methodological perspective research that explores translocal geographies also needs to collect the narratives of migrants which highlight the personal experiences of migrants in and across different spaces and places while being mobile (Brickell and Datta 2016).

Based on these methodological considerations of both approaches and considering time constraints for the research, the fact that I was the only researcher working on this project as well as the lack of funding which would have made it difficult to follow individuals over a longer period of time and at multiple locations across Canada and Germany (and possibly other countries), I decided to utilize narrative interviews. Specifically, I decided to employ narrative life story interviews which were inspired by the life story approach as developed by Bertaux (2016) as they are particularly helpful in obtaining an understanding of individuals' lived experiences as well as their flows of social trajectories. The next section explores the idea of life story interviews in more detail.

6.2 The Life Story Approach and Life Story Interviews

The life story approach as developed by Daniel Bertaux (2016) employs an ethnosociological perspective which is interested in understanding how a specific social phenomenon works and how it changes over time. The goal is thus to understand social phenomena by examining "the structure of social relations, the situations they generate and their logic, the mechanisms that generate practices, the recurrent logic of action, [as well as] the processes that characterize and sustain it"[32] (Bertaux 2016, 13). However, in contrast to purely ethnographic research which aims at describing a certain context or phenomenon, ethnosociological research aims to abstract from this level and to generalize by examining social actions, situations and behavior "which could also be present in a multitude of different contexts" (Bertaux 2016, 19).

To achieve this, Bertaux (2016) suggests to draw on life stories which are the results of narrative interviews that are centered around the life course of an individual and their lived experiences. Life story interviews can give insides into at least three different social dimensions/objects: "social worlds, categories of a social situation, and the parallel flow of trajectories" (Bertaux 2016, 20). For this research project the most important social dimension/object that life stories give insides to, are flows of social trajectories. These refer to "bundles of similar biographic journeys" such as, for example, outstanding social success or social fall. They also allow to study how individuals became, e.g., an activist, a politician or a migrant (Bertaux 2016, 24).

Studies using an ethnosociological approach only draw on "a bare minimum of hypotheses built in advance" (Bertaux 2016, 25). These hypotheses are often built on prejudices and stereotypes and tend to proof wrong once the researcher starts to become emerged in the field. The goal of the research is thus not so much to proof that these hypotheses are right but rather to "describe a phenomenon and then trying to understand its internal functioning – tensions and dynamics – and to elaborate a model of this functioning in the form of a body of

[32] All quotes taken from Bertaux (2016) were translated by me.

plausible hypothesis" (Bertaux 2016, 25). The focus of life stories is therefore not so much on what people belief or their attitudes and values but rather it is on obtaining an understanding of the social contexts which shape certain experiences of which individuals have obtained knowledge through experiencing them. Thus, life stories aim to understand how certain social contexts make individuals to what they are today.

Moreover, life story interviews are particularly useful "to capture *processes*, that is to say *sequences of situations*, *interactions* and *actions* (reactive or proactive, courses of actions are proactive)" (Bertaux 2016, 75). This is because processes often take place over a long(er) period of time which can be captured particularly well by the narrative character of the life story interviews which are able to capture not just the interaction or result happening at this moment but also the processes that lead there. Understanding and identifying social processes is at the heart of sociology. In a constructivist understanding, these social processes are understood "as a series of actions and interactions of *actors placed in situation*" (Bertaux 2016, 75).

To achieve this, the interviewer asks their participants what course of actions they undertook to arrive at their current positions but also what happened to them and which obstacles they might have faced. In this way, "the *account of practices* is in deep affinity both with an objectivist conception of the social-historical, but also with the *action in situation* and the *courses of action* which constitute the center of gravity of the new sociologies" (Bertaux 2016, 26). In fact, Bertaux (2016) argues that life stories are the best methodological tool to understand how actions unfold because in contrast to other methods, they allow to describe their development over time. Life stories do not only give access "to the *historicity* of the actors as well as to their *singularity*, their 'differentiality'" but also to "long-lasting temporal dynamics" (Bertaux 2016, 27).

Therefore, life story interviews are not, as often assumed, the attempt to reconstruct the entire life of an individual as is typically the case in an autobiography. Rather, they aim to capture a narrative regarding a specific "part of the lived experiences" of individuals which help

to explain certain social processes or phenomena (Bertaux 2016, 40). This means that the researcher is not interested in learning every detail about the life of their interviewees but rather, they aim to learn more about the lived experiences of their interviewees regarding a specific "object or social phenomenon", "social world or category of a social situation" or "migratory flow" (Bertaux 2016, 42). As such, life story interviews put a "filter" on the lived experiences of interviewees and this filter guides the interview process (Bertaux 2016, 42). It is the task of the interviewer to establish this filter and to explain it to the interviewee resulting in a "less abundant, much more centered or 'focused'" account than an autobiography would (Bertaux 2016, 43).

Even with the interviewer putting a filter on the life story of their interviewees there is still a risk that the stories told by the interviewees contain "subjective and cultural mediations between the 'raw' lived experience and its narrative" (Bertaux 2016, 43). However, Bertaux (2016, 43) argues that this does not mean that these life stories are completely "subjective and therefore a distorted reconstruction of the history actually lived" (Bertaux 2016, 43). In fact, interviewees might slightly "modify the meaning of events, encounters, acts, courses of action" in their life stories, however, this does not impact the general "sketch" of what happened, i.e., "the diachronic structure" of these events, encounters, acts and courses of action (Bertaux 2016, 44).

Moreover, considering that many social processes, social situations and social worlds, e.g., family and interpersonal relations, schooling/education, starting working life, or employment develop and evolve over time and can result in different outcomes of different individuals, employing life story interviews makes it possible to capture and explain these developments and differences (Bertaux 2016). Overall, the lived experiences of people thus offer a great source for creating "sociographic and sociological knowledge" (Bertaux 2016, 49). However, for this to be possible, it is important to step away from trying to focus on an

individual and understanding their "internal functioning" but instead to focus on understanding "a *segment of socio-historical reality*; a social object" (Bertaux 2016, 49).

This means that a single life story interview is not enough to obtain such information, but a multitude of interviews are needed to recognize patterns, functions or internal dynamics as it is only through comparing different stories with each other that commonalities that relate to the "social dimensions" of the objects or social phenomena under study can be identified (Bertaux 2016, 40). To achieve this, Bertaux (2016) suggests the use of theoretical sampling as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) which allows to gradually build a sample that captures differences among individuals experiences and understandings of the same phenomenon. It is only when all these different viewpoints and positions are combined and analyzed against the backdrop of the phenomenon under study that a more objective understanding and a model that represents it more accurately can be developed. This requires a constant process of interpreting and re-interpreting the findings, discussing them with other people, adjusting them to new insights and finally arriving at a version of a model that is coherent and suitable for the social sciences.

6.3 Sampling Process and Re-Adjusting Initial Interview Categories

This process of going back and forth between the data and theorizing as described above as well as gradually building or adjusting one's sample to ensure that the differences that exist among individuals are captured as best as possible was also the case during my research project as described below.

At the beginning of the conceptualization of my dissertation, I was struck by two observations: (1) That most of the theories explaining migration movements focus on explaining so-called "South-North" migration movements, i.e., people migrating from under-developed or developing countries to (highly) developed countries, but do not pay much attention to so-called "North-North" movements, i.e., individuals moving from one (highly)

developed country to another. Thus, the reasons lying behind these movements, as well as the structures impacting such movements remain relatively unexplored so far. (2) That most studies examining migration movements focus on one specific stage of migration, i.e., the phase of emigration, immigration or return migration, but do not link these stages in their analysis. Studies, for example, focus on the reasons lying behind migration movements, however, they often do not consider that these reasons might change over time and that individuals might assign new meanings and reasons to their movements post-factum. Based on these two observations, I was, curious to explore the migration movements of individuals moving between (highly) developed countries in more detail. On the one hand, I wanted to obtain a better understanding of these processes in general. On the other hand, however, I was also particularly interested in obtaining a better understanding of not only why these individuals decide to leave but also why some of them decide to stay at their places of destinations while others decide to return to their country of origins eventually. Specifically, I wanted to explore the decision-making processes lying behind these decisions and the material and non-material factors impacting them.

To address these issues, I was aiming to interview three different target groups, namely Germans belonging to the creative class in their country of origin upon their self-initiated emigration (target group 1), in the country of destination, Canada (group 2), and when experiencing return to their homeland (group 3). Individuals belonging to target group 1 were supposed to still be living in Germany and either being in the process of moving to Canada (e.g., having already applied for visas etc.) or considering moving to Canada but not having made any administrative arrangements for doing so. To be considered as part of this target group, individuals had to initiate their emigration on their own and not being send abroad by a MNC for a limited amount of time only. Individuals belonging to target group 2 were supposed to have migrated to Canada recently and to be residing in their new host society now. I was aiming to interview only Germans who had been residing in Canada for at least four years (since

this would have allowed them to obtain Canadian citizenship if so wished) and who had the intention of staying there on a permanent basis or had already decided to settle down in Canada permanently. As I was aware that the situation of my interviewees might change in the future due to unforeseeable factors, I decided that the intention to settle in Canada or having already taken clear steps towards settling down (e.g., buying a condo/house) would be the determining factor for selecting the interviewees belonging to this group. Finally, individuals belonging to target group 3 were supposed to either be residing in Canada and having taken concrete actions to initiate their return to Germany or Germans, who had previously resided in Canada but eventually returned to Germany, where they were now living. Moreover, I was aiming to only examine individuals who did not already know from the beginning that their stay in Canada would be temporary, as this would give a better representation of the reasons lying behind a return migration, as well as information about why they decided against settling down in Canada on a permanent basis.

In addition to these criteria all individuals, irrespective of which target group they belonged to, were supposed to be between 25 and 45 years old and had to belong to the creative class, i.e. work in one of the following sectors: “science and engineering, architecture and design, education, [or] arts, music and entertainment, business and finance, law, health care and related fields (…) [as well as] business and finance, law, health care, and related fields” (Florida 2002, 8). This was because research has demonstrated that countries are particularly interested in attracting and retaining young and highly skilled or creative individuals who are thought essential for the economic development of a country and specifically for these countries to stay competitive in the global economy. In addition to that, they had to be classified as SIEs, i.e., individuals who had initiated their emigration on their own. In this way, I thought, it would most likely be avoided to include individuals who already from the beginning knew that their stay in Canada would only be on a temporary basis, e.g., students who are doing an exchange in Canada, or AEs who are placed in Canada for a limited amount of time by MNCs. Timewise,

the study was supposed to focus on migration processes that have taken place in the past 25 years, thus between 1995 and today. The reason for this was that since the mid-1990s the internet and other communication possibilities have significantly advanced which has had an impact on migration movements and possibilities of transnational connectivity (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015). Moreover, choosing a timeframe past 1990, would allow me to examine migration processes from a reunified Germany, rather than having to consider processes from the former GDR as well as the FRG.

At that stage of my research, I was still thinking about the processes of emigration, immigration and return migration as relatively clear-cut processes which would be easy to identify and analyze. I anticipated to interview 20 people belonging to each of the three aforementioned target groups, i.e., emigrants (who are still living in Germany and are planning to move to Canada in the future and/or have already taken active steps to do so), immigrants (who are currently residing in Canada and have done so for at least four years) and return migrants (who either have returned to Germany or are still living in Canada but have already taken steps to return). However, while I started to recruit interviewees based on these criteria, which are also reflected in my calls for participation/information letters (see Appendix 1-3), during the interview process, I soon started to realize that the categories of emigrants, immigrants and return migrants were not as clearly identifiable as I had thought beforehand. Listening to the stories being told by my interviewees, I learned that their moves to or from Canada were often only one piece of a puzzle in their migration or mobility trajectories. In fact, many of my interviewees had already been mobile before and, thus, lived and/or were living in other countries for a while due to different reasons before they decided to move to Canada. Others had moved back and forth between Canada several times and again others did not necessarily return to Germany but rather moved onward to other countries after their stay in Canada. Thus, their current stage of migration could only be seen as a stage in a continuous

process that in many cases did neither start nor necessarily end with their move to Canada or their return back to Germany.

As a result of these observations during the interview process, I decided to loosen the criteria for my three target groups and instead strived to interview an as broad variety of people at different stages of their migration trajectories as possible. Therefore, I did not only include highly skilled Germans who were still living in Germany and wanted to move to Canada, but also Germans who were already living in other countries at the point when they decided to move to Canada. Moreover, I did not only include Germans who had already lived in Canada for at least 4 years, but also Germans who had moved to Canada more recently and I also did not only include Germans who returned to Germany but also those who decided to move onward to a third country. Lastly, I also decided to enlarge the sample criteria to not just include individuals who belong to the creative class but more generally to individuals who have obtained tertiary education in a variety of different domains and/or were in the process of obtaining tertiary education (e.g., international students) because during the interview process I learned that student mobility was often a starting point for later moves and/or that the experiences made during such moves resulted in the decision to prolong stays in Canada. I believe that by broadening the inclusion criteria for my interviewees, I was able to capture, describe and explain the phenomenon under study in a better and more realistic way than based on my initial selection criteria.

6.4 The Interview Process

This section presents the interview process by explaining the structure of the interviews, the recruitment strategies as well as the process of conducting the interviews. It also provides an overview of the profiles of my interviewees.

6.4.1 Structure of the Interviews

As highlighted above, I conducted narrative life story interviews which were inspired by the life story approach as developed by Bertaux (2016). Instead of re-creating the entire lives of individuals life story interviews try to put a filter on the narrative to focus on a specific lived experience which helps to identify and explain social process or phenomena. For my research, this filter consisted of my interviewees' migration trajectories and specifically those associated with their moves to and from Canada.

Each interview started with compiling a life calendar with each participant highlighting their most important life events in the spheres of education, work, family, place of living/living situation, friends, and social networks, as well as free time activities and community involvement/volunteering. This calendar was then used as a reference point during the interview to obtain a better understating of how the individual migration trajectories were interlinked with events in the life course of my interviewees.

The actual interview then started with the open question of explaining the decision for and circumstances of their (planned) move/immigration to Canada (for the full interview guide see Appendix 4). Depending on the stage of their migration trajectories at which my interviewees found themselves (pre-movement, living in Canada, or post return or onward movement), the interview would then focus on trying to repaint the contours of these stages and what they entailed for each individual. Thus, interviews with those who were in the process of or planning to move to Canada in the future focused on this pre-movement stage specifically; interviews with individuals who were living in Canada focused on the situation since their arrival in Canada and how their situations changed over time; interviews with returnees or onward migrants focused not only on their experiences in Canada but specifically also on their experiences of returning to Germany or moving to another country.

While my interviews were inspired by the life story approach, they did not entirely follow this approach. Thus, while I started with an open question and tried to trace the different

steps and phases that my interviewees had gone through on their migration trajectories to and from Canada, I did insist on obtaining information related to the fields of education, work, family situation, housing and place of residence, social networks as well as free time activities/volunteering and how these changed and evolved over the course of their trajectories. This was because, on the one hand, these fields had been identified in the literature review as impacting the lived experiences of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants at their places of destination and were specifically related to the hidden frictions and social and emotional costs these individuals might encounter. On the other hand, however, the literature review also identified factors related to these fields as being pertinent in impacting future migration decision-making. Often my interviewees addressed experiences related to these different fields by themselves during the interview and I did not have to ask questions to obtain information about them. However, when they did not, I would follow-up with specific questions to ensure that I obtained all information needed. Moreover, to be able to answer the last part of my first research question, I also ensured that each interview reflected on the topic of integration and belonging at the places of destination. Finally, each interview ended with the question of whether my interviewees wanted to add any other aspects that we had not talked about but that they thought were relevant for the study.

At the end of each interview, I asked my interviewees to fill out a short questionnaire about their most important biographical information, education and work experience, income levels, language knowledge, mental and physical well-being, as well as their immigration class. These questionnaires guaranteed, on the one hand, that no important information was lost in the interview process, while it also allowed me to verify the information collected during the interview process. This ensured a process of triangulation of the data collected (Bloor 1997).

6.4.2 Interview Recruitment

Interviewees were recruited with the help of different methods: First, I contacted different German and Canadian organisations and associations such as different German language schools in Canada, the German Society of Montreal, the Canadian German Chamber of Industry and Commerce Inc., the DAAD Info Centre Toronto, different German or Canadian/North American studies departments at universities in Canada and Germany or the Gesellschaft für Kanada-Studien e.V., and asked them to distribute my call for participation among their members (see Appendix 5 for an example). Second, I contacted the German Embassy to Canada and the Canadian embassy to Germany and likewise asked them to distribute my call for participation via their mailing lists and to share them via their social media platforms. Both embassies agreed to this and helped me to distribute my call for participation, for example, by posting it on their respective Facebook pages (see Appendix 6). In addition to that, the German embassy to Canada posted my call for participation on their homepage "So German-Si Allemand" which promotes German-related events and activities in Canada and provides a variety of other information to Germans living in Canada (see Appendix 7). Third, I contacted people in my social and academic networks and asked them to distribute my call for participation to individuals they thought would fit the participation criteria (see Appendix 8 for an example). Forth, I posted my call for participation in different Facebook groups targeted toward German migrants in general, and specifically those addressing Germans either currently living in Canada or who want to move there (see Appendix 9 for an example). In addition to this, I posted the call in different internet forums and online platforms such as Kanada-Forum.net (an online forum specifically for German-speakers interested in Canada), InterNations (an online network to connect expatriates living in different cities) or Meetup.com (an online platform that allows individuals or online groups to organize different social events and aims to connect people with similar interests living in a city) (see Appendix 10 for an example). Fifth, and finally, I also made use of the so-called snowball principle, i.e., once I had

recruited a few participants I asked them if they knew other people who fit the criteria of my target group and who would be willing to participate in my study as well as to generally share the information about my research in their social networks. By means of these different strategies, I was able to recruit 48 interviewees in total. Overall, it was a lot easier to recruit individuals who had moved to and were currently living in Canada as opposed to individuals who were in Germany (or elsewhere) and were either in the process of moving to Canada or had returned to Germany or moved elsewhere.

6.4.3 Conducting the Interviews

As this research is a multi-sited research project, interviews were conducted both in Germany and in Canada. In addition to that, while I strived to conduct as many in-person-interviews as possible, due to limited research funds, some interviews also had to be conducted using Skype or the phone. This allowed me to include the experiences of Germans living in different parts of Canada, i.e., from Newfoundland at Canada's East Coast, all the way to British Columbia at its West Coast, as well as Germans who either lived outside of Germany but were thinking about moving to Canada as their next trajectory move or who had moved onward to other countries but Germany after their time in Canada.

Overall, 48 narrative interviews with German migrants by choice were conducted at different stages of their migration trajectories, i.e., in the phase of emigration, the phase of settling down and living in Canada and the phase of return and/or onward migration. Thus, I talked to eight individuals who were residing in Germany, or in two cases in Belgium and Austria respectively, and either had already taken concrete measures to move to Canada or were planning to do so in the future. Eleven of my interviewees had returned to Germany after having lived in Canada for a certain amount of time, while one had moved onward to the Netherlands after the stays in Canada. One interviewee was currently staying in Germany but moved back and forth between Germany and Canada on a regular basis because he was conducting a joint

PhD between a German and a Canadian university. Seventeen out of these twenty interviews were conducted in person in a variety of different cities all over Germany (e.g., Bremen, Wolfsburg, Duisburg, Berlin, Leipzig). To accommodate my interviewees and make them feel comfortable and at ease, they were able to choose the location. As a result, nine interviews took place in the homes of my interviewees, six took place at their respective workplaces, two in a café and one in a room at a university. Two interviews were conducted via Skype while I was in Germany and the respective interview partner was residing in Austria and the Netherlands. Finally, one interview was conducted via phone as I only received the contact information toward the end of my research stay in Germany and was no longer able to make the trip to meet this interviewee in person. In addition, one interview was also conducted in Belgium, namely with a German who was living there but was in the process of moving to Canada. This interview also took place face-to-face in the workplace of this interviewee.

As for the remaining 27 interviews, 26 of these interviewees were residing in Canada where they had lived for varying amounts of times ranging from a few months only to 21 years at the most and one was currently living in the US after previously having lived in Canada. Out of these interviews, seventeen were conducted in person and again, the interviewees were free to choose the location and time that was most convenient for them. Therefore, ten interviews took place in the homes of the individuals I talked to, three at their respective workplaces, two in a café and two in a room at a university. The in-person interviews were conducted in the cities of Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, and Toronto. The remaining ten interviews were conducted via Skype with interviewees who lived further away in Canada and, also, included the one person who had moved onward to the US.

All interviews were conducted between March and May 2017 and on average lasted between 45 minutes and three hours. My participants were given the choice to conduct the interview in either English or German (my mother tongue) and all of them decided to speak in German. After the interview process, all interviews were transcribed in their entirety.

Finally, it is important to mention that while I would have preferred to conduct all interviews in person this was not possible due to a lack of research funding and resources as well as the geographical distances involved. Nevertheless, I did not feel as if having to conduct interviews via Skype and in two cases via phone impaired the quality of the interviews significantly. While some scholars highlight that doing phone interviews might be harder because it is more difficult to establish rapport with the interviewee (Rubin and Rubin 2005), I did not find that this to be a problem. Especially using Skype made it possible to still see my interviewees' reactions and expressions and engage in small talk with them. Moreover, all the interviewees I talked to via Skype were familiar with and comfortable to use this technology as they often used Skype or other online (video) chat programs to communicate with their friends and family in Germany or elsewhere in the world. While I was not able to see my interviewees reactions or expressions during the phone interviews I still felt as if I was able to create rapport, especially considering that one of these interviews had started via Skype and we had to switch to the phone afterwards because of technical issues. While this disrupted the interview for a few minutes, my interviewee was very understanding about the situation as in fact she had mentioned at the beginning of the interview that her internet connection might not be strong enough to conduct the entire interview via Skype. Thus, after these issues were solved and we had switched to the phone we continued the interview, and we were able to pick up where we had left. Therefore, even despite small issues, being able to use Skype made it possible to include a wider variety of people residing in different regions of Canada, as well as to include some individuals who were either living in other countries but intending to move to Canada or who had not returned to Germany but moved to other countries after their stays in Canada. This would have not been possible otherwise.

6.4.4 Presentation of the Interviewees

As highlighted above, eight of my interviewees were in the process of moving to or planning to move to Canada in the future (out of these six resided in Germany and one each in Belgium and Austria), 26 interviewees lived in Canada when I talked to them, eleven had returned to Germany, one had moved onward to the Netherlands and one had first moved to the Netherlands and then to the US where she was residing at the point of the interview. Several of my interviewees moved back and forth between Germany and Canada (and other countries) several times during their lives, and, thus, their current place of living was either the second or third time they were living in Canada or the second or third time they had returned to Germany. Moreover, most (35) of my interviewees had experiences of previous mobility, e.g., during high school or university exchanges, work and travel experiences or working abroad.

6.4.4.1 Gender, Age and Family Status

While I was striving for an equal distribution between male and female participants in my study, I ended up talking to a few more women than men. In total, 29 of my interviewees identified as women and nineteen identified as men. Their ages ranged between 25 and 47 years old. 29 of my interviewees were married, two had been previously married and were now divorced, nine were in a common-law relationship and eight were single. Among those that were in a relationship I was able to interview three couples that were married and two couples that were in a common-law relationship, i.e., I talked to both partners about their mobility experiences. This gave me the unique opportunity to explore how both partners experienced their mobility trajectories and how their expectations and experiences differed (or not). However, while I interviewed all couples in joint interviews, the experiences of each partner were still examined separately, i.e., the experiences of each partner were counted as a separate interview. 27 of my interviewees did not have children, while six of them had one child and fifteen had two children at the time of the interview.

6.4.4.2 Level and Fields of Education

The education level among my interviewees was high. The majority, 26 of the people I talked to, had obtained a masters, respectively a diploma or magister degree (the former equivalent of a master's degree in the German university system). Eleven had obtained a PhD, one person was a medical doctor, and five people were holding a Bachelor's degree. In addition to that, one of my interviewees had obtained a teaching degree in Germany (equivalent to a master's degree) and one person went through a cooperate degree program to become a business administrative (equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration). Moreover, I also included one person who was a nurse and, while not having a university degree (as nurses in Germany go through a three-year apprenticeship rather than through a study program at university), still fitted the selection criteria as she was working in a health care profession. Lastly, two of my interviewees – a pilot and an air traffic controller – did not strictly fit the education and job criteria set out in my study, however, I still decided to include them as both had interesting mobility trajectories behind them already and I thought their experiences would add valuable information to my research.

The fields of education were quite diverse ranging from education to film and natural sciences. In total, ten of my interviewees obtained an education in the field of commerce, management and business administration; eight in the humanities and related fields; five each in the social sciences and related fields, agricultural, biological, nutritional and food sciences as well as engineering and applied sciences; four in mathematics, computer and physical sciences; two each in the field of health professions, psychology and natural sciences, and one each obtained their education in education, recreational and counseling services, film, architecture, as well as pilot and air traffic controller training.

6.4.4.3 Fields of Employment

This educational diversity was also reflected in the current fields of employment of my interviewees: Eighteen of them were working in science. This group included individuals working at universities as professors, post-doctoral fellows, or PhD candidates as well as individuals working in science coordination, for example. Four of my interviewees were working in trade, management, and marketing, three in economics and finances and another three were working as engineers. Two were working as IT consultants. One was working in education while another one was studying to become a teacher. The remaining individuals were working in architecture (1), in film (1), as a pilot (1), as an air traffic controller (1), for an international trade union (1), in public relations (1), as a medical doctor (1), as a project coordinator (1), as a CEO of a company working in construction, in the real estate industry (1) and as a freelancer in consulting and translation (1). Finally, two of my interviewees were currently on parental leave, while two were searching for a job and one was waiting to obtain a work permit in the US to be able to work there.

6.4.4.4 Language Knowledge

Regarding their language knowledge most people stated that they were fluent in English (41), one said they were at the level of a native speaker and six said their English was excellent. Fluency in French, the second official language in Canada, was not as dominant as in English. Most of my interviewees had basic knowledge of the French language (17), while ten stated that they had good knowledge of French, six very good and five said that they were fluent. However, there were also nine interviewees who did not have any knowledge of French at all and one did not make any statement on their level of French.[33]

[33] Language knowledge level in both English and French were evaluated on a scale of seven (native speaker, fluent, excellent, very good, good, basic, no knowledge).

6.4.4.5 Immigration Programs and Legal Status

My interviewees used or were thinking about using a variety of different immigration programs to enter Canada including working holiday visas, study and work permits, the express entry option for skilled workers (including the Quebec specific version of this option) and the Canadian experience class, as well as provincial nominee programs and family sponsorship. In addition to that, two of the individuals I talked to were dual German and Canadian citizens from birth as they were born in Canada by their German parents. Both individuals lived in Canada for the first couple of years with their German families but returned to Germany while still being children. However, after entrance into Canada my interviewees often changed their legal status, in some cases even several times, i.e., they, for example, entered on a working holiday visa, obtained a temporary work permit afterwards and eventually become PRs of Canada through family sponsorship and some even obtained Canadian citizenship. As a result, at the time of the interviews the legal status that my interviewees were holding in Canada varied. While five were not holding a legal status in Canada yet as they were only planning to move to Canada at a later point, one had already obtained a working holiday visa but was still residing in Austria, another one had already obtained his PR status through spousal sponsorship but was still residing in Belgium and planning to move to Canada shortly and a third one had applied for a temporary work permit but was still living in Germany and waiting to hear about the results. Of those individuals who were residing in Canada at the time of the interview, eight had a temporary resident status and one was holding an implied status, i.e., this person had applied for permanent residency through spousal sponsorship and was allowed to remain in Canada until the PR status was confirmed although the previous visa had expired. Fourteen of my interviewees had a PR status and three had obtained Canadian citizenship and were dual German and Canadian citizens. Out of the three individuals holding Canadian citizenship status, two had obtained the citizenship status after living in Canada for a while, while one was born in Canada by German parents, returned to Germany with his family during his childhood and

had recently moved back to Canada. Among those individuals who returned to Germany or moved elsewhere after their time in Canada, seven had a temporary resident status while living in Canada and three had obtained permanent residency while living in Canada. Moreover, three of the individuals who returned or moved onward held dual German and Canadian citizenship. While two of these individuals received their Canadian citizenship status only after their return to Germany, one of them was a dual German and Canadian citizen from birth as she was born by German parents in Canada where she lived for a few years during her childhood. A summary of the presentation of my interviewees can be found in table 1.

6.5 Data Analysis

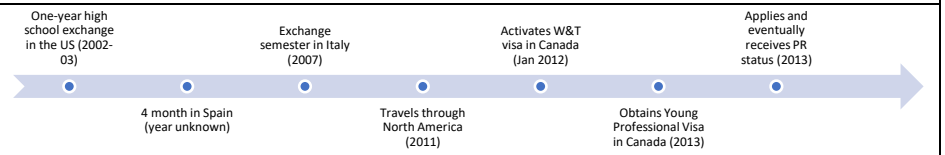
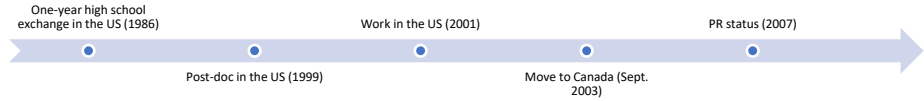
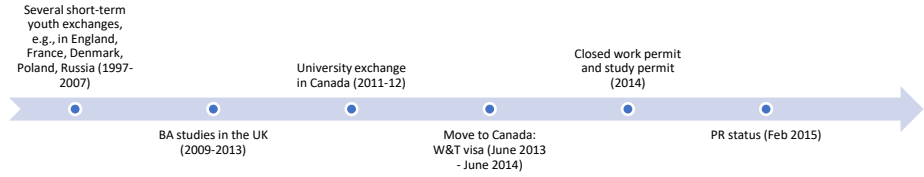
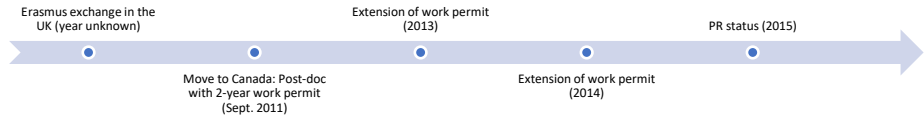
In general terms, the data analysis of this research followed the model suggested by Gaudet and Robert (2018, 139) who state that the analytical process of qualitative research projects should contain three different stages, namely a "vertical, horizontal and theoretical analysis". These different stages are dependent on and impact each other. The first step – the vertical analysis – consists of an analysis of "the material in its 'totality'" during which each source is examined in its own right (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 140). The second step – the horizontal analysis – consists of a comparison of "the different sources of information" (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 140). Finally, the third and last step – the theoretical analysis which is also referred to as "analytical generalisation" – consists of linking "the pertinent ideas" that were discovered and answering the research question(s) (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 140). While these three general stages guided the analysis, in each stage specifically, I drew on the suggestions of Bertaux (2016) for the analysis of life story interviews.

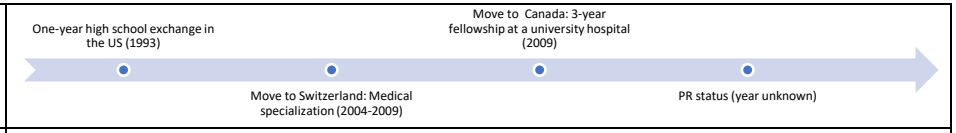
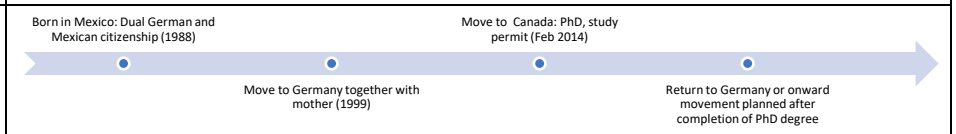
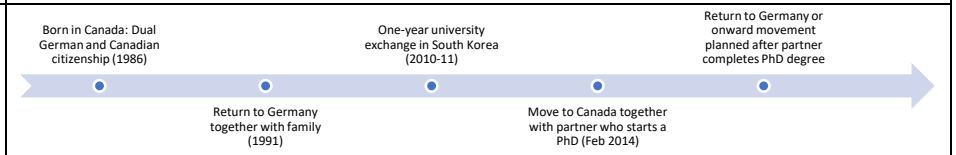
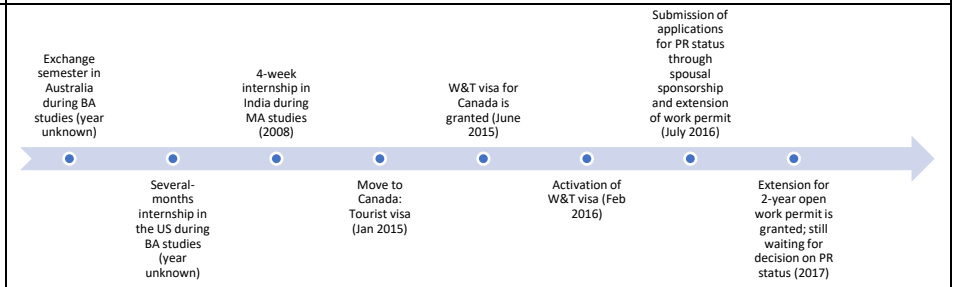
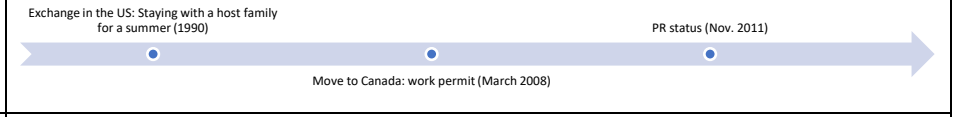
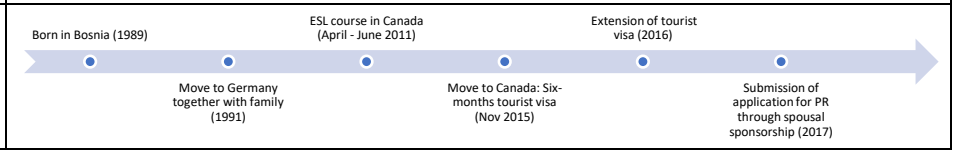
6.5.1 Step One: Vertical Analysis

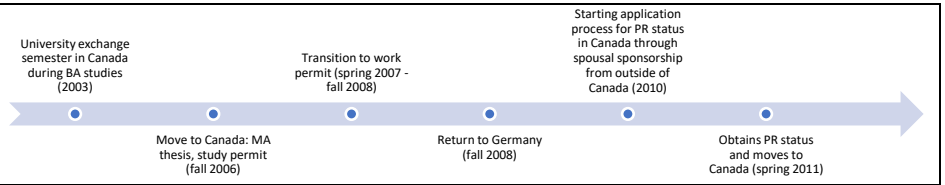
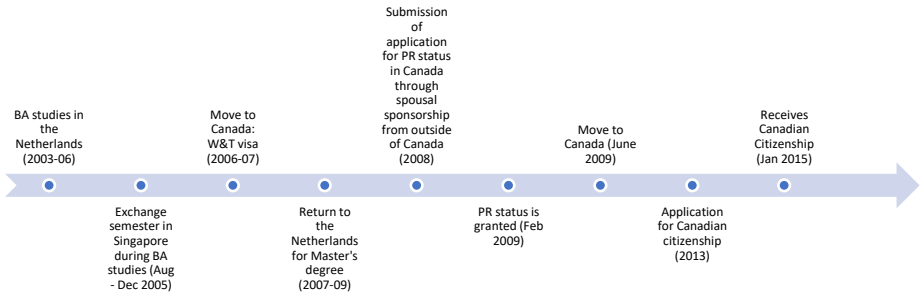
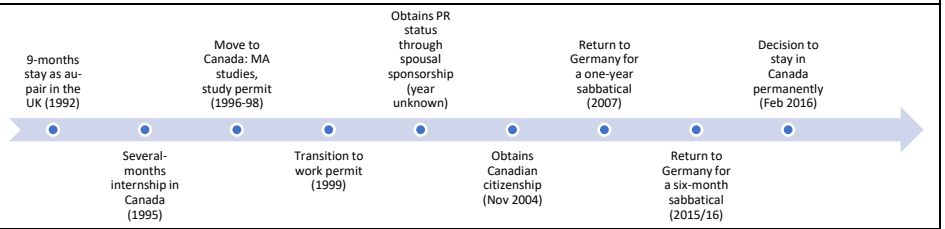
According to Gaudet and Robert (2018, 140), the first step of the analysis – the vertical analysis – fulfills two tasks, namely "(1) the contextualizing condensation that documents the context

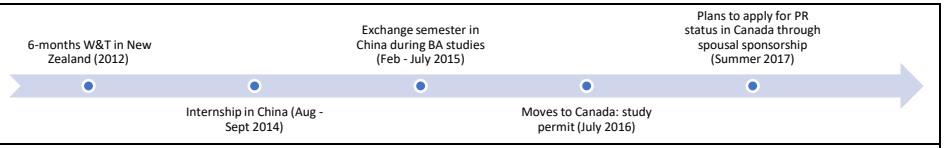
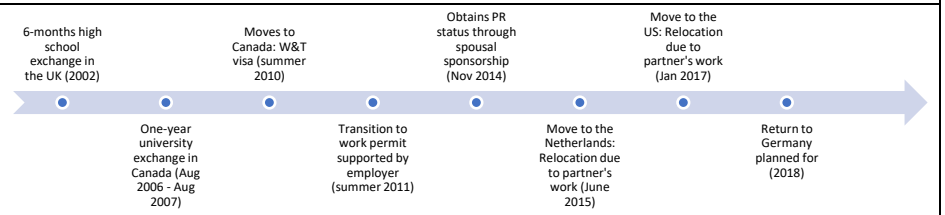
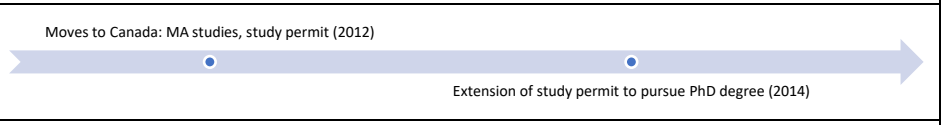
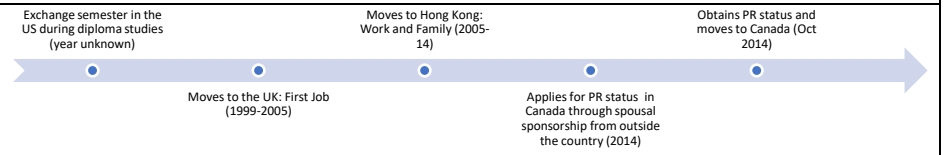
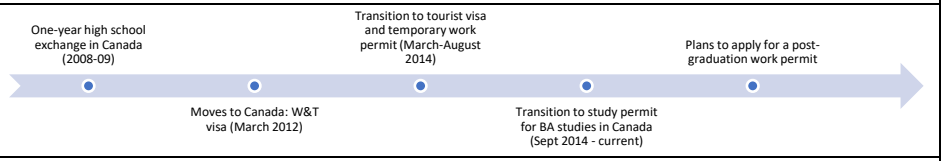
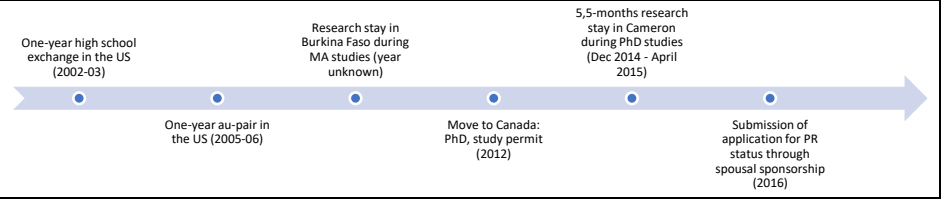
of the production of the source; and (2) the semantic condensation which focuses on the symbolic content of the source". While the former involves a process of identifying the material and documenting the context in which it was produced, the latter involves an examination of each source as well as the information that can be taken from it in its own right (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 141–42).

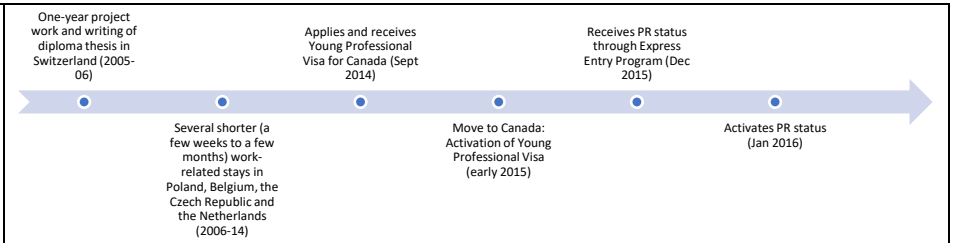
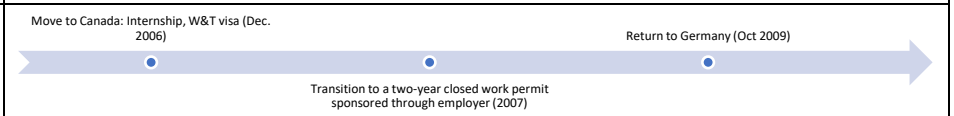
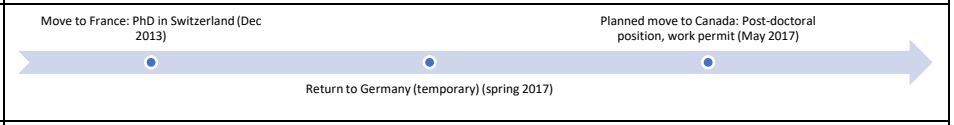
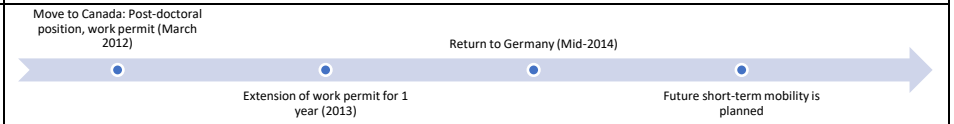
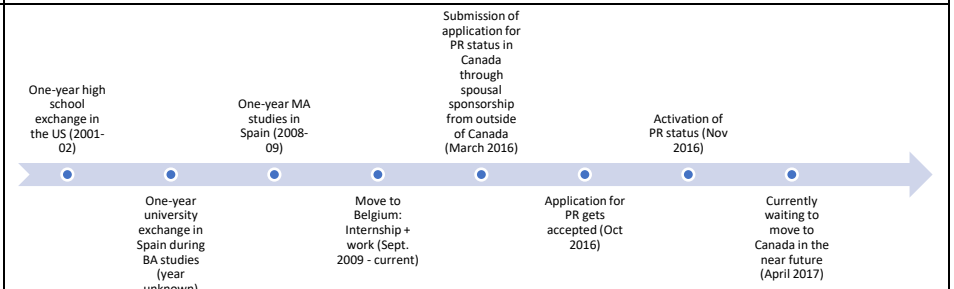
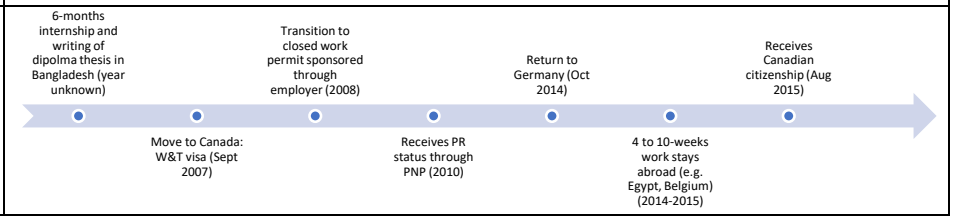
Figure 1: Characteristics and Migration Trajectories of the Interviewees

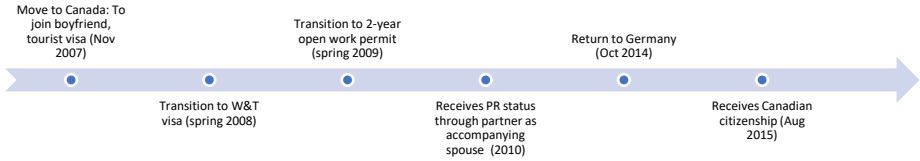
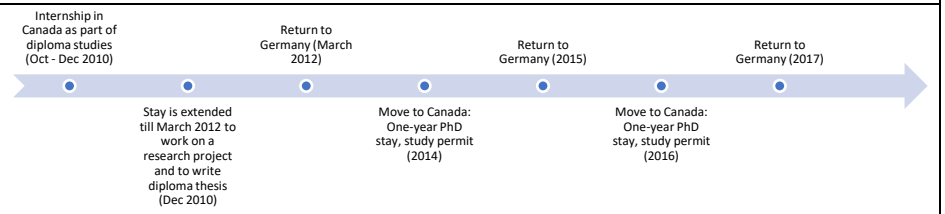
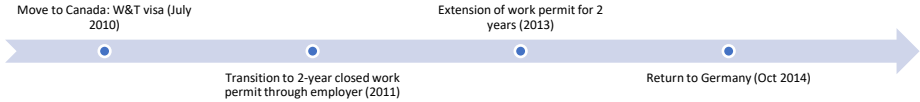
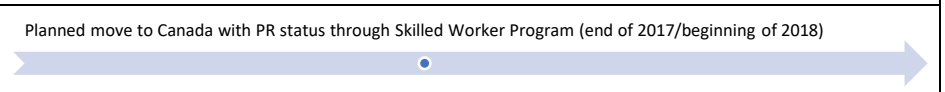
Name*	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Children	Highest Level of Education	Profession	Mobility Trajectory Throughout the Life Course*
Tobias	M	45	Married	2	PhD	Research associate	
Frida	F	39	Married	2	PhD	Assistant professor	
Annika	F	31	Common-law	2	Master's/diploma degree	Financial manager	
Linda	F	47	Divorced	2	PhD	Unemployed	
Florian	M	27	Married	0	Bachelor	Senior analyst	
Benjamin	M	37	Married	0	PhD	Assistant professor	
Laura	F	35	Married	0	Master's/diploma degree	Tax consultant	

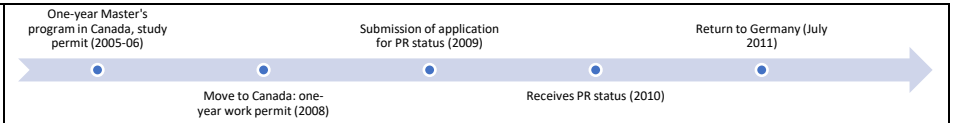
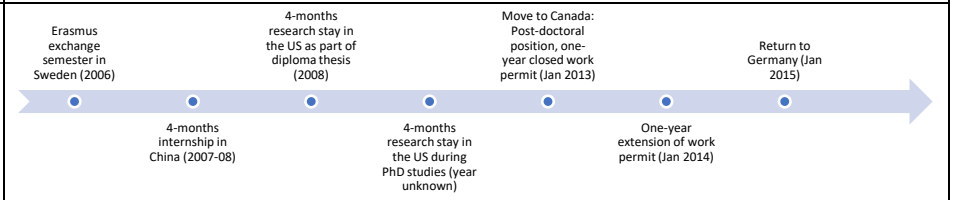
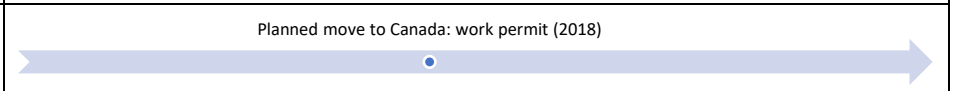
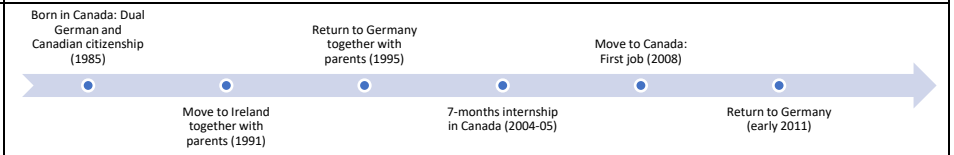
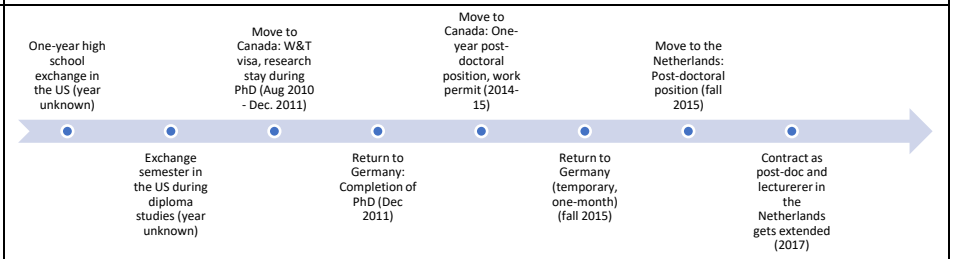
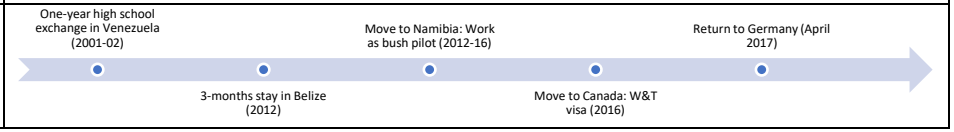
Sophie	F	40	Married	2	Doctor of medicine	Pediatrician	
Helene	F	29	Common-law	0	Master's/diploma degree	PhD candidate	
Peter	M	30	Common-law	0	Master's/diploma degree	Real estate development / engineer	
Leon	M	28	Married	0	Master's/diploma degree	Project coordinator	
Emma	F	34	Married	0	Master's/diploma degree	Freelancing: consulting and translation	
Paul	M	43	Divorced	0	Master's/diploma degree	Engineer	
Nikola	F	28	Common-law	0	State examination (teaching)	Unemployed	

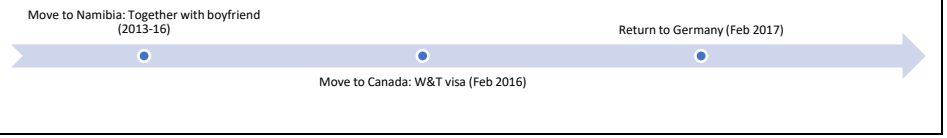
Marie	F	35	Common-law	2	Master's/diploma degree	Marine biotechnologist	
Sonja	F	39	Married	2	Master's/diploma degree	Development officer	
Anne	F	33	Single	0	PhD	Post-doc	
Jutta	F	33	Common-law	0	Master's/diploma degree	Economist	
Vanessa	F	46	Married	2	PhD	Associate professor	
Marlene	F	38	Single/ Boyfriend	0	Master's/diploma degree	Development manager	

Till	M	27	Married	0	Bachelor's degree	Student at teachers' college	
Petra	F	31	Married	0	Master's/diploma degree	Waiting for work permit in the US	
Hilda	F	25	Common-law	0	Master's/diploma degree	PhD candidate	
Nils	M	44	Married	2	Master's/diploma degree	Architect	
Johan	M	25	Single/ girlfriend	0	In the process of completing Bachelor's degree	BA student	
Charlotte	F	31	Married	0	Master's/Diploma degree	PhD candidate	

Anton	M	36	Common-law	0	Master's/diploma degree	Engineer	
Klaus	M	36	Married	1	Master's/diploma degree	CEO of a family run business in the construction industry	
Pia	F	30	Single	0	PhD	Starting post-doctoral position	
Hannes	M	34	Married	2	PhD	Junior professor	
Karl	M	33	Married	2	Master's/diploma degree	Trade union secretary	
Henning	M	34	Married	2	Master's/diploma degree	Engineer	

Nora	F	33	Married	2	Nursing degree	Stay-at-home-mum	
Hanna	F	41	Married	2	Master's/diploma degree	PhD candidate / teacher	
Erik	M		Single	0	Master's/diploma degree	PhD candidate	
Christian	M	31	Single/ girlfriend	0	PhD	Waiting to start post-doctoral position	
Ida	F	25	Single/ boyfriend	0	Master's/diploma degree	Team assistant (management, commerce)	
Lea	F	36	Common-law	0	Master's/diploma degree	Online marketing	
Lukas	M	33	Married	0	Master's/diploma degree	Project manager (IT)	
Emil	M	37	Married	0	Master's/diploma degree	IT consulting	

Lena	F	36	Married	2	Master's/diploma degree	Public relations	
Carolina	F	33	Married	1	PhD	Scientific coordinator	
Greta	F	30	Married	1	Master's/diploma degree	Parental leave / HR	
Luisa	F	31	Married	1	Bachelor's degree	Parental leave / project management	
Isabelle	F	31	Married	0	Apprenticeship as air traffic controller	Air traffic controller	
Lara	F	33	Single	0	PhD	Post-doc	
Lutz	M	32	Married	1	Pilot	Pilot	

Ute	F	28	Married	1		Parental leave / textile business economist	

* Interviewees names were changed and the specific names of the cities where they moved to were left out to protect their anonymity.

This goes hand in hand with the first step of analysis of life story interviews that Bertaux (2016) suggest, i.e., the transcription of the interviews collected which should be paired with memories from the encounters as well as the notes taken during the interviews. After the process of transcription each interview should then be examined in its own right with a specific focus on identifying and reconstructing "the diachronic structure" of the events and actions narrated throughout the life story (Bertaux 2016, 80). Reconstructing this diachronic structure of the lives of interviewees and the events, actions and situations they have been in or undertaken allows to understand and explain their "sequential causality" which allows to identify and understand "the social mechanisms generating actions" rather than just identifying the actions themselves (Bertaux 2016, 81).

In addition to the diachronic construction of the events, actions and situations that individuals refer to in their life stories, it is also important to put these in relation to the "*historic time*" in which they took place, i.e., to put them in a chronological order that considers the biographic age of the interviewee as well as the historic time in which they took place (Bertaux 2016, 84). This allows to understand how the experiences of an individual were impacted by historic events or circumstances as well as phases of social change that are typical for certain periods in history.

Moreover, it is important to consider that although life story interviews might focus on one specific aspect or experience of an individual's life there are often many parallel aspects of an individual's life that impact this aspect or experience. As such, it is important to take into account this interlinkage of different trajectories of an individual, e.g., their housing trajectories, their professional trajectories and their family trajectories. Bertaux (2016, 86–88) emphasizes that specifically the family or household trajectory is an important one to consider as it often impacts other trajectories and, therefore, the reconstruction of the family and household composition should form an important part of the analysis of life story interviews.

Overall, the reconstruction of the diachronic structure of each life story can be seen as a preparation for the identification of social mechanisms and processes which are at the heart of ethnosociological research as they provide indications for what might be expected to be found in the life stories of others (Bertaux 2016, 90).

6.5.2 Step Two – Horizontal Analysis

The second step of the analysis – the horizontal analysis – moves away from exploring the individual documents or data sources collected and instead focuses on comparing and making links between these documents and sources. Thus, while it draws on the results from the vertical analysis it moves away from purely describing the data and instead puts them in comparison with each other "to generate an iterative interpretation of the whole material" (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 178). This does not only include finding similarities in the data collected but also identifying differences between them which makes it possible "to compare the social, cultural and symbolic conditions that allow us to understand the phenomenon under consideration" (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 143). Ultimately, as Gaudet and Robert (2018, 143) state, the goal of this step of the analysis is "to identify essential insights for understanding the phenomenon under consideration" which leads to "a more complex and nuanced comprehensions of the phenomenon, of its analysis and of its explanation".

This is in accordance with Bertaux's (2016) suggestions for the second step of the analysis of life story interviews which should consist of a comparative analysis of all life story interviews conducted. This comparative part of the analysis aims to identify commonalities between the different interviews, specifically, "*recurrences* of the same situations [and] similar logics of situation" which allows the researcher to identify "the *same* social mechanism generating practices, the same process" (Bertaux 2016, 97). Identifying these processes and mechanisms allows to slowly develop a model that helps to explain the phenomenon under study. During this process, the researcher moves from initial presumptions to more concrete

formulations and explanations. Thus, initial hypotheses transform into what Bertaux (2016, 97) calls "(hypothetical) *model*". In developing this model, it is important to pay particular attention to so called "negative cases" which challenge or question one's initial hypotheses and result in a reformulation of these hypotheses which leads to the final model (Bertaux 2016, 97).

Likewise Gaudet and Robert (2018) highlight that sources differing from the majority should not be deleted. Rather they should be kept to identify the variety that might exist and/or to test and question the typology or model one has developed (Gaudet and Robert 2018). Therefore, it is important to make conscious and careful decisions about who to include and exclude in the sample so that the data collected "provides the researcher with a source of information about the subject that has depth and range" (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 145). This is needed to ultimately "theorize and theoretically generalize the knowledge produced" which means that the knowledge produced can be transferred to other cases with similar settings or other cases that involve similar processes (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 145).

6.5.3 Step Three – Theoretical Analysis

The third and last step of the analysis process – theoretical analysis – brings the two previous stages as well as the literature review of the project together and "reflects a higher-order conceptualization" that is based on an interplay between these three components (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 147). In fact, making links to the literature and theories used allows "for triangulation of the information" which makes it possible "to capture original observations made during the fieldwork that were not already empirically documented in the literature" (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 147). Ultimately, this stage of the analysis should also allow to "confirm certain hypothetical propositions (deduction), to highlight some details (induction) and to open other pathways of research (abduction)" (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 147–48). The goal is to answer the research question(s) by developing "an interpretation based on empirical evidence" (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 198). This can at times be challenging given that

qualitative research is often rich in empirical data. Therefore, it is important to "create a synthesis of the most important elements of response, that is to make them intelligible, while conserving the richness of the empirical material" (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 198). In doing so, researchers need to achieve three things: 1) "condensing the information so that it reaches a high level of abstraction", 2) document how this level of abstraction was reached, and 3) presenting this information in written form (Gaudet and Robert 2018, 198).

Transferring this last step to the analysis of life story interviews, Bertaux (2016) demonstrates that the comparison of the different cases, i.e. life stories collected, allows to identify communalities or differences between them based on which they might be classified into "different *types*" (Bertaux 2016, 99). This system of classification needs to be explained and justified by "showing the sociological relevance of the characteristics which distinguish them from each other" as well as "by demonstrating the *internal consistency* of each type" (Bertaux 2016, 99). It is exactly by examining and describing the "coherence of a type" that researchers are able to identify the social mechanisms which are typical for each type (Bertaux 2016, 99). Moreover, although life story interviews usually draw on a relatively small number of cases and research applying such a perspective does not allow for statistic generalization, the identification of social mechanisms makes it possible to formulate "hypotheses on collective phenomena" which can lead to generalizability (Bertaux 2016, 102). Rather than on statistical representativeness, these generalizations are thus built based on empirical observations and are reworked and made more precise during the research process. Eventually they result in the development of a model and although this model is based on a small number of cases, it can then be used and applied to other similar cases or situations studied and in this way take "on the value of generality, even universality" (Bertaux 2016, 103). The most important and underlying factor in this undertaking is that the concept or model developed needs to be based on "*analytical descriptions*" that are convincing and that deliver detailed and in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon under study (Bertaux 2016, 108).

6.5.4 Process of Data Analysis

Following these three steps of the data analysis process, as part of the **vertical analysis**, I first started by transcribing each interview in its entirety. This resulted in over 1,200 pages of interview transcripts. During this transcription process I already started to take notes about interesting and significant points or themes that my interviewees had mentioned. In this way, I was able to identify first topics and themes that emerged from the interviews which helped me in developing my coding scheme during the later stages of the analysis process. In addition to the transcriptions, I also evaluated the short questionnaires that my interviewees filled out after the interviews were finished. To this end, I generated excel files which summarized the findings of all interviewees. After this process of transcription and evaluating the questionnaires, I re-read every interview and with the help of the life calendars that I had compiled with every interviewee at the beginning of the interview process as well as the summary tables from the questionnaires, completed these life calendars. However, instead of sorting the calendars by different topics/trajectories (e.g., housing, education, work, family etc.) as I had done for the interview process, I focused on reconstructing the diachronic structure of different events and actions by putting them into their chronological order (for an example see Appendix 11). This process of establishing the diachronic structure of events and creating a chronological life calendar for every individual was done in preparation of the next step of the analysis, as it already helped to identify certain commonalities in the life stories of my interviewees.

During the second or **horizontal step of the analysis** I focused on the comparison between the different interviews collected. During this phase of the analysis, I went through several rounds of coding using the qualitative research software NVivo. The initial round of coding of the interviews resulted in the establishment of first thematic codes, and sub-codes. In a second round of coding, and following the idea of the trajectory approach, I refined my coding scheme by identifying the different phases that my interviewees went through during their

migration trajectories and sorted the different codes and sub-codes developed initially into these different phases. During this second round of coding, I also refined some of the initially developed codes and sub-codes and added new ones that emerged during this phase.

Finally, during the third and last step of the analysis, **the theoretical analysis**, I brought the previous two steps together. To do so, I re-read the material that had been coded into the different codes and sub-codes several times, identified, and summarized the most important findings of each of these and started to make connections and links between them. During this process, I came up with some initial types and ideas for a model to conceptualize the processes under study in this research and to answer my research questions. These were refined and slightly changed several times until I arrived at the final version, the results of which are presented in the remaining chapters of this thesis. Overall, the analysis chapters follow the different phases that my interviewees experienced during their migration trajectories, i.e., the first analysis chapter explores the reasons and motivations lying behind my interviewees moves and considers their pre-movement situations and the processes that lead to their (planned) moves to Canada; the second analysis chapter examines the initial phase of arrival in Canada and the experiences which my interviewees made during this phase at their places of destination; the third chapter then focuses on how their experiences changed and evolved over time in Canada after this initial phase of arrival and how these experiences impacted my interviewees decisions of staying or leaving and either returning to Germany or moving elsewhere; the fourth and final analysis chapter highlights the reasons and motivations lying behind return or onward movements and also explores the experiences of my interviewees after their return or onward movements. Here it is also important to highlight that I decided to mainly focus on the local level (including regions, cities, neighbourhoods, houses, apartments etc.) for those parts of the analysis that explore the lived experiences of my interviewees rather than the (trans)national level. This is because the existing literature on (highly skilled) migration often focuses on the (trans)national level in their analyses and highlights the detached character of

highly mobile individuals whereas the role that places and places attachment play for these individuals, even or especially at the local level is often ignored. Thus, following the approach to translocal geographies, I particularly wanted to highlight these different places (other than the national or transnational) that become important for the lived experiences of my interviewees.

6.6 Critical Reflections on the Research

Before starting with the actual analysis of the interview material, this section critically reflects on the research project by discussing ethical considerations, my position as a researcher and the limitations of this study.

6.6.1 Ethical Considerations

As a researcher employing qualitative methods, it is particularly important to reflect on ethical issues and take those into consideration throughout the research process (W. C. Van den Hoonaard 2015). Therefore, before starting the data collection process an ethics application which outlined the methodological foundation and construction of the research project as well as the risks and benefits involved, and the measures taken to safeguard my interviewees was submitted to the research ethics board (REB) of the University of Ottawa. This application, with the file number 11-16-12, was approved by the REB in January 2017 (see Appendix 12).

One aspect which is particularly crucial to reflect on regarding ethical considerations of a qualitative research project are its costs and benefits, meaning that it is important to consider which risks it implies for one's informants and if the expected findings or outcomes of the research are worth taking these risks into account (Allen 1997). Thus, it is important to think about the ways in which one's research might influence and maybe even harm one's informants. In connection to my research topic no severe risks for my participants could be identified, as

my interest neither concerned a highly sensitive topic, nor was it interested in specific information that could harm my interviewees in any way.

Despite this low risk factor for my informants, it was still important to inform them about the purpose and aim of my research, what the interview process would entail, and how the empirical material would be used, in order to make them aware of the implementations of their participation (Bell 2010; W. C. Van den Hoonaard 2015). Furthermore, it was important to inform them that their participation in my study was completely voluntary, that they could decide to not answer any question or part of a question if they did not feel comfortable and that they could withdraw from the process at any given time if so wished. Thus, prior to the interviews, I sent a consent form (see Appendix 13) to my interviewees informing them about these aspects.

The consent form further informed them about the fact that their personal data would be treated confidentially and that the material is only going to be used for academic purposes. The consent form also asked for the permission to tape record the interviews and store the data for up to five years after the completion of the PhD project. All interviewees read and signed the consent form prior to the actual interviewing process and had no further questions regarding the research process.

6.6.2 My Position as a Researcher – Reflections on Rapport and Bias

In addition to reflecting on ethical issues, it is also important to reflect on one's own position in the research process and in which ways this might influence not only the data-collection process, but also the analysis of the data (Warren 2000; May 2011). Therefore, below, I reflect on my position as a researcher within this project.

As a doctoral student in Sociology with a particular interest in ethnic and migration studies and having done my undergraduate and graduate studies in such fields as Social and Cultural Anthropology as well as International Migration and Ethnic Relations, I am familiar

with the concepts, theories, and methods I am using. Thus, even though I aimed to analyze the data in an inductive way, the ideas and concepts I identified in the interview accounts were somewhat influenced by my academic background as well as the literature review, I conducted as part of this research project.

Furthermore, when conducting qualitative research, it is important to reflect on how oneself as the interviewer might impact the answers one will receive. This is because one's own position and role in society, including "age, gender, class, and race" among others, may impact the way an interviewee perceives the interviewer, and, thus, responds to them (J. Miller and Glasner 2004, 129). For example, not being part of the group one studies may result in distrust from the interviewee, make it difficult for them to understand the researcher's questions, for the researcher to have enough knowledge about the topic to ask relevant and pertinent questions, or result in misleading answers. Reflecting on these aspects and trying to establish rapport – which Miller and Glasner (2004, 133–34) define by drawing on the works of Glassner and Loughlin (1987) and Blumer (1969) as "[e]stablishing trust and familiarity, showing genuine interest, assuring confidentiality, and not being judgmental" as well as making an interviewee feel "comfortable and competent enough in the interaction (…) to label particular topics irrelevant, point out misinterpretations, and offer corrections" – is thus important to obtain reliable and valuable data.

As a German having moved to Canada for my doctoral studies as well as having been internationally mobile throughout my life with returns to Germany in-between, I was an insider to the group of highly skilled German migrants by choice that I studied and I presented myself as such to them, i.e., a young female PhD student who is originally from Germany and moved to Canada for her studies. Not only did I share certain cultural, historical, and linguistic backgrounds with my interviewees, but I had also gone through the process of deciding whether to stay in Germany, move to Canada or move elsewhere. These similarities made it easy to recruit interviewees and to establish rapport with them as it enhanced communication in general

and made it possible for me to understand certain nuances during the interview process as well as to relate to their experiences and accounts and for them to relate to me. Moreover, considering that my interviewees were highly skilled and that most of them had obtained university degrees and even pursued graduate studies, they were familiar with academic research, and, thus, were not sceptic about participating in a research study but rather open and willing to do so. Many also thought that it was an interesting research topic because there was not a lot of information about the immigration process from Germany to Canada, and, thus, they willingly told me their stories in the hopes that it might enhance the experiences of other people who might plan to do so in the future.

While being an insider certainly helped with the recruitment process and establishing rapport it also required a notion of caution during the research process. First, I needed to be careful in not making any presumptions about the situation and experiences of my interviewees. Specifically, I needed to be aware that my experiences do not necessarily correspond with those of my informants. Everyone makes different experiences and moreover, interprets these experiences in a different way depending on their personal situation and characteristics. Thus, it was important to carefully listen to my interviewees and to critically examine their accounts, trying to separate them from my own experiences. By using narrative life story interviews, I tried to avoid asking leading questions and having any particular answers in mind, instead giving my interviewees the possibility to stress what they felt was important for them. Second, I also needed to be careful to explain cultural, historic, and linguistic nuances in the analysis part of the research to avoid bias and make it possible for readers with a non-German background to understand certain expressions or references, for example. Overall, to avoid upcoming bias, I tried to reflect on my own position as a young female student and a German national currently living in Canada as much as possible in any step of the research process and especially, while conducting the interviews and analyzing the data. By these means, as well as by thoroughly outlining and explaining the structure of my research design and the development

of my research project, I tried to avoid upcoming bias as well as making it possible for the reader to follow the research process. This also includes a reflection on the shortcomings and limitations of this research project as done below.

6.6.3 Limitations of the Research

Although it was thoroughly prepared, this research has several shortcomings and limitations:

First, although the chosen approaches through which I explore the research questions, i.e. the trajectory approach and the conceptualization of translocal geographies, suggest several different methods that can be used from a methodological perspective, this research only drew on narrative interviews that were inspired by the life story approach as developed by Bertaux (2016). While the trajectory approach, for example, also suggests following individuals on their journeys, and the approach of translocal geographies suggests employing participant observations, collecting diaries or making use of visual documentations such as videotaping or photography, due to the limited resources (both financial and in human power) and time available for this research these methods were not considered. On the one hand, this meant that I was not able to talk to my interviewees at different points of their trajectories. Thus, I was only able to recreate their trajectories up until the point of the interview as well as to obtain knowledge about their future mobility intentions, but I was not able to actually know whether they followed through with these intentions or not. To compensate for this shortcoming, I talked to a wide variety of individuals at different stages of their migration trajectories (e.g., the stages of (planning) emigration, immigration, return or onward migration movements) which allowed me to obtain an understanding of these different stages even if not all interviewees had gone through them (yet). On the other hand, it meant that I was only able to obtain information about the different places that were important for the everyday lived experiences of my interviewees through the interviews which might have resulted in some important places being left out as my interviewees did not think about them during the interview. However, by specifically asking

questions about different spheres of my interviewees' lives I think that I was still able identify many of these different places that were important to them and their everyday lives.

Second, in my analysis, specifically those chapters that focus on the lived experiences of my interviewees, I decided to predominantly focus on the local perspective (i.e., the cities, regions, or neighbourhoods in which they were living as well as housing arrangements) and mainly leaving out the (trans)national perspective. This was because many studies already highlight the (trans)national components of (highly skilled) migration whereas little research has been conducted on the lived experiences at migrants' local places of destination and how they form attachments and feelings of belonging to these places. Nonetheless, this choice might have resulted in overseeing some important processes or mechanisms impacting the experiences of my interviewees.

Third and finally, although the life story approach encourages to start the analysis process simultaneously and interchangeably with the process of data collection, considering that I was the only researcher working on this process, this was only possible to a limited extent. For example, I was not able to transcribe each interview before I started to conduct the next one. However, I tried to compensate for this by taking some notes after each interview and writing down relevant observations or ideas. This allowed me, for example, to reformulate certain questions that did not work well or to consider certain aspects in subsequent interviews which I had not previously. It was also through these notes and observations that I made during the first few interviews that I decided to enlarge my sampling criteria and involve individuals who I had not planned to involve initially as outlined earlier in the chapter. Thus, while it would have been desirable to interlink the data collection and data analysis processes even more, I tried as best as possible to compensate for this through the measures just listed.

7 Love, Chance, and Dreams – Explaining the Moves of German Migrants by Choice to Canada

This first analytical chapter focuses on explaining the moves of German migrants by choice to Canada. As such, it aims to understand the contexts in which and the factors that impact these moves. Generally speaking, the young and highly skilled Germans that were the target group of this study present a population that is not only open to being mobile but, in many cases, has previous experience of living, studying and/or working in other countries at least for a certain amount of time. Thus, many of the interviewees had, for example, participated in high school and university exchanges, international internships, or gained work experiences abroad and those interviewees who did not have previous experience of living abroad (other than holiday trips) showed a keen interest in gaining such experience. Often, however, this interest in being internationally mobile was not connected to a specific destination but rather a general desire to experience life abroad. The question then is, why did my interviewees decide on Canada as a destination? Overall, three main triggers could be identified that impacted these decisions, namely 1) **love**, 2) **chance or chance encounters** and 3) **the fulfillment of dreams**. However, it is important to highlight that while these three reasons were the main triggers lying behind the interviewees' moves to Canada, other factors also impacted their decision. The following three sections of this chapter explore these three triggers in more detail while also highlighting other factors. The chapter concludes with a summary and discussion of the findings.

7.1 All You Need Is Love? – Love as a Part of the Migration Trajectory

Already in 2002, when debating new forms of migration and how migration studies needed to include these new forms to paint an accurate picture of today's migration movements, Russell King (2002, 99) stated:

> Maybe, as far as migration factors are concerned, 'love conquers all'. The possibility for the initiation of such 'transnational intimacy' is greatly increased by mass travel, study abroad, and tourism; whilst the accelerating speeds and technologies of travel and communication in shrinking Europe increase the chances of such transnational love being maintained.

While in this quote King puts a specific focus on Europe, his statement also applies to a global scale. Indeed, in my study, love was also one of the main triggers for moving to Canada among many of the interviewees that I talked to. These individuals had a history of being internationally mobile and, thus, had or were living abroad in a variety of different countries for longer or shorter periods. In fact, in accordance with the findings presented in chapter three, many interviewees had not only participated in one but several different forms of mobility prior to their moves to Canada. Florian (27), for example, already participated in different kinds of short youth exchanges in England, France, Russia, Denmark, and Poland, among others as a child. Later, after finishing high school and completing his civilian service in Germany, he decided to move to England to complete his undergraduate degree. Likewise, Jutta (33) conducted her university studies abroad – in her case in the Netherlands – and, in addition to that, participated in an exchange semester abroad during that time. Karl (33) went to the US for a one-year high school exchange as a teenager. He completed his undergraduate studies in Germany but participated in an exchange semester in Spain where he also pursued a one-year master's program. After this, he moved to Belgium where he first did an internship and then started to work. Till (27) went abroad to New Zealand for half a year as part of a work and travel experience and later did an internship and participated in an exchange semester in China. While for some, as for example those mentioned above, these mobility experiences involved countries other than Canada, others, such as Marie (35), Emma (34), Nikola (28), Vanessa (46), and Petra (31) had already been to Canada on short term (two months to a year) university related exchanges prior to their moves.

Regardless of the destinations of their previous mobility experiences (Canada or elsewhere) what united this group of interviewees in addition to their previous mobility experience is that they met their Canadian partners – in almost all cases this happened during one of their previous stays abroad – fell in love with them and ultimately (in same cases after

several years) decided to move to Canada on a more permanent basis. For these interviewees Canada as a destination was thus determined by their partners. While all of them were open to and had participated in international mobility, none of them had necessarily had any specific plans of moving to Canada prior to meeting their partners. Overall, three different scenarios of how and where my interviewees met their Canadian partners could be identified: First, interviewees met their Canadian partners while, in most cases, being abroad temporarily – either in Canada or elsewhere – fell in love and then had to coordinate and navigate long-distance relationships while trying to figure out if their relationships would work and if so where they would want to move to, to be able to live together. Second, some interviewees met their Canadian partners while the latter were on exchange in Germany. Like the first group they had to navigate long-distance relationships and decide where they wanted to settle eventually. Third and finally, some interviewees met their Canadian partners while both themselves and their partners lived abroad in the same country. In that case, they often lived together in that country for some time, formed a family and eventually, after several years decided to move to Canada. All three scenarios are explored in more detail below.

7.1.1 Meeting a Canadian Partner While Temporarily Living and/or Travelling Abroad

Several interviewees met their Canadian partners while they were living abroad for a temporary time only (e.g., for a university exchange) or while they were travelling to countries other than Canada. Florian (27) told me, that it was during the first year of his undergraduate studies which he pursued in England that he met his now wife who is Canadian and who was on an exchange year in England at the time. Florian and she lived in the same student residence, got to know each other, and fell in love. He highlighted that without her he would have "never had any plans of going to North America"[34] because "in Europe there are so many countries to go and see and

[34] Translation of all quotes from the interviews are mine.

yeah, well, sometimes priorities change". In contrast to that Till (27) met his wife who is Canadian in the spring of 2014 during a holiday trip to China where he was visiting relatives. His now wife was in China at the time because she was pursuing a two-years master's program there. While they did not become a couple during this visit they stayed in contact and Till started to fall in love with her. In an attempt to see her again, he applied for a 2-month internship in China which he completed in August and September 2014. It was during this time that the two became a couple. Similarly, Jutta (33), who completed her Bachelor's degree at a university in the Netherlands, got to know her Canadian partner while she went on an exchange semester to Singapore in 2005. However, the two did not meet in Singapore but when Jutta was visiting Hong Kong for a few days where her Canadian partner was on exchange himself at that point. Others also met their Canadian partners during a temporary stay abroad. Annika (31), for example, met her Canadian partner during a university exchange semester in Italy, Benjamin (37) met his wife at a conference in the US, and Sonja (39) met her husband during an exchange semester in Norway.

While the interviewees referred to above met their Canadian partners during a previous mobility experience in another country, some interviewees met their partners while they lived in Canada temporarily, e.g., for a university exchange. For Marie (35) participating in an exchange semester in an English-speaking country was a requirement of the undergraduate degree she pursued in Germany. As a result of this, she went to Canada for one semester. It was during this stay that Marie got to know her partner, who is Canadian, and they quickly became a couple and have been together since then. While Nikola (28) first got to know her Canadian partner who, like her, is of Bosnian decent, during a holiday trip to Bosnia, she reconnected with him during a three-months stay at a Canadian university where she participated in an ESL (English as a Second Language) course in 2011 and the two become a couple. In contrast to that Emma (34) met her Canadian husband during a holiday trip to Canada in 2012. Others,

such as Vanessa (46) and Petra (31) also met their Canadian partners during previous stays in Canada.

Irrespective of whether the interviewees met their Canadian partners in Canada or in another country because they had met them during temporary stays abroad, they initially were only able to see and get to know each other for a limited amount of time before they had to return to their respective home basis. This required them to coordinate and navigate long-distance relationships which often involved several years of either seeing each other only during temporary visits each year or by trying to find other possibilities such as university exchanges, internships or work and travel visas to see each other for longer periods of time. Often, this kind of moving back and forth and making use of different temporary visas also meant that the immigration process to Canada was not a straightforward one. Rather, it evolved over time and in many cases the decision to move to Canada was only taken after several years. Often interviewees either went through a phase of moving back and forth between the two (or more) countries multiple times and/or slowly transitioned their status in Canada from a more temporary to a more permanent status, which could be referred to as a "step-by-step immigration".

This pattern is particularly well illustrated by Florian's (27) case. Even though he met his wife during his first year of studies in 2009 in England, it took him several years before moving to Canada in 2013 with the prospect of staying there on a more permanent basis. The time in-between was characterized by multiple visits to see each other either in Canada or Germany. In addition to these visits, sometimes he and his now wife also traveled together, e.g., in the summer of 2010 they went on a trip through Europe together and the summer thereafter, in 2011, they went on holidays together to Croatia. In trying to create opportunities for seeing each other for more than a few weeks, Florian also made use of other mobility opportunities. As such, in September 2011, he moved to Canada for a one-year university exchange so that he could be together with his wife:

> Well, 11/12 that was, the exchange year, that was the only possibility to spend the year together. I always had plans to participate in an exchange year, well to do an exchange year during my studies abroad. I always rather wanted to go to Sweden, but as I said, priorities change. I went to (name of city in Canada)[35] instead. (Florian, 27)

After his exchange year in Canada, Florian had to return to England to finish his studies which he did in 2013. At that point he decided to apply for a work and travel visa to Canada so that he and his wife could be reunited again. He was able to obtain the visa and moved to Canada in June 2013. The work and travel visa allowed Florian to stay in Canada for twelve months which he knew would be the required time for him and his wife to get recognized as common-law partners. Obtaining this status ultimately meant that they could apply for his PR status through spousal sponsorship. However, Florian still needed to bridge the time between applying for his PR status and receiving it, and, thus, he had to find a way to legally stay in Canada in the meantime. In this regard, he was able to obtain a closed work permit from his employer at the time. However, not working in a field related to his studies, he decided to instead pursue a master's program in Canada to increase his qualifications. With the start of his studies, he received a study permit which allowed him to stay in Canada during the time he was waiting for the approval of his PR status. Florian finally received his PR status in February 2015 and highlighted that the process through spousal sponsorship "was the fastest and easiest possibility" for him as he among other factors did not have to provide any proof of his language skills. Shortly after he obtained his PR status, Florian was able to find a job in his field of expertise and he told me: "And latest when I got the job it was clear that we would stay here [= in Canada] for sure. And it was also always clear that it would be easier for me to be here, than for my wife to establish herself in Germany, particularly professionally".

While at the time of the interview, Florian (27) had already obtained his PR status in Canada, others were still in the process of applying for this status or were waiting to be able to do so but had otherwise gone through a similar trajectory. Till (27), for example, met his now

[35] As I am referring to other identifying information of my interviewees (e.g., their age and fields of employment) during the four analytical chapters of this dissertation I refrain from naming the cities in which they are and/or were living to ensure their anonymity.

Canadian wife in China in 2014, was first able to participate in a university exchange semester in China from February to July 2015 which allowed them to be at the same place again for a few months. After the exchange semester he had to return to Germany to complete his studies, but he and his wife were able to visit each other several times. During this time, they were looking for opportunities to be together at one place instead of in a long-distance relationship. Till told me: "Yes, and when we discussed this issue, it was more or less clear, well she does not speak any German, I do speak English. Well, if we want to be together, it would probably be easier if I moved to Canada." To achieve this, Till decided to continue his studies in Canada and applied for a study permit which would allow him to legally reside in Canada. In the summer of 2016 he moved to Canada, married his wife, and started his studies in the fall of 2016. At the time of the interview, he and his wife had been living together for about seven months and they were waiting to reach the one-year mark so that they would be able to submit Till's PR application through spousal sponsorship. Nikola (28) had been in a long-distance relationship with her Canadian partner for almost four and a half years, moved to Canada on a six-months tourist visa in November 2015 and since then had extended her tourist visa once for another six months at which point, she submitted her PR application through spousal sponsorship and was waiting for the application to be processed at the point of the interview.

Again others, had also previously gone through the phases of navigating long-distance relationships and seizing opportunities for seeing each other on a longer but still temporary basis. However, in contrast to Florian, Till, Nikola and others, they did not end up transitioning their status while being in Canada but instead applied for their PR status through spousal sponsorship from outside of Canada, e.g., while living in Germany or another country. Jutta and her Canadian partner had not only seen each other during visits but in May 2006, after Jutta finished her undergraduate studies, she moved to Canada on a one-year work and travel visa to be closer to her boyfriend who at the time still had to finish his university degree. Not having been able to get admitted to Canadian university, she returned to the Netherlands to complete a

master's degree after this one-year stay in Canada. Her boyfriend joined her in the Netherlands for six months but was unable to find a job there and ultimately returned to Canada. At that point they applied for PR status for Jutta through spousal sponsorship, which was possible because they had lived together for a year in total combining their time in Canada and in the Netherlands. During the time Jutta was waiting for the approval of her PR application she completed her master's degree and she and her boyfriend needed to navigate a long-distance relationship once again. In February 2009 she received the approval of her PR status and moved to Canada in June of that same year. While Jutta stated that she and her partner had considered whether he could move to Germany or elsewhere in the EU with her, she explained that this ultimately fell through:

> Well, it was as follows, we actually did think about, well, whether he could come to Germany, or if we could move to England maybe or something like that. But to obtain a work permit for him in England was not that easy or, respectively, he already had a job [in Canada] and […] well for me it wasn't the case. And to be honest, I never really saw it as such a big decision to emigrate to Canada. I tell you; I just did that somehow. And because I studied in English and, well, I could have worked anywhere. […] In addition to that, my boyfriend does not speak any German at all, and it would have been much harder for him to find a job in Germany. That's why we said 'Okay, let's go to Canada.' (Jutta, 33)

Likewise, Marie (35) who met her Canadian partner during a university exchange semester at a Canadian university remembered the time after the exchange and recounted: "Yes, and then all the years after that we did, well we huddled through that time with different visas and sometimes living in Germany and sometimes in Canada, sometimes long-distance relationship for certain stretches of time." In fact, she explained that after her exchange semester she returned to Germany and finished her undergraduate degree and then continued to pursue her master's at a university in Germany. However, she was able to return to Canada in the fall of 2006 for her master's thesis project and also managed to find employment at a university lab after the completion of her degree, which meant that she was able to stay in Canada until the fall of 2008. She then decided to return to Germany because employment opportunities in the region in Canada she was in were limited in her field. In 2010, she and her partner started to apply for her PR status in Canada so that they finally could live in the same place permanently.

A year after, her PR status was granted in 2011 Marie thus moved to Canada to join her partner again. During the interview, Marie reiterated one important point several times, namely that she "never had any plans to emigrate" and that she was "not one of those emigrants, who always wanted to move" and for whom Canada was the country of their dreams. Much rather, the move to Canada was "the best possible solution for the relationship". Thus, she and her partner took the decision to live in Canada not because she did not feel at home in Germany but rather because it was a bit more important for her partner to live in Canada, in the region where he grew up and where his friends and family were located, than it was for Marie to remain in Germany.

The above examples are representative for those of others who met their Canadian partners during temporary stays abroad not only regarding the experience of having to navigate their long distance relationship with their Canadian partners which often meant visiting and/or moving back and forth between the two countries (or other countries) several times and going through a step-by-step immigration process to Canada but also regarding the statement that it was easier for the interviewees (i.e., the German partner) to move to Canada as opposed to their Canadian partners moving to Germany due to language skills, job prospects and/or the importance of staying in their familiar environment. However, it is important to highlight that not all of these interviewees relied on family sponsorship for obtaining their PR status in Canada, and, thus, transitioning to a more permanent status. Some, such as Annika (31) or Benjamin (37) applied for permanent residency on their own in the respective provinces they were living in.

7.1.2 Meeting a Canadian Partner while Living in Germany

In contrast to the above examples, two of my interviewees met their Canadian partners in Germany. While this aspect of their story differs from those above, their stories are otherwise similar in that both Charlotte (31) and Leon (28) had previous mobility experiences. Charlotte

first participated in a one-year high school exchange in the US and after finishing high school in Germany went to the US again for another year to work as an au-pair. Moreover, during her master's degree she also conducted fieldwork in Burkina Faso. Leon (28) first lived abroad in Singapore for two years between 2005 and 2007 where he visited the United World College – an international school where students can take their International Baccalaureate. During his studies he then also participated in an exchange semester in South Africa.

Both met their Canadian partners while the latter were pursuing their master's degrees at universities in Germany where my interviewees also happened to study and soon became couples. While Charlotte met her then girlfriend in 2010 and Leon met his then boyfriend in 2011. After finishing their degrees in respectively 2011 and 2014 and with their respective partners returning to Canada, Charlotte and Leon had to navigate being in long-distance relationships for some time. In trying to find solutions for being able to be closer to or living together with their partners, they both ended up moving to Canada. Charlotte decided to apply for a PhD position in Canada which she successfully received. This allowed her to be closer to her then girlfriend but also to continue her academic career. Thus, she moved to Canada on a study permit in 2012 which she prolonged once during the course of her studies. At the point of the interview, she had almost finished her PhD, had gotten married to her girlfriend and they had applied for her PR status in Canada through spousal sponsorship in 2016 but were still waiting for the result. In contrast to that, Leon and his husband decided to apply for his PR status in Canada through spousal sponsorship from outside of Canada in the summer of 2014 before Leon's husband returned to Canada. Their application was approved in January 2015 and Leon moved to Canada in April of that same year.

When explaining why they decided to move to Canada, Charlotte and Leon draw on similar reasons as those interviewees who met their Canadian partners during temporary stays abroad, i.e., that it would be easier for them to move to Canada as opposed to their Canadian

partners moving to Germany because of, e.g., language barriers in Germany or employment opportunities. Leon underlined these factors when he told me:

> The main reason was definitely my husband. And the situation is the following, he does not speak any German and we both work in the same sector, well we are both in public policy […] and that's a sector where language is extremely important. Well, when you don't speak the language you simply can't work in this sector. And an additional point is that he is very specialized on First Nations and Nations in Canada, which is something that can't be found in Germany at all. […] And I was a bit more flexible, and I also speak English fluently. And, thus, our thoughts were simply: 'Okay, if we want to build a life together that will likely be a lot simpler for us in Canada. (Leon, 28)

7.1.3 Meeting a Canadian Partner while Living Abroad

The above-mentioned interviewees met their Canadian partners during temporary stays or visits in other countries or while the latter were on exchange in Germany and often went through a phase of having to navigate long distance relationships and moving back and forth between Germany and Canada (and sometimes other countries). Others also met their Canadian partners while living abroad but instead of frequently moving between different countries they mainly stayed and lived in the country where they met each other at least for several years. Often, during this time they formed families and got children and only decided to move to Canada after several years of living together in one or more countries outside of Germany and Canada.

Like others, Karl, for example, had been mobile prior to his planned move to Canada, e.g., as part of high school and university exchanges, among others. As highlighted above, after completing his master's degree he moved to Belgium where he got to know his wife – who is a dual Canadian and Polish citizen but has spent most of her life in Canada – after a few months. So far, Karl's story does not differ much from those told above. However, in contrast to them, he and his wife then lived together in Belgium for a longer period, namely nine years in total, instead of moving back and forth between Canada, Germany, and possibly other places. During these nine years Karl and his wife lived and worked in Belgium, they got married, had two children, and Karl switched employment several times. Karl told me that while the option to either move back to Germany or move to Canada was always there and his family life had always been torn between the different cultures/backgrounds in his life (Germany and Canada

as well as the Polish influence from wife and (name of city in Belgium) as their place of living) the decision to finally take action and move to Canada was made in 2016. This decision was caused by several factors: As in the above cases, Karl mentioned that the decision to move to Canada was partly tied to his wife as they felt that it would be easier for him to move to Canada as opposed to her moving to Germany. Specifically, he told me that while they discussed the options of moving to Germany and Canada ultimately, his wife "did not dare to take the step of moving to Germany, because she doesn't speak any, or doesn't speak German on a high enough level and has respect for the integration into the job market there, or rather doubts about it, let's put it like that". However, he also highlighted several other factors which impacted the decision to leave Belgium and move to Canada which are closely tied to family considerations: First, the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016 created increased security concerns and resulted in an increased presence of military and police in the city Karl and his family were living which was not seen as a desired environment to raise their children. Second, Karl and his family would not have been able to buy a house and live the desired lifestyle in (name of city in Belgium) as houses were too expensive, there was not enough access to garden space and too much traffic. Third, he and his wife were of the opinion that the decision of where they wanted to settle permanently should be made before their children were too old so that they could still easily adjust to the new environment and were not taken out of tight friendship circles. Fourth, Canada offered the possibility to educate their children in French which was seen as an advantage as they visited a French school in (name of city in Belgium). Fifth, and finally, Karl also mentioned that Canada offers similar social securities as compared to European countries. He summarized most of these different factors quite well in the interview when he explained:

> Well, apart from the fact that this [= moving to Germany or Canada] has always been a part of our conversations, it's because we are now getting to an age where we're thinking: 'Okay, in the long run, is this it or do we want that our children grow up somewhere else? And (name of city in Belgium) has always been a bit of a love-hate relationship to me. There are a lot of opportunities but it's also super expansive, jammed, crowded. […] And yes, then we had another reason when those things started in Paris [= attacks in Paris in 2015] and they started to increase the patrols here [= police and military patrols in city where they are living].

> […] And, I don't wanna say that this was the reason for our decision, but it added another layer of factors to it. (Karl, 33)

Taken these different factors together which had the family's best interest at the center, Karl and his wife ultimately decided to move to Canada. They applied for Karl's PR status through spousal sponsorship from outside of Canada and at the point of the interview Karl had already obtained his PR status. However, while his wife and children had already moved to Canada where they were living with his parents-in-law, he was still living in Belgium to support the family financially until either his wife or himself would find a job in Canada to have some security. He was hoping that this transition would "go quicker rather than slower".

This overlap of different factors but all centering around the best interest of the family becomes also apparent in Nils' (44) narrative. Like Klaus, he too had participated in an exchange semester during his university studies and after finishing his degree he moved to the UK where he met his wife who is a dual citizen of Canada and Hong Kong. Nils and his wife first lived in the UK for five years and then moved to Hong Kong where they lived and worked for the following nine years before they and their two children who were born during that time moved to Canada. For Nils and his family, the move to Canada was also triggered by his wife who held Canadian citizenship which allowed her to sponsor Nils for his Canadian PR status and, thus, made the move to Canada possible. However, just as in Klaus's case, Nils highlighted several other overlapping factors that also influenced their decision, these included: First, the environment in which their children should grow up, i.e., Hong Kong was not seen as the ideal place because of the high air pollution, especially considering that one of their children had asthma. Second, they also wanted to move at an age where their children were still young enough to easily integrate in a new environment. Third, although they had successful careers in Hong Kong, Nils was not sure if he wanted to continue working in the same enclave until retirement as employment options were limited due to his lack of Chinese language skills. Fourth, he also mentioned their housing situation which was not ideal in Hong Kong because

they were living in a relatively small apartment. Fifth, he emphasized that moving to Germany would have been more difficult because his wife and children only speak relatively little German and, thus, their integration into respectively the working market and school would have been difficult and not seamless. Moreover, as Nils himself did not have any working experiences from Germany, he also felt that a return to Germany would not mean that he would have an easier time finding work there as compared to Canada. Sixth and finally, Nils referred to another important factor that made Canada more attractive for them, namely the perception that Canada is more multicultural than Germany:

> I think, for us specifically, Germany is simply not as multicultural as Canada or as (name of city in Canada). That was also a decisive point, that we thought we would be able to integrate faster and more easily here [= in Canada] as compared to Germany, a typical medium-sized city in Germany. (Nils, 44)

Overall, both examples highlight the intersection of different factors impacting the decision to move to Canada. Firstly, this decision was closely linked to their wife's who are both Canadian citizens, were able to pass on their Canadian citizenship to their children and were able to sponsor their husbands so that these could obtain PR status in Canada, and thus, easily immigrate to the country. Like for those of my interviewees who met their Canadian partner's during a temporary stay abroad, even for these interviewees it was only through meeting a Canadian and being in a relationship with them that Canada as a possible destination came into play. However, in contrast to those interviewees who met their Canadian partners during temporary stays abroad, Karl and Nils did not go through a phase of having to negotiate long-distance relationships and moving back and forth between Germany and Canada or other countries. Rather, they were relatively settled in their respective places of living and their immigration to Canada was not a step-by-step process during which they slowly transformed their status from a more temporary to a more permanent status as they entered Canada with the status of a permanent resident. Moreover, there were also several other reasons which were often related to the family unit which motivated them to actually move. In both cases these reasons were linked to the city and housing environment, the stages that they found themselves

in their life course, job opportunities and prospects, decisions regarding the future of their children, as well as societal events and social security. The examples of Klaus and Nils highlight the importance of family considerations not only considering their partners but also their children. They also demonstrate the importance of understanding migration as an ongoing process and embedding migration experiences into individual's wider migration trajectories as their decisions to move to Canada were inherently linked to their previous migration and mobility experiences.

7.2 Grabbing Opportunities – the Impact of Chance and Chance Encounters on Moving to Canada

As demonstrated in chapter three of this thesis, chance and chance encounters as factors impacting migration trajectories have so far only sparsely been examined in migration research. Gladkova and Mazzucato (2017, 1) argue that this is because "the aim of social scientific inquiry [is] to search for structures, regularities, and lasting relationships" rather than "exceptional and insignificant" events which chance and chance encounters are often seen as. However, in their paper, the authors argue that chance and chance encounters need to be theorized as an important factor impacting migration trajectories as these change and evolve over time. So far, the concept of chance and chance encounters has mainly been studied in research on refugees and the journeys they undertake to reach their places of destination. However, in the accounts of several of my interviewees, I also found that chance and chance encounters played an important role. In fact, many of them had not necessarily thought about Canada as a destination per se but they rather had plans to continue their mobility trajectories by living and/or working abroad and Canada as a destination was the result of a coincidence, a chance encounter, or an elimination process. This was also the case for a few interviewees who did not have any previous experience of being mobile but were intrigued to gain experiences

abroad, without necessarily having a set destination in mind. Below both scenarios are explored in more detail.

7.2.1 Chance and Chance Encounters Impacting the Continuation of Migration Trajectories

For several of the interviewees their moves to Canada represented a continuation of their migration trajectories. For most of these interviewees the desire to continue their migration trajectories was more important than wanting to move to Canada specifically. In fact, Canada as a destination was often rather the result of chance or chance encounters. This was true for interviewees who pursued an academic career as well as for those who pursued careers outside of academia.

For those interviewees who worked in academia one uniting feature was that they all highlighted the necessity and normality of moving as part of life in academia and especially when aiming to pursue a successful career in academia. Often research is so specialized that certain research projects or facilities can only be found at certain universities in the world which then requires researchers to move to these places to be able to work there and to advance their careers. Moreover, gaining international experiences is often seen as an important qualification within academia which results in prestige and increases one's competitiveness in the job market. Those of my interviewees who were working in academia or aiming to pursue academic careers emphasized these points. Carolina (33), for example, highlighted that research in the field of chemistry, which was her field of expertise, has a strong international orientation and that as a result of this it is "helpful to obtain certain intercultural competences and language skills". As a result of this, throughout her undergraduate and graduate studies, she had participated in different university exchanges and internships abroad, including a semester in Sweden, a four-months stay in China, and two four-months stays at a university in the US. Likewise, during the interview, Pia (30) who had pursued her PhD in Switzerland and was about to move to Canada

to start a post-doctoral position there, talked about her perception that in her field of study – physics – or in academia in general it was "fairly common to move around a lot". In fact, she explained:

> […] normally you need to change countries or even continents every two to three years. […] And well, within Europe there are a lot of moves and depending on how long you want to stay in academia, you usually either end up in America or somewhere else that's further away at least once. (Pia, 30)

Similar reasons were emphasized by Christian (31), who had also pursued his PhD in Switzerland. He told me that during his PhD he searched and applied for post-doctoral positions worldwide because his research field is very specialized. Therefore, there are not a lot of positions in his field in Germany, many research projects are international collaborations and the most interesting projects are at foreign universities. Like Carolina and Pia, he thus highlighted the international orientation of his research field which made it common to at least spent some time of his academic career abroad. However, he also highlighted that because of the rules and regulations for academic positions in Germany – specifically the so-called "Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz" (Act of Academic Fixed-Term Contract) which requires young academics to find a permanent position or transform their temporary to a permanent position within six years – it made sense to obtain experiences abroad which allows one "to publish, to sharpen one's profile, to learn new things" without having to work against this six-year limit. As a result of these factors, Christian was open to applying for post-doctoral positions abroad. This openness of going abroad and/or continuing their academic mobility – at least for some time – could also be found among other interviewees who were in academia.

Moreover, what was typical about this academic mobility was that it was not necessarily driven with a specific destination country in mind but rather with the ambition to find the best match for their academic and language skills, and, in some cases lifestyle considerations. Therefore, Canada as the destination was often rather the result of chance, a chance encounter or an elimination process. While Christian, for example, was open to apply for post-doctoral positions internationally, he still limited his choices by deciding that he wanted to move to an

English-speaking country that offered him the possibility to work on an interesting research project and would allow him to maintain a good way of life. Thus, while he was open to the idea of working and living abroad, he did not have Canada in his mind specifically. He, for example, also applied to positions in Denmark and the US. However, he ended up deciding on moving to Canada because he was selected as the successful candidate by the research team at a Canadian university. Moreover, the research project in Canada that he was supposed to start working on was the most interesting one and the one that matched his qualifications the best as compared to the positions in the US and Denmark. Likewise, when thinking about where to move for her post-doctoral position, Carolina and her husband who wanted to accompany her came up with a list of criteria for determining the destination namely an English-speaking country that would allow Carolina to obtain further research qualifications and at the same time would allow them to have a good life, where they could feel comfortable and participate in exciting and interesting activities. Based on these criteria, they came up with a list of three countries – Australia, New Zealand, and Canada – and she simply started to look into and contact different research groups that were working on the same or related topics to her own research and where she could apply for a post-doctoral position. Thus, while Canada was on her list of possible destinations it was ultimately only because she received a positive reply from a university in Canada and was able to obtain funding for the post-doc through a German foundation that she moved to the country in January 2013. While Carolina received a closed work permit, her husband was able to join her and received an open work permit as the accompanying spouse.

Carolina's interview also highlighted another important factor, namely that academia does not only require international mobility but makes such a lifestyle possible. Carolina told me that once she completed her PhD degree in Germany, she decided to continue her migration trajectory – this time together with her husband – as she realized that the time after her PhD was "the last possibility" for her "to really go abroad for a longer period of time again". She

went on to explain: “Somehow I am always itching to travel again and experience something new once I get back to Germany. Well, it’s always such an exciting time and you take in so many impressions and you learn so much.” Thus, in addition to allowing her to broaden her academic perspectives and skills the move to Canada also allowed her to fulfill her personal desire of living and experiencing other cultures.

While in the above two cases, Canada as a destination was the result of chance and an elimination process, as both Christian and Carolina received a positive response from a Canadian university but could have just as well ended up in other countries had they received a job offer from there, Pia’s case differed slightly. Like Carolina and Christian, she was also in the process of thinking about her next steps in her academic career, however, in contrast to the two, she had not started to search for post-doc positions herself yet. Rather, a professor from Canada who was working at the same research facility as her at the time told her about a post-doc position in Canada and encouraged her to apply for it which Pia did. She ended up being the successful candidate and was in the process of moving to Canada when I talked to her in April 2017. Pia highlighted that “all of it was relatively fast and it was really more or less a coincidence”. Thus, she did not have any fixed intentions of moving to Canada but rather took up an opportunity that came her way. This was also the case for others with previous mobility experiences and who were working in academia, such as Frida (39), her husband Tobias (45) and their son who moved to Canada because she received an offer for an assistant professorship at a Canadian university; Linda (47) who first moved to the US as a post-doc together with her husband and later moved to Canada because her husband received a professor position at a Canadian university; or Anne (33) and Helene (29) who moved to Canada because they were able to secure PhD positions in the country. In Helene’s case, the move to Canada was also supported by her boyfriend Peter (30) who was happy to move with her as he had planned to obtain work experiences abroad. In addition to the fact that he held dual German and Canadian citizenship because he was born and lived the first five years of his life in Canada with his

German parents certainly facilitated the move there as he did not have to go through the immigration process.

The narratives of Carolina, Christian and Pia also highlighted another important factor, namely how inherently linked their (planned) moves to Canada were to their previous stays abroad. All three stressed how their previous experience abroad had prepared them in some way or another for future moves. Carolina told me: "But well, I learned from my own experience from previous stays abroad, that that [= finding friends] will happen. Thus, I did not have any fear at all." Christian likewise talked about how his previous experience abroad had prepared him with strategies for his future move to Canada, specifically regarding making new friends and building a social network. He explained how his previous experience taught him the importance of establishing a social network outside of his work environment, which he planned to achieve in Canada by "quickly searching for social groups outside of work such as a sports club, I don't know, let's say a 'nerd club', well something with board games or something along those lines" and by putting in the time and energy to achieve this. Moreover, he emphasized that his previous experience of living and working in the French-Swiss border region had made him feel "relaxed in regard to the administrative aspects" of the move to Canada. He was convinced that "things would work out somehow" in Canada as his previous experience showed him that there was no reason to stress out because everything, from opening a bank account to insurance and other aspects was "so simple, so uncomplicated" and he was anticipating that it would be the same in Canada. Pia (30) highlighted similar aspects. While she told me that a move within Europe was likely easier than a move to Canada from an administrative and bureaucratic perspective, she still thought that her previous experiences abroad would be helpful "because you have at least lived a bit further away from home already. Well, you had to completely settle in, get to know new people. Well, and I think those are really practical skills as it means you're not thrown in at the deep end […]". Pia's story also demonstrated another link between her previous international experiences and the move to Canada, namely the fact

that it was while she was living and working abroad that she met the professor who told her about the post-doc position in Canada. Without this "random" encounter during her previous mobility experience, she might not have ended up moving to Canada. This was also the case for Sophie (40) who conducted her medical residency in Switzerland and worked together with a colleague who had just recently returned from Canada and was talking a lot about his experiences there. This made her curious about Canada as she said, "it all sounded so cool" and she asked him for the contact information so that she herself could apply for a fellowship in Canada which worked out.

This link between a previous mobility experience and the move to Canada through a chance encounter while living abroad could also be observed in the narratives of others who were not working in academia. Henning (34), for example, spent six months in Bangladesh during his diploma studies where he did an internship and wrote his diploma thesis. During his time, he worked together with another person from Germany who was employed by a Canadian company. This person later offered him a job at this company in Canada which Henning decided to take as he explained:

> And when my studies were done, well, then the question was: What are you doing next? You start a new chapter of your life and I always wanted to go abroad to learn the language [= English] for real and to live abroad. And my sister had been on an exchange year and I thought that was really exciting, though she did that during high school. And because of that I really, really wanted to do something like that too […] and then this offer came from Canada. (Henning, 34)

Thus, while Henning wanted to gain abroad experiences, he did not necessarily have Canada on his radar, but this destination was the result of the encounter with his colleague in Bangladesh. Nora (33) his wife, and girlfriend at the time, had never even thought about moving abroad but accompanied him to Canada because she was afraid that their relationship, which was still relatively young at the time, would not last if she stayed behind. For Lutz (32) it was also a chance encounter that triggered his move to Canada and meant a continuation of his migration trajectory. He recounted that as a teenager he participated in a one-year high school exchange in Venezuela and as a young adult also lived in Belize for three months before he

moved to Namibia in 2012 to start working as a bush pilot there. He lived in Namibia for about four years and it was during that time that colleagues of him, who were either from Canada themselves or had lived and worked in Canada before, told him how easy it was to find a position as a pilot in Canada and that he would have very good chances of finding employment there. As up until this point in his life, being mobile and living in other countries formed an inherent part of his life, Lutz decided to look into the possibilities of moving to Canada and did so together with his wife Ute (28) in 2016. Thus, like the above examples, Henning and Lutz did not necessarily have a fixed plan of moving to Canada but rather were interested in experiencing life abroad and to continue their mobility trajectories, and, for both of them an opportunity came up or was brought to their awareness to move to Canada which was inherently linked to their previous stays abroad.

7.2.2 Chance and Chance Encounters Impacting First Time Movers

That Canada as the country of destination was more or less the result of chance or chance encounters was also present in the stories of some of my interviewees who did not have any previous experience of living abroad but wanted to obtain such experiences. What was characteristic for these interviewees was that they did not have a specific destination in mind but rather were interested in obtaining abroad experience in general. While being open to a variety of different locations, some of them still set certain criteria that a destination should fulfill. Laura (35), for example, highlighted that the only condition she had for a destination was that she wanted to move "to a country that had similar health care conditions to Germany," regarding health care insurance and health procedures that are being covered. Similarly, Klaus (36) emphasized that he wanted to move to a country that offered similar conditions as Germany in terms of standard of living. Moreover, he wanted to move to an English-speaking country because that was the only foreign language that he spoke and a stay in an English-speaking country would allow him to improve his English language skills. Likewise, Lea (36) and Greta

(30) highlighted the importance or advantage of moving to an English-speaking country because of their existing language skills and/or the opportunity to improve these. As a result of this general interest in gaining experiences abroad, for these interviewees Canada as a place of destination was often the result of chance or an elimination process, just as it was for those with previous mobility experiences as discussed in the first part of this sub-section.

Laura explained that she and her partner who both used to work as international tax consultants for a big company in Germany were inspired to go abroad by all their clients who often lived very international lifestyles. Consequently, she stated that "at some point the question [for us] was no longer if but more or less when and where?" Thus, while they knew that they wanted to move abroad, at least for some time, they did not know where to move to and how to organize the whole undertaking. However, their company frequently relocated personnel to other locations around the world and ultimately because Laura's partner was working with a client in Canada, an opportunity came up to apply for a permanent position in Canada with the same employer, which meant that their stay in Canada would not be limited to a certain amount of time, as is often the case with internal company relocations. When this possibility came up, Laura told me that she and her husband started to search for information about the place of destination in Canada online. They watched several videos on YouTube and read up on things and ultimately were so intrigued that they decided that this was the place where they needed to go to. Similarly, Paul (43) recalled that his move to Canada was a coincidence. After he finished his university studies, he started to work in Germany but was only able to get fixed-term contracts and not a permanent position. Therefore, he started to search for positions internationally. At that time, he had a friend from university with whom he was still in contact with and who himself had moved to Canada for professional reasons. Ultimately, this friend contacted Paul at some point when a position became available at his employer since he knew that Paul was looking for work and was willing to move abroad. It was because of this contact that Paul ended up moving to Canada. For Hannes (34) and Eric Canada

as a destination was also determined by chance and chance encounters. Hannes ended up moving to Canada for his post-doc because of a chance encounter with a professor from Canada who happened to be a guest professor at the same university where Hannes conducted his PhD studies. This professor was working in the same lab as Hannes and encouraged him to apply for a post-doc in Canada with him as his supervisor. Erik's experience was similar in that he wanted to gain international experience and learn how the academic system works in another country but did not have a set destination in mind. Canada came up as an opportunity because one of his professors heard about his ambitions and knew another professor who had previously worked at the same university in Germany but ultimately transferred to a Canadian university. She facilitated the contact between Erik and this professor and Erik was able to start an internship with this professor's research team in Canada. Likewise, Marlene (38) and Greta (30) who were working outside of academia both were open and interested in obtaining international experiences but neither of them had a specific destination country in mind. Canada ended up being the destination for their (planned) moves simply because their employers offered them the opportunity to relocate there.

Finally, even for Lea (36), Klaus (36) and Hilda (25), Canada as a destination was not so much the place, they had always dreamt of moving to but rather the result of a process of elimination. Both had always wanted to go and experience life abroad for a while but for different reasons did not manage to do so during their university studies. However, Klaus took the opportunity to go abroad after his university studies. While he initially wanted to go to the US and applied for internship positions there, this undertaking fell through and having to reorient himself, he tried his luck in Canada instead where he was able to secure an intern position. Lea first worked for a few years after finishing her university degree and then took the opportunity to go abroad when she was in a relationship with someone who had already lived abroad before and was willing to do so again. This gave Lea the sense of security she needed

to undertake this move. Lea described the choice of Canada as a destination as an elimination process:

> And then, why Canada? That was because I wanted to go somewhere anglophone. And then in my head so to speak there was: 'Okay, the US, Australia, Canada.' […] Australia was too warm for me […]. Going to the US is relatively difficult and expensive and going there just seemed a bit too much. And then Canada was kind of the only option that was left. (Lea, 36)

For Hilda – who always wanted to gain experiences abroad but had not gotten the chance of doing so during her undergraduate degree – Canada as a destination was determined by the fact that the field of research, she was interested in, had a strong basis at the Canadian university she applied to. In her case, finding a good fit for her research field was the most important factor rather than looking for a specific country or city to move to.

7.3 Dreaming of (a Life in) Canada? – The Impact of Previous Experiences in Canada on My Interviewees' Migration Trajectories

The previous two sections of this chapter emphasized how for many of my interviewees the move to Canada was something that they had not necessarily planned but happened because they either got to know a Canadian and fell in love with this person or because they by chance came across an opportunity to move to Canada. However, there were also several interviewees for whom their move to Canada was inspired by previous experiences in Canada specifically. In most cases, these experiences were either linked to high school or university exchanges or to holiday trips in Canada. In contrast to the groups of interviewees referred to above, these interviewees had a distinct desire to move to Canada and had actively sought and/or were seeking to find ways of doing so. In what follows, I first reflect on the group of interviewees who were inspired to move to Canada because of a high school or university exchange there. After that, I examine those interviewees whose dream of moving to Canada was inspired by previous holiday trips in the country.

7.3.1 High School and University Exchanges in Canada as an Inspiration to Move There

Both Johann (25) and Ida (25) had gone to Canada for a high school exchange when they were in grade eleven, during which they lived with a host family and visited a Canadian high school. While Ida stayed with a host family in a small city in the province of Quebec (the French speaking part of Canada), Johan stayed with a host family in a bigger city in the province of Ontario. Both enjoyed their experiences in Canada a lot and described them as being formative for their lives. Ida, for example, highlighted that the positive experiences that she made during her high school exchange and a three-months stay in Canada after high school inspired her wish to move to Canada at a later stage in her life. She said that it was "neither the quality of life nor the nature, but simply the people and for me, I just really feel so comfortable there". At the point of the interview, Ida was still living in Germany and did not have a concrete plan of when to move to Canada but just knew that she wanted to do so in the next few years. In addition to her inspiration through her previous stays in Canada, Ida also emphasized that her wish of moving to Canada was influenced by the desire to have a challenge. She explained:

> Well, I would find it very boring to live in Germany my whole life. […] And yes, I think simply this challenge to say 'It's a huge step to do this [= move to Canada]' And no one else has done something like that in my circle of friends. And I am just so up for this, well I really wanna do something different. (Ida, 25)

Johan emphasized similar factors. When talking about his high school exchange in Canada he explained: "[…] I think, what I really liked is that I was able to pick up English so quickly and in such a way that no one could tell if I was from Canada or not. And that was somehow, I think unconsciously, I don't know if I was aware of it back then, but unconsciously it felt like an opportunity to completely redefine yourself." This experience of being able to redefine himself and because upon return to Germany he did not quite feel at home there any longer and did not feel as if other people could relate to the experiences he had made and understand him fully inspired him to later return to Canada, where he was living and studying at the time of the interview.

While Lena (36) did not go to Canada on a high school exchange but rather went there for a one-year master's program, her experiences of returning to Germany were similar to those of Johan's. She told me that after her return to Germany she felt very out of place in Germany and did not really know what to do. She compared everything to Canada and thought that everything in Germany was terrible:

> I thought everyone was so grumpy and complicated, and I did not really know what to do with my life. […] And I was so homesick for the open, friendly, and kind way of Canadians and also for this student life. Well, I was homesick, homesick for Canada. (Lena, 36)

In addition to this nostalgia for Canada, she was also having troubles finding a permanent job in Germany. These factors combined lead her to search for ways to move back to Canada which ultimately became possible because she met her future Canadian employer who was visiting Germany. After that, she successfully applied for a position in Canada and moved back there.

Lara's (33) story is slightly different from those above. Her migration trajectory started when she went on a high school exchange in the US during grade eleven. After obtaining her high school leaving exam, she started an undergraduate degree at a university in Germany during which she spent one semester on exchange at a university in the US. Lara later continued to pursue graduate studies. During her PhD she joined a research group at a Canadian university for about a year and a half and conducted research there which she saw as a very valuable and important experience for her academic career. She returned to Germany to finish her PhD degree and then moved back to Canada again to continue her academic career by taking up a post-doctoral position at a different Canadian university. However, in contrast to Johan, Ida and Lena, it was not so much the attraction to Canada as such and her previous experiences that impacted her decision to return to Canada for her post-doc but rather the fact that she had gone to a conference in the Province of British Columbia at some point during her PhD studies during which she got to spent two days in (name of city in Canada). This very short stay in (name of city in Canada) inspired her to apply for a post-doc position in this city as she "was simply

stoked" by her stay there and thought that it would be a great place to life for a year. Her efforts were successful, and she was able to move to Vancouver for a one-year post-doc position.

While Luisa (31) also had previous experiences of living in Canada, her narrative is unique in that she was born in Canada while her German parents lived and worked there due to a work assignment of her father. As a result of this, she lived in Canada for the first six years of her life and automatically obtained dual Canadian and German citizenship because she was born in Canada, but her parents held German citizenship. After the first six years of her life, Luisa moved to Ireland together with her family because of another job relocation. They stayed in Ireland for three years before they returned to Germany where Luisa then spent the remaining years of her childhood and teenage years and went to high school. Holding Canadian citizenship and having lived in Canada as a child but not having a lot of memories of that time, and, thus, not knowing what "real life was like in Canada" triggered her curiosity of wanting to move back to Canada at least for some time. She explained:

> It was more, because I, myself was holding dual citizenship because I was born in Canada and I told myself 'Well, but I don't have a clue what life is like there. I only know it from holidays.' And I always said, 'I wanna know what a liter of milk costs there' (Luisa, 32).

This curiosity resulted in her moving to and from Canada several times later during her adult life. This phenomenon of moving back and forth between Canada and Germany several times. Luisa's case is unique in that her wish to move to Canada was not triggered by a high school or university exchange but rather by an experience as a child during which she had no influence on the decision-making processes of the moves and simply moved along with her parents.

7.3.2 Holiday Trips to Canada as an Inspiration to Move There

While in the above examples my interviewees were inspired to move to Canada (or planned to do so in the future) because of a previous longer experience in the country during which they lived and studied at a high school or university in Canada, a few of my interviewees were inspired to move to Canada through the experiences they had made in Canada during holiday

trips. This was the case for Lukas (33) and Emil (37), for example, a couple that at the time of the interview was still living in Germany but already had taken active steps organizing and planning their move to Canada. Lukas told me that he always had the desire to move abroad and wanted to experience the challenge of living abroad, experiencing something new and having to start over. However, when he was younger, he did not have the opportunity as his family did not have the financial means to send him on a high school exchange. During the end of his high school studies and the beginning of his university studies he worked as a travel guide in England for several weeks at a time and got a little taste of what life abroad is like. In 2010 he, his husband Emil and his father went to Canada for the first time, and it was during this trip that both Lukas and Emil fell in love with the country and decided that emigrating to Canada was a possibility. Lukas explained that when they first arrived in (name of city in Canada) it felt like coming home:

> We arrived at the airport and it was, well at least this is how I experienced it, of course today that's a bit romanticized, but it was a feeling, somehow like coming home. It was a really strange thing. We arrived and everything was simply wonderful right from the beginning. (Lukas, 33)

This feeling of being at home never left. While Lukas was the driving force behind the dream to emigrate, Emil was open to this idea. He told me that as a child he travelled a lot with his parents, and this installed a "Wanderlust" in him which remained till today. Both Lukas and Emil highlighted their perception that Canada would offer an excellent quality of life in terms of a good work-life balance because of the accessibility to nature and outdoor activities which would allow them "to simply get out of the city and drive somewhere by car for an hour and then camp in the middle of nowhere" as Lukas, for example, stated. Emil underlined this point by saying:

> But what is really, as Lukas already said, the hiking, well the possibility to really be able to go and hike […] that's what I am most interested in. Because it gives you a real perspective to do something different during the weekends. To really get out and to let the job be a job. (Emil, 37)

At the end of this first trip during which they traveled through the Rocky Mountains, visited Vancouver Island and went down to Seattle in the US as well, they spent a few days in (name of city in Canada). They were very impressed by the city and this was when they decided that this city would be the place where they would want to move to in Canada. After their initial trip to Canada in 2010, Lukas and Emil visited Canada two more times in 2012 and 2014. These trips confirmed their impressions from their first visit in Canada. In addition to the nature aspect, Lukas also emphasized that they enjoyed the friendliness and the open way of Canadians. This became particularly apparent to them when they returned to Germany from their trips and people at customs and elsewhere did not ask them how they were doing but simply asked for their passports, for example. Even if they were aware that the Canadian friendliness was quite superficial, they still enjoyed this more open interaction and thought that the social interaction in Canada was nicer than in Germany. At the time of the interview, Lukas and Emil had started their preparations for moving to Canada. They had familiarized themselves with the Canadian immigration system and decided to apply through the Express Entry system as skilled workers. They had started to downsize their belongings, organized their insurance and pension plans in a way that they would also be able to access them in Canada and they had also started to tell their customers – the two were the owners of a successful IT consulting company – that they would be moving to Canada.

The narratives of Isabelle (31) and Hanna (41) were similar to that of Lukas and Emil. Both Isabelle and Hanna had fallen in love with Canada the first time they went there for a holiday trip and decided that they wanted to move there eventually. Both mentioned similar factors to those of Emil and Lukas that had made them fall in love with the country including the nature and outdoors as well as the friendly, open, and helpful way of Canadians which they appreciated and as Isabelle highlighted gave her “a feeling of being at home”. Both went back one or several times after this initial trip to confirm their impressions of the first trip and tried to find opportunities to move to Canada. While Isabelle was still living in Austria at the point

of the interview and was looking for ways to make her dream come true, Hanna and her family had succeeded to move to Canada in 2011 but at the point of the interview had just recently returned to Germany. This aspect of returning to Germany is explored in more details in the fourth analysis chapter.

Finally, Anton (36) was both inspired to move to Canada by his multiple previous holiday trips during which he got to know the country and the culture as well as by meeting his Canadian partner during a holiday trip in Iceland. Anton stated that he had already planned to move to Canada at some point in his life before he met his partner as his holiday trips and the positive experiences he made in Canada, e.g., "the open and friendly society," "the super friendly and courteous interaction among one another," "the cultural diversity of the country," and "the beautiful landscape", triggered the wish for him to reside in the country for a longer period. However, it was not only the positive experiences in Canada which generated Anton's wish to move abroad, to do something different and to experience something new and interesting, but also the German society and his situation in Germany as such. First, he had the desire to "live in a society that has a more relaxed relationship to social change" than Germany. According to him, while social change was seen as a part of the concept of the country in Canada and was not identified as a danger, this understanding of social change was something that he was missing in Germany. Not necessarily among his friends, but more so among the larger society. Furthermore, he highlighted that he was critical to the current political climate in Germany. He had the impression that right-wing tendencies had become more dominant again, which made it possible for parties such as the AfD (Alternative for Germany)[36] to obtain more power. On a more personal basis, Anton was also not that satisfied with his working conditions, although he had a good and secure job that allowed him to maintain a high standard of living.

[36] The AfD is a right-wing populist and Eurosceptic political party in Germany which was founded in April 2013 and currently holds representation in ten of the sixteen German state parliaments.

However, according to him, the company for which he worked in Germany represented "very conservative values" with which he could not identify with. One result of these conservative values was that the social interaction among colleagues was not "super good." Another result was that there was little room for innovation and new ideas. Being dissatisfied with their workplaces or conditions despite having a good and well-paying job was also an additional factor mentioned by Emil, Lukas and Isabelle, among other interviewees. Taken these factors together, Anton had the impression "that the project of living in a different society, at least for some time, would be a good experience for him." While these factors generated his wish to move to Canada, the actual timing of his move was impacted by another event in his private life. Thus, the year before Anton moved to Canada, he got to know his current girlfriend (who was born in a country in the Middle East but grew up in Canada) during a holiday trip with friends. The two visited each other several times and then decided to give their relationship a try. As it was a lot easier for Anton to move to Canada because of his occupational background as an engineer, as it would have been for his girlfriend, who studied Canadian law, to move to Germany, Anton started looking into different options and eventually was able to move to Canada on a Young professional visa. As for others, his move to Canada also represented a continuation of his migration trajectory as he had previously studied and worked in Switzerland for a while and lived and worked in several European countries for a few weeks or months at a time.

7.4 Discussion of the Research Findings

This chapter explored the reasons and circumstances which motivated my interviewees, who are young and highly skilled migrants, to move to Canada. So far, research has mainly explored the movements of highly skilled migrants from an economic and a policy perspective which sees highly skilled and qualified individuals as an important asset to the economy of a country, region, or city. In this perspective, highly skilled migrants are often seen as a commodity that

can easily be moved from one country to another if they are offered the right incentives. This understanding results in the portrayal of these migrants as rational actors who move to the places that offer them the highest salaries and the best possible living conditions. However, as demonstrated in chapter two of this thesis, such a perspective ignores the human perspective of these movements as well as the irrational and emotional components that might impact these moves.

Indeed, this chapter has demonstrated that emotional, affective, relational, and ideational factors did play an important role in the migration movements of German migrants by choice who moved or were planning to move to Canada. **Specifically, three main triggers were identified for these moves, namely a) love, b) chance and chance encounters, and c) the fulfillment of dreams.** These three factors, as well as how individuals navigate the situations resulting from them, have not received a lot of attention in research exploring the movements of highly skilled migrants yet as they are difficult to identify, measure and conceptualize. This is particularly true for the factor of chance and chance encounters which mainly has been acknowledged in research on refugee movements. However, as the results of my interviews demonstrate, chance and chance encounters also played an important role in the movements of German migrants by choice. This is especially true for the group of young academics (graduate students, post-docs and early career researchers) as well as individuals in the early stages of their careers.

In fact, **many of these interviewees had a keen interest to either continue their mobility trajectories or to gain international experience, however, without necessarily having a specific destination in mind**. For those interviewees who were in academia, this interest was sparked by a desire to work together with certain professors, gain international experiences and intercultural competences, improve their language skills, or work in research projects specialized in their fields of interest which often could only be found abroad and thus required them to move. These motives were also found by other studies focusing specifically

on academic mobility (Bauder 2015; Vysotskaya 2015; Raghuram 2013; H. Alberts 2017; Thorn and Holm-Nielsen 2008). For some of my interviewees, however, these aspects were also paired with their wish to explore new and different places and cultures and to gain new experiences in general. This was also true for other interviewees who were not in academia but likewise were driven by the desire to experience life abroad at least for some time. Some also highlighted that they wanted to improve their English language skills and thought that abroad experience would look good on their CVs. Thus, for some, these moves could be seen as an attempt to advance their careers proactively as they thought this abroad experience would be recognized and seen as an asset when potentially returning to Germany later on. However, they were often not tied to an immediate career advancement as in many cases, the interviewees did not earn more money than they had previously. These observations are similar to those made by Richardson and Mckenna (2002; 2003) on British academics working abroad, Eich-Krohm (2012) on highly skilled German migrants in the US or Mosneaga and Winther (2013) on international students.

While the above-mentioned factors explain the desire (or necessity) to either continue or start their international lives for these interviewees, they do not explain why they ended up in Canada. In fact, often the destination for these moves only played a minor role in my interviewees' mobility decisions with the exception that many either wanted to move to an English-speaking country and/or a country that offered somewhat similar standards to Germany. This goes hand in hand with the findings of Nowicka (2007) who also emphasized that for some individuals who are living a mobile lifestyle, the fact that they are mobile is more important than their actual destinations. **However, my results also highlight this feature for individuals who had a desire to gain international experience but did not have any previous experience of living abroad and being mobile**.

This general desire for being mobile or gaining international experience resulted in what Nowicka (2007, 75) referred to as a "'we shall see'" attitude, i.e. my interviewees were open to

different options and their destinations were often the result of a coincidence. Some, for example, applied to positions in several different countries and simply moved to the country from which they received a job offer. Often, these individuals had previous mobility experience which had equipped them with the tools and strategies to successfully do so. Others, by chance, met someone who presented them with an opportunity to move to Canada (e.g., by offering them a job) or they met someone who told them about different possibilities in Canada and in that way made them curious about the country and presented it as a desirable destination. For some, these chance encounters happened during their previous stays abroad and, thus, their moves to Canada were inherently linked to these previous mobility experiences. In both cases, interviewees would likely not have moved to Canada if they did not have these chance encounters. This impact of "chance, luck and serendipity" was also highlighted in the study on academic mobility by Richardson and Mckenna (2003, 780) but has otherwise gotten little attention so far. However, the results presented in this chapter confirm these findings. **More importantly, they underline that there is a need to consider the possibility of chance and chance encounters as determining factors for the outcomes of migration movements even for highly skilled migrants who are often seen as rational actors.**

In fact, chance also played into the migration outcomes of another group of my interviewees, namely those who moved to Canada because of love. These individuals, often by chance, met a Canadian, fell in love and ultimately decided to move to Canada to be together with their partners. While all interviewees belonging to this category had at least some experience of living abroad for shorter or longer periods, most of them neither had plans of leaving Germany permanently nor of moving to Canada before they met their Canadian partners. **Their moves to Canada were mainly triggered by relationship considerations, i.e. finding ways that they and their partners could be together.** Indeed, previous research has also found that one's relationship status and specifically being in a binational relationship can trigger international movements (Vorheyer 2016). However, little is known about how

binational couples navigate their relationships and decide where they want to settle. The results presented in this chapter contribute several interesting observations in this regard.

First, as highlighted above, all interviewees belonging to this group had a previous history of being mobile and having lived – for longer and shorter periods – abroad. Many, in fact, met their partners during these stays abroad. **Thus, for most of these interviewees, their moves to Canada did not only represent a continuation of their migration trajectories but these moves were also inherently linked to their previous migration or mobility experiences as it was only because of these experiences that they met their partners**.

Second, most interviewees belonging to this category had to navigate long-distance relationships at least for some time. This was partly because they often first wanted to see if their relationships were serious and would last, but also partly because many of my interviewees were still in the process of conducting their university studies when they met their Canadian partners and, thus, had to finish their degrees first before being able to decide where they wanted to move to. Consequently, at the beginning of their relationships (and sometimes for several years) many of these interviewees moved back and forth between Germany and Canada (or other countries) several times in an effort to find possibilities to see their partners for more than just a few weeks. In this regard, they made use of different types of temporary visas or permits (e.g., study permits or work and travel visas) to be able to stay in Canada (or elsewhere) for longer periods. Because of this, many of them lived a rather mobile lifestyle during the first few years of their relationships before they made a final decision of where they wanted to settle with their partners. This also meant that it was often only over time and after several years that they transitioned to a more permanent status in Canada (or were still in the process of transitioning to such a status at the point of the interview). This was often (though not always) achieved by applying for their PR status in Canada through spousal sponsorship. **Their immigration to Canada thus cannot be seen as a one-time event but rather as a process that evolved over time**.

Third, the decision to move to Canada rather than to settle in Germany was based on my interviewees' **understanding that it would be easier for them to move to Canada as opposed to their Canadian partners moving to Germany**. This understanding was linked to factors such as lack of or insufficient German language skills of the Canadian partners while my interviewees were proficient in English, employment situations and job prospects (e.g., the Canadian partners already having a secure or established job in Canada and/or thinking that it would be easier for my interviewees to find a job in Canada as opposed to their partners in Germany), and it being more important for their partners to stay in their established environment in Canada as opposed to my interviewees staying in Germany.

Fourth and finally, for those interviewees who met a Canadian while living abroad (i.e., in another country but Germany and Canada), formed a family and had children, **family considerations and specifically considerations regarding their children also impacted their decisions to move to Canada**. This impact of family considerations and particularly the presence of children was also highlighted by other studies (Richardson and Mckenna 2003; Eich-Krohm 2012). My findings demonstrate that for my interviewees, these considerations were linked to housing and lifestyle desires of the families, the environment they wished their children to grow up in, education possibilities as well as the age of their children (e.g., moving at an age where they could still easily integrate into their new societies). While these factors sparked their desire to leave the places they were living at, it was again their Canadian partners who were the determining factor for the decision of moving to Canada instead of Germany as they, on the one hand, were able to sponsor my interviewees, and, thus, make the move possible. On the other hand, however, like for the other interviewees with a Canadian partner, their partners only had insufficient German skills and it was seen as the easier option for the family to move to Canada.

While love for a Canadian was an important trigger for the group of interviewees discussed above, love also played an important role for the last group of interviewees, namely

those who I categorized under dreams. **In their case, however, it was not love for a Canadian but rather having fallen in love with Canada as a country which inspired their dream of wanting to move to Canada. This dream was sparked through previous experience in Canada that my interviewees had gained either during high school and university exchanges or during holiday trips.** Several factors inspired these dreams. Often, they were related to the positive experiences they had made during their time in Canada and the idea that Canada would offer a better work-life balance due to access to nature and outdoor activities, the friendly, helpful and open-minded mentality of Canadians or the feeling of being at home when temporarily living and/or visiting Canada. These factors were often paired with feelings of being unsatisfied about certain aspects of their lives (e.g., working environment, political climate) in Germany or other countries where they were living.

These reasons are similar to those highlighted in the literature on lifestyle migration – i.e. "something loosely defined as quality of life" – which explores the migration patterns of "relatively affluent individuals" (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, 621). Indeed, like lifestyle migrants, my interviewees were not forced to leave their places of origin nor were their moves impacted by economic or political reasons (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014b). Rather, they voluntarily choose to do so because they were attracted to a place – in their case Canada – and have/had or were hoping to have the possibility of moving there.

As much as these moves were about lifestyle considerations for my interviewees, they were also about self-realization and wanting to escape the mundane day-to-day life in Germany. For some, who had gained previous experience in Canada during a high school or university exchange, moving to and living in Canada represented the possibility to re-define themselves and to start over on a blank sheet so to speak. Others were driven by wanting to experience the challenge of having to start over somewhere else or wanting to do/experience something that most people do not. Moving or planning to move abroad made them stand out and feel special. These aspects of escapism, self-realization and self-transformation as well as

seeking challenges and an adventure are also explored in the literature on lifestyle migration among others (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014b; Hoey 2010; Scheibelhofer 2009).

However, in contrast to much of the literature on lifestyle migration which often focuses on movements from countries with a colder climate (e.g., Northern European countries or Canada) to countries with a warmer climate (e.g., countries in Southern Europe or the South of the US) (Desrosiers-Lauzon 2011; S. K. Smith and House 2006; Coates, Healy, and Morrison 2002; King, Warnes, and Williams 2000; Williams, King, and Warnes 1997; Gustafson 2008; Ibrahim and Tremblay 2017), the movements that my interviewees undertook were towards a destination, namely Canada, that is not typically associated with these lifestyle movements. Moreover, often (though not always) the literature on lifestyle migration focuses on older individuals or retirees whereas my interviewees were younger (between 20 and 40 years). Lastly, the literature on lifestyle migration often identifies touristic visits in the place of destination as the trigger behind these movements (Oliver 2011). This was also the case for several of my interviewees; however, I also found that longer previous experiences in the country, e.g., in the form of high school or university exchanges could spark the desire of moving back there at a later point.

Thus, my findings highlight three important new insights: **First, that the research on lifestyle migration needs to be extended to include non-typical destination countries such as Canada. Second, that this research also needs to focus on the movements of younger individuals who move for lifestyle considerations. Third and finally, that the moves of lifestyle migrants might not only be triggered by touristic experiences but also by other experiences abroad such as high school or university exchanges that inspire the dream of moving to this country later on.**

7.5 Conclusion of the Chapter

To conclude, this chapter identified three important triggers that impacted the decisions of my interviewees – German migrants by choice – to move to Canada, namely love, chance and chance encounters as well as the fulfilment of dreams. However, while these three triggers were the most important factors in determining the destination of my interviewees' moves, it is important to underline that several other factors impacted their general willingness to move. These factors included family or relationship considerations, career ambitions and employment prospects, language skills, the interviewees' life stages, lifestyle considerations, the desire to experience something new and different, satisfaction with life at the place of current living, or major societal events. **Overall, these findings highlight the importance of considering the human aspect of highly skilled migration patterns and specifically, the impact that emotional, affective, relational, and ideational factors as well as chance take on these migration processes.**

Moreover, irrespective of which of the three triggers resulted in my interviewees' moves to Canada, one aspect that was found in all three groups of interviewees was that most of them had previous experience of living abroad either one or several times. As such, their (planned) moves to Canada represented just one out of in many cases several steps on their wider migration trajectories. Moreover, in many cases, these previous mobility experiences were in one way or another linked to their moves to Canada as it was during these previous moves that they met their Canadian partners, by chance were presented with a possibility to move to Canada or fell in love with Canada as a country. Therefore, to understand these movements it is crucial to embed them in my interviewee's wider migration trajectories and not to examine them independently. **These findings demonstrate the importance of not seeing migration as a one-time event but rather understanding and conceptualizing it as an ongoing process that changes and evolves over time.** This also means that my interviewees' moves to Canada cannot be seen as the end point of their migration trajectories as in some cases, the negotiations

about whether to stay in Canada, return to Germany or potentially move elsewhere continued even many years after having moved to Canada – an aspect that is further explored in the remaining analysis chapters of this dissertation.

8 Experiences of Living in Canada – Initial Phase of Arrival and Adjustment

The previous chapter explored the triggers and reasons lying behind the decisions of German migrants by choice moving to Canada and how for many of them these moves were embedded in and inherently linked to their previous migration and mobility trajectories. This second analysis chapter focuses instead on the lived experiences of German migrants by choice in Canada. My interviewees moved to and lived in a variety of different places in Canada. While most of them lived in bigger cities such as Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, or Edmonton, there were also a few who lived in smaller cities or rural areas. Depending on their location, their legal status, their family situation, the stage in their life course and whether it was their first time living in Canada or not, their experiences during their day-to-day lives varied. Despite this, some general trends could be observed regarding their experiences when arriving and settling in Canada. For example, most of them went through an initial phase of arrival and adjustment during which they had to orient themselves in their new environment, take care of administrative tasks, and, in many cases find housing, employment, and build a social network. The aim of this chapter is to explore this initial phase of arrival and adjustment at my interviewees' places of destination to obtain a better understanding of the different processes that my interviewees went through when arriving in Canada. Specifically, four different processes could be identified which are examined in further detail below: a) first orientation at the places of destination, b) accommodation arrangements and finding housing, c) building social networks, and d) entering the labour market.

8.1 First Orientation at the Places of Destination in Canada

When first arriving at their places of destinations in Canada, in addition to organizing accommodation, building up social networks and entering the labour market, my interviewees also had to undergo a general process of first orientation. This process included having to take

care of certain administrative procedures, learning new social rules and norms and how society works in general as well as having to learn how to navigate and orient oneself in the cities that they moved to.

8.1.1 Administrative Procedures upon Arrival

Typically, during the first few weeks after arriving at their places of destinations my interviewees had to take care of several administrative procedures such as applying for a health card, replacing their German with a Canadian driving license, setting up a bank account or obtaining a phone and other contracts and insurances. These tasks had to be taken care of simultaneously to having to adjust to their new lives at their places of destination and in some cases establishing a family life and taking care of their children. Nils (44), for example, remembered how for the first few weeks after arriving in (name of city in Canada) he and his wife had to take care of several "practical life matters" every day after they had brought their children to school in the morning including "applying for a health card, well, all these small, this bureaucratic stuff". Likewise, Lutz (32) remembered the many "administrative formalities" that he had to handle at the beginning of his stay in (name of city in Canada) and highlighted that it "can be relatively annoying when you have to take care of a lot of things and you don't really know the system […]". However, while he stated that managing these different tasks was "annoying" because they were time consuming, he thought that it was relatively uncomplicated to accomplish them. Others reiterated this sentiment and Anton (36) even highlighted that he thought that it was easier to handle these administrative formalities in Canada because it was easier to obtain information online about which public authority helps with what kinds of issues. Nikloa (28) emphasized another factor that she thought helped in taking care of these procedures, namely that in contrast to Germany the personnel at public authorities was friendly and helpful and explained the processes to her.

Regardless, some interviewees faced certain challenges when dealing with some of these administrative procedures. For some, for example, not being familiar with the Canadian insurance system meant that they had difficulties understanding this system and judging whether they were offered appropriate services and contracts or not. Frida (39) and her husband Tobias (45) told me that in the beginning of their stay they were unsure about how insurances in general but the car insurance in specific worked in the province of Quebec where they were living and only understood the whole process over time and after many phone calls. For Marlene (38) it was not only insurance contracts that she was worried about in the beginning but also other contracts that she had to sign because she was never sure if she managed to get a contract with good conditions or not. Moreover, she emphasized that she was not able to get her years of driving experiences from Germany recognized which meant that she was categorized as a novice driver and had to pay a large amount of money annually for her car insurance. However, it was not only the insurance system that interviewees had to learn about when moving to their places of destination in Canada. They also had to understand how the health care system works and how to find a family doctor and those with children had to learn about the organization of the day care and/or school system. Moreover, some interviewees mentioned that they also had to gain an understanding of what the typical price for rent is or how the baking system works.

Specifically, regarding the banking system, several of my interviewees faced challenges as they were unable to obtain a credit card in the beginning of their stays. Those interviewees who were affected by this told me that this was due to their lack of credit history in Canada. Annika (31), for example, said that this lack of credit history meant that she was not able to obtain a credit card despite having a well-paying job and no debt. It was only over time and after having paid a certain amount of money to the bank as a security that she received a credit card allowing her to spend $300. Eventually, she was able to get a card with a more reasonable credit limit with the help of an acquaintance who helped her navigating the banking world. Annika underlined that having no credit card or a credit card with a small credit limit was

problematic as she could not even book a flight on her own. She said that she was lucky because her Canadian partner was able to help her out but stated that for people who come to Canada without any contacts not being able to obtain a credit card could cause more severe problems. These experiences were reiterated by Hanna (41) who moved to (name of city in Canada) together with her husband and two children. While both she and her husband had well-paying jobs in Germany and, thus, "a super good credit balance" and financial stability, when they moved to Canada, they learned that their credit history from Germany was not worth anything and they had to "start from zero". Not having a credit history in Canada for them meant that they did not have an overdraft credit which "was really tough" for them, especially at the beginning of their stay. While not everyone faced these challenges those who did had a hard time initially especially since they needed to cover a lot of fix costs when first arriving at their places of destination. Therefore, they had to come up with strategies of how to deal with this situation. Some still relied on their German credit cards, while others, such as Annika who I referred to above, were able to find temporary solutions with their partners until they were able to obtain a credit card with a reasonable credit limit.

8.1.2 Learning Social Rules and Norms

In addition to these administrative procedures, the initial phase of arrival at the interviewees' places of destination in Canada was also characterized by having to learn social rules and norms and how different processes and procedures work more generally. About this, some interviewees mentioned that they had to get used to price tags usually do not already including taxes which makes it look as though things are cheaper. However, more importantly, several interviewees highlighted that they had to get used to the "small talk" in grocery stores, restaurants or elsewhere. This was a practice which they did not know from Germany. Nora (33) explained:

> Well yes, you had to adjust a bit, but it was quite strange in the beginning. Simply this, […] "So, what are you guys doing today?", and "How are you?", and "What are you looking for? Do you need any

> help?" I felt that was a bit too personal. Well, as a German you're always, well, you don't trust everyone [laughs] and that's why I thought it was a bit bizarre in the beginning.

This was in line with the reports of some of the other interviewees who also emphasized that they first had to learn how to react to this kind of small talk as they did not know how to react to it or what the appropriate answers were. Some, such as Vanessa (46), for example, first had to learn that when people asked her how she was doing, they were not actually interested in a long and detailed answer about her life and current situation but that it was rather just used as a rhetorical question when meeting people anywhere. Moreover, Carolina (33) highlighted, how initially she thought it was exaggerated that everyone said thank you to the bus driver in (name of the city in Canada) where she was living. She explained that when arriving from Germany "you have a completely different mindset" and "in Germany you just don't do that". However, over time she got used to it and started to appreciate this gesture.

Benjamin (37) mentioned another social rule that was common in (name of city in Canada) where he was living and that he had to get used to, namely lining up for a bus before entering it. While he was generally aware that this rule existed, he did tell me that at the beginning of his stay he put his foot in it and had to learn it the hard way:

> But one time I took the bus from (name of place) and it was a bus, well there are a lot, it is a big bus stop where there are lots of people. And the people were standing nicely in a line around the corner, well almost around the entire block. And I didn't recognize it as a line because I thought: "What the heck are they doing? Why are they all lined up like that? What are they waiting for? Is there free beer or something like that?" And I simply did not understand that the people were lining up around the corner to wait for the bus. […] And then the bus arrived, and I went to the front of the line, being the first person more or less, because I did not understand that it was a line. Well, you can imagine how that ended. (Benjamin, 37)

He continued to explain how in the beginning this social norm was something that was "really foreign" to him and that he did not quite understand it but after this event he internalized this rule of lining up for buses and never again made the same mistake.

Many of the interviewees mentioned that learning about social rules and norms was not only important for interactions in public life but also when it came to their jobs and establishing a social network. The importance of learning new social rules and norms in these two spheres

is analyzed in more detail in the respective sections of this chapter looking at the establishment of social networks and entering the labour market.

Finally, while many of the interviewees talked about things like these that they had to learn, adjust and get used to, it is important to mention that many of them did not necessarily interpret and/or called this learning experience as a cultural shock but rather just as a small adjustment process. In fact, many did not feel as if Canada was much different from Germany and that the two countries were quite similar. Moreover, it is important to highlight that not all interviewees were facing these challenges to the same extent. Specifically, those who had previous experiences of living in Canada, and, thus, were already familiar with the social rules and norms, did not face these challenges or only to a lesser extent.

8.1.3 Geographical Orientation in Their Places of Destination

The initial phase of arrival of my interviewees was not only characterized by having to take care of administrative procedures and learning about new social rules and norms, but they also had to learn how to find their way around the new places where they were now living. Moving to and living in a new city always requires acquiring a sense of orientation within the city to know where certain services, goods and institutions are located and how to best get from one place to another. This is true for any kind of move but especially for an international move where the way a city is structured and organized might differ even more so than when moving within one's own country of origin where one is at least somewhat familiar with the geographies of cities. Consequently, many of my interviewees recounted that when they first arrived in their places of destination in Canada, they had to figure out where they could find certain (food) products, how and where to get groceries and how to navigate within the city. Charlotte (31), for example, told me that in the beginning she had to figure out: "Yeah, were do I get my food? How do I fill my fridge? How do I get from point A to point B? How do I find my way around (name of city in Canada) and on campus?"

Likewise, Emma (34) remembered, how, when she first arrived in (name of city in Canada) and drove through the city together with her husband she was thinking "Pff, how will I ever find my way around here?" but how over time she got a better sense for where things were located just like one would do in any new city. She specifically emphasized that in the beginning doing groceries was a bit of a "shock" as she went to a store where the prices were relatively high because that was the only place she knew. However, over time she discovered more and more places and was able to get a better sense of where to get which products at a more reasonable price and where to find certain products she was looking for.

Hilda (25) had a similar experience regarding groceries and discovering the variety of different places that are available. She recounted that the first time she went grocery shopping in Canada was at a Costco and that back then she thought that a Costco was what a standard grocery store in Canada looked like. She was feeling confused by that and thought that was "totally bananas" as you were "only able to get two kilograms of grapes" in the store and they only "sold boxed bread in very large quantities". Eventually, she discovered other "normal grocery stores" and understood that Costco was, in fact, not the prototype for grocery stores in Canada.

Frida (39) and her husband Tobias (45) also remembered that at the beginning of their stay in (name of city in Canada) they had to figure out where they could find different services and products:

> F: And then the next thing is somehow, I mean to find a post office. Yeah, here, the post offices are included in the drug stores. Okay, that's something you need to learn and then you know. I don't know all these little things: Where do I get this here and…
> T: Shoelaces?
> F: Shoelaces. How do I get a copy of a key here? Okay, we figured that one out relatively quickly, but these are such, it's often these.
> T: There are a few things, which we really had troubles to get them. I don't remember what they were but there were a few things that we really had no clue where we needed to go to get them.

Frida went on to explain how this lack of knowledge meant that in the beginning a lot of activities required having to "climb a little hill" and took a lot of energy as one did not know where to get things, if those things were the standard products to use or if local people

potentially used different products or did things differently and they simply did not know about it. Others, such as Petra (31), reported that, while everything was different and foreign when she first moved to (name of city in Canada) as part of a university exchange, she thought that it was fun and exciting to find out where to get groceries and how to get from A to B in the city. She also emphasized that because of her previous experiences abroad she already knew more or less what to expect when moving to a new place.

For some interviewees, people they met during the early phases of their arrival at their places of destination were important in helping them with navigating through these places and finding the things they needed. While Paul (43) told me that his first girlfriend who he met shortly after arriving in (name of city in Canada) showed him where he could go in the next bigger city to do some "proper shopping", Erik recalled that his roommates made sure that he would know where and how to get a bus ticket, showed him how to get to university and where he could find furniture and bedding to buy and so on.

Finally, it is important to mention that those of my interviewees who had previous experiences of living in their places of destinations, for example due to a longer stay during an internship or a university exchange, did not face the same challenges of having to find their ways around and navigating through these places.

8.2 Finding Accommodation: Housing, Location and Neighbourhoods

Closely tied to being able to orientate oneself in the places of destinations is getting a feeling for the cities themselves as well as finding accommodation. The experiences of the interviewees regarding finding accommodation varied significantly depending on their personal situation and the reasons why they moved to Canada. While some were able to move in with their Canadian partners who already had an apartment or house, others were able to move into student accommodations provided by the universities they attended or were able to move in with colleagues from work. Many also moved into temporary accommodations (e.g., a furnished

apartment, staying with family or friends or in a hostel/hotel) in the beginning so that they could look for a more permanent place to stay during the first few weeks. These different scenarios are explored in more detail below.

8.2.1 Moving in with Their Canadian Partners

Several of my interviewees were able to move in with their Canadian partners when they arrived at their places of destination in Canada. This made their move relatively uncomplicated and stress-free as they did not have to search for and arrange accommodation prior to their departure and neither had to take care of organizing furniture and other household items. Anton (36), for example, was able to move to the condo of his partner in (name of the city in Canada) initially and emphasized that this made things easy and uncomplicated. Likewise, Emma (34) moved into her partner's townhouse in (name of city in Canada) upon her arrival in Canada and emphasized that she was satisfied about both the form of housing as well as its location. She stated, for example that she liked the nice and quiet neighbourhood in which they were living and that their home was directly by a river with access to a bike and walking path but also only five kilometers from the downtown part of the city. Moreover, she highlighted that she loved how close (name of city in Canada) was to the mountains and the location of their townhouse allowed them to get out of the city and en route towards the mountains quickly.

Others were less satisfied with the location of their apartment or house. While Annika (31) moved in with her Canadian partner when she initially arrived in (name of city in Canada), she did not move to her partners apartment but they both moved into a new place together. However, this apartment was in a neighbourhood that they did not know well, and Annika soon realized that she was not happy about the location. On the one hand, they had moved to a very francophone neighbourhood which she thought was difficult because she soon realized how much of a barrier her lack of French skills was (e.g., she could not just go to a bakery and order something). This experience, however, motivated her to improve her language skills. On the

other hand, however, they also realized that they had moved to a slightly sketchy neighbourhood:

> Well, where we lived it was terrible. It was really terrible. We didn't, when we chose the apartment there, we obviously didn't see it, but as soon as it got dark there were some sketchy people out on the streets, a lot of street prostitution. That's really not nice. I think we only stayed for five or six months and then we moved. (Annika, 31)

In addition to this, Annika also highlighted that the apartment where they were living was very loud because the children of their landlord who were living in the same building had started a music band. Thus, overall, these combined negative factors resulted in Annika and her partner moving to another place a few months later.

8.2.2 Student Accommodations

Those of my interviewees who moved to Canada as students, often initially either moved into accommodation provided by their universities or that was specifically targeted at students. Charlotte (31), for example, first moved into a townhouse in (name of city in Canada) that was provided through student housing. She shared this place with another graduate student who become her closest contact during her first year. While Charlotte did not move in with her Canadian wife (back then girlfriend) during her first year in Canada, she explained that like for those who did move in with their Canadian partners, her move was smooth and uncomplicated because her wife's family was very supportive, helped her with the move and, for example, provided her with pots, pans, plates, glasses, and other household items. Others did not make such positive experiences with their student accommodations. Anne (33) moved to (name of city in Canada) to conduct her PhD and was able to stay in a student residence at the beginning of her stay. While she got along well with her roommates, she highlighted that the location of the campus on which her residence was, was about 50 km from the downtown part of the city. As a result of this distance, her not owning a car and the relatively limited access to public transportation, it was difficult and long (an hour to an hour and a half) to get into the city which

limited her possibilities to go out and explore her new place of living. Moreover, she emphasized that there were only limited possibilities for grocery shopping around as there were only small convenient stores in the immediate surrounding. The next bigger store was about a 20 km ride away and required her to take the bus which she thought was really annoying, especially considering that in Germany she had been able to just go around the corner to get groceries. To address this situation, she eventually bought a car after her first year in (name of city in Canada) which made her life a lot easier and eventually moved to the downtown part of the city. Erik also initially moved into a student residence. In his case it was a private one that was announced as being furnished and well connected to public transportation. However, when Erik arrived in (name of city in Canada) he was very disappointed. Not only was the apartment in a terrible shape – "the kitchen was a bit rotten and let's not even talk about the washroom" as he put it – but also the information about the residence being in a neighbourhood that was well connected to the public transportation system was wrong and there was no bus that could take him to university. All of this was a huge disappointment for Erik and meant that his start in (name of the city in Canada) was a bit difficult and he soon decided to look for a new place to live.

8.2.3 Shared Apartments or Houses

In many cases, the first accommodation of my interviewees was seen as a place of transition that was convenient to move to initially to have a place to stay upon arrival but was not necessarily thought as a permanent place to stay at. This was specifically the case for those who were able to move in with colleagues from work or friends.

Helene (29) and her boyfriend Peter (30), for example, were able to spend the first few weeks with a friend of theirs in (name of the city Canada). This was a big help as it gave them time to look for a permanent place to stay. They were able to find their own apartment within

the first five days after their arrival and were even lucky enough that this place fulfilled all their criteria including that it was located in the neighbourhood that they wanted to live in.

Paul (43) also first moved in with a friend of his who was already living and working in Canada and had facilitated the contact between Paul and his employer. While moving into the house his friend rented in (name of city in Canada) was convenient for Paul in the beginning because he did not have to search for accommodation himself, he remembered that over time things got worse because he and his friend among other factors had different standards of cleanliness. Paul also realized that he did not enjoy sharing a place with another person. Thus, after about a year he moved out of his initial place of accommodation and moved in with his now ex-wife who he had gotten to know by that time. Henning (34) and his wife Nora (33) made similar experiences. Initially they were able to move in with a colleague of Henning with whom they shared a house. However, they did not get along well with this person and things got a bit awkward, so they decided to move to their own place.

While Carolina (33) did not move in with colleagues from work, she also moved into a shared house when she arrived in (name of city in Canada) to start her post-doctoral position. She shared this house with her landlord as well as several other international students. When asking about the time when she first moved to Canada, she said she remembered that time particularly well and elaborated:

> I still remember that I, well, not jobwise but in the private sphere I lived in the shared accommodation for two months and that was pretty horrible, I have to say because the landlord was a very odd person. […] There were so many rules in this house. You were not allowed to do this and this. And if you didn't sort the garbage correctly, then he would summon you. […] It was horrible yes. (Carolina, 33)

She went on to explain that her landlord also had a dog who constantly barked and who bit her, that she went out with her colleagues from work once, got home past midnight and her landlord got really mad at her for that, and, finally, that when she told him that she wanted to move out, he threatened her that her visa would be annulled as a consequence. Overall, Carolina said that it was "just too much to live there" and, therefore, after two months, which was also when her

husband joined her from Germany, she decided to move out and find a new place for the two to stay.

8.2.4 Moving in with the In-laws

Several of my interviewees moved in with their parents-in-law when they arrived at their places of destination in Canada. This did not only allow them to safe money as they did not have to pay rent but also gave them the possibility to look for more permanent places to stay. However, often it also resulted in a potential for conflicts or dissatisfaction. Sonja (39) who moved to (name of city in Canada) together with her Canadian husband after having lived in Germany together for several years remembered how they initially moved in with her parents-in-law. While this was a big help for Sonja and her husband as neither of them had a job lined up for them upon arrival, Sonja highlighted that she was happy when they were able to move into their own place because, as she said, "at some point, you want to have your independence back and you want to start your own life again." However, even the place they moved to – the old house of her husband's grandparents which was usually rented out to students - was not the ideal solution in the beginning because it was not in the best state and it "smelled a bit weird". Thinking about this initial phase of her life in (name of city in Canada), Sonja said: "And during that time I had moments when I thought: "Oh wow, we had such a nice apartment [in Germany] and now I shall live here? It's really not as nice as before. This isn't quite how I envisioned it." Similar experiences were also described by others who initially moved in with their parents-in-law until they were able to find their own places and moved to more permanent places of living. Till (27), for example, highlighted that living with his parents-in-law was hard because it meant that he had to find compromises and did not have that much privacy. Jutta (33) mentioned that while she and her partner were able to save a lot of money on rent, living with her parents-in-law was not quite what she had expected. She found this living arrangement a bit difficult in the beginning, among other factors because her parents-in-law lived in a suburb which did not

offer the main amenities, services, and activities as when living in a city. Being far from the city also meant that she was not able to do activities on her own but was dependent on borrowing the car of her parents-in-law which limited the activities she could do significantly.

8.2.5 Moving to Canada without a Specific Destination in Mind

Finally, Lea's (36) experience was slightly different from those above and, therefore, warrants some explanation. She was the only one of my interviewees who arrived in Canada without having a fixed destination in mind. She recounted that she and her now ex-boyfriend came to Canada on a work & travel visa and simply booked the cheapest flight to Canada from Germany which brought them to (name of the city in Canada) where they spent the first two weeks of their stay in an AirBnB apartment that was rented to them by an older lady. After the first two weeks they went on a road trip through Canada and drove all the way from the east coast to the west coast in order to get a feeling for the country and to determine where they wanted to live. When they arrived in Vancouver, they thought it was a great city, but the prices of the housing market were too high and, thus, they ultimately decided to return to (name of the city in Canada) where they had first arrived as they had enjoyed their time there because of its "nice flair, and everything was so colorful and the people were somehow, it seemed like a good community". At this point, they contacted the lady who they had rented the AirBnB from in the beginning to see if she had an apartment available in which they could move. That was not the case, however, as that lady was going on a longer holiday trip, she offered Lea and her ex-boyfriend that they could stay in her apartment for the time she was gone, as long as they would feed her cats. Lea remembered how she was very impressed by this offer as according to her something like this would never have happened in Germany. She and her boyfriend ended up staying at this place for about a month and eventually also got to know their new landlords through this initial contact with the lady.

8.3 Establishing Social Networks: How to Meet People and Make New Friends

When moving to a new place, it is important to build up a social network to have a support system and to make new friends. As highlighted above, while many of my interviewees thought that it was easy to get in contact with Canadians as they were friendly and open to welcoming new people, it seemed hard to transform such an initial contact into a closer friendship and often took a lot of time. Therefore, my interviewees utilized different strategies to get in contact with people when they first moved to their places of destination depending on their interests and hobbies or the stage of their life course that they found themselves in. Their experiences in establishing social networks also differed depending on their personal situation and mobility experiences. While some either already knew some people and/or had an established circle of friends in the places they moved to because of previous stays in Canada, others were able to benefit from their Canadian partners who already had a social network which they could become part of and again others did not have any contacts at all. These different situations and the different strategies that my interviewees made use of to establish their social networks are examined below.

8.3.1 Becoming Integrated in Their Partner's Social Networks

Several interviewees highlighted that having a Canadian partner meant that they already had some form of social network when they arrived at their places of destination as they were welcomed with open arms by their partners' families. Thus, already from the beginning, they had some sort of support network which often facilitated their initial arrival. Moreover, many of these interviewees stressed that they were "adopted" by their partners' friends and which also made it easier for them to build up a social network and establish some contacts. Leon (28) told me that because his husband had already been living in (name of the city in Canada) for a few months when he arrived and had met several people, it was relatively easy for him to meet new people and become part of this group:

> Well, it was mainly, well, first of all mainly through my husband. Well, he already knew a few people with whom he did activities, who he knew and then it is often the case that I, or rather the friendship circle too, well, his friendship circle became our friendship circle to some extent.

Likewise, Charlotte (31) recalled how she let herself be "adopted" by the friendship circle of her wife (back then girlfriend) when she moved to (name of city in Canada). Consequently, her friendship network mainly consisted of people who were also friends with her wife. These experiences also reflect those of other interviewees with a Canadian partner.

However, it is necessary to underline that while having a Canadian partner often meant that my interviewees were included in an already existing social network, for several of these interviewees it was important to establish their own social network or friendship circle outside of the already existing one of their partner's. Sonja (39), for example, told me that she was happy to have made some friends through her husband and that this was an easy way to make new friends. However, she also highlighted that it was important for her to establish her own friendship circle outside of her husband to "not just be Peter's [= her husband] wife". For her, finding employment and going to work were important steps in this undertaking. While she did not become close friends with any of her colleagues, going to work did mean that she was able to form new relationships and contacts and start something that was her own. Marie (35) also reiterated these impressions. While the friendship circle of her husband (back then boyfriend) took her in and she became a part of it, she also stated that she tried to get to know people outside of these circles by, for example, joining different sports teams, because it was important for her to have her own group of people as well. These factors of work and joining a sports team as ways of getting to know people are explored in further detail later in this section.

8.3.2 Social Networks through Previous Stays in Canada

For some of my interviewees it was a combination of having a Canadian partner and their own previous experiences in Canada which meant that they already had some form of social network when they arrived in their places of destination. Nikola (28) remembered:

> The initial phase wasn't that difficult because I had already been to Canada a couple of times. I already had friends or rather the family of my boyfriend with whom I am very close. Thus, I already did get to know a lot of people and had a friendship circle so to speak.

Similarly, Petra (31) told me that when she returned to (name of city in Canada) for the second time to be able to live together with her Canadian boyfriend (now husband), she already had an established circle of friends because during her previous university exchange she was able to get to know his friends and their respective girlfriends quite well and befriended many of them. While Nikola and Petra were able to draw on a social network partly because of their Canadian partners and partly because of their previous experience in Canada, several others, who were not in a relationship but had previous experience of living in Canada for some amount of time also reported that they were able to draw on large social network because of their previous stays in Canada. Luisa (31) remembered that she had been able to establish a large circle of friends in (name of city in Canada) during her previous seven-months internship there and she said "that is was certainly simply nice to return to this circle of friends" when she moved back there for the second time a few years later. Likewise, Jutta (33) already had a well-established circle of friends when she returned to (name of city in Canada) for the second time in 2009. This impacted her desire to move and stay in this city rather than elsewhere. These experiences also reflect those of others who had already lived in Canada previously for varying amounts of times.

8.3.3 Strategies of Building a Social Network when Arriving at Their Places of Destination in Canada

Most interviewees who did not have a Canadian partner or previous experiences of living in Canada themselves more often had to start from scratch in establishing their social networks upon arrival. But even those with a Canadian partner were sometimes keen to expand their social networks and form friendships with people outside their partners' networks as demonstrated above. To achieve this, my interviewees utilized different strategies including a) drawing on contacts from friends, family or relatives, b) using their work environment to

establish contacts, c) joining sports teams, other groups or volunteering, d) establishing contacts with other Germans in Canada, e) meeting people in their neighbourhoods, as well as f) social media and other strategies. These different strategies are examined in more detail in the following sections.

8.3.3.1 Drawing on Contacts from Friends, Family or Relatives

Some of my interviewees who had not lived or even been to Canada before moving there, asked their friends, family, or relatives prior to their departure if they had any contacts in Canada who they might be able to get in touch with prior to their moves or when arriving at their places of destination. Indeed, a few interviewees were lucky to get the names and contact information of some individuals that their friends, family or relatives knew in Canada. This strategy is, for example, reflected by in Sophie's (40) accounts who moved to (name of city in Canada) without knowing anyone there. However, she told me that before her move she asked all her relatives and friends if they knew anyone in this city and indeed, she was able to get two contacts of other Germans who were living there. She continued by saying:

> And in any case, I had those two contacts and then I contacted both of them when I was in (name of city in Canada). And one of them I only saw once, but the other one became a super close friend of mine. She really helped me to settle in. […] Well, she really really helped me a lot and until this day is one of my best friends.

This friend did not only tell her where she could find certain products but also introduced her to life in Canada and explained certain processes and mechanisms to her. Lutz (32) also recalled that when he first moved to (name of city in Canada) he was able to stay with a family friend who his parents knew. This person was an older man who himself had immigrated to Canada. Staying at his place allowed Lutz to transfer his pilot license to a Canadian one during the first few weeks of his stay in Canada before his wife Ute (28) joined him. Although this family friend did not become a close friend of Lutz and his wife because they moved to another city

shortly after Ute's arrival, having this contact still significantly facilitated their arrival in Canada.

8.3.3.2 Friends through Workplaces and Universities

For those of my interviewees who either did not have any prior contacts or wanted to expand their contacts outside those of their partner's circle of friends, their workplaces and/or university became important places of getting in contact with people and making new friends. While finding employment is not so much a strategy of expanding one's social network per se but rather a necessity to provide income, several of my interviewees mentioned that their workplaces were important places for them to meet people and form friendships. Klaus (36) told me that through his job he was quickly able to meet other people who were in the same situation as himself, i.e., young and new in the city, and with whom he often went out in the evening, did activities on the weekends and explored the city as well as the surrounding area. Hannes (34) also recalled that during his first year in (name of city in Canada) he mainly met people at work because he was very focused on his working career and, thus, took few opportunities to do activities outside of work. For Nora (33), it was first the colleagues of her husband Henning (34) who she met and became friends with when she moved to (name of city in Canada) initially as she did not have a job yet. Later, she told me, when she started to work herself, her social network expanded, and she also started to meet up with her own colleagues and to do activities with them together on weekends. While many of my interviewees reported that their workplaces were important places to meet new people and find friends, it is important to mention that this was not the case for everyone. Some, such as Annika (31), for example, thought it was difficult to make friends at work because they were in a manager position. Being the head of a small team meant that there was an imbalance of power relations between them and their co-workers. For those of the interviewees who were students and not working yet,

university presented an important platform for getting in contact with people and making new friends. Till (27), for example, told me:

> I think, what was an advantage for me, was that I am studying here, because it was the first semester. Everyone was just starting. […] Then we all got to know each other. And everyone came from different regions. Well, there weren't any pre-existing friendship groups, but rather new friendship groups formed. And then, yes, there are a few people now that I get along with well and we sometimes meet up and do things together, like going to a boardgame café or something like that.

Till's experiences are representative of others, such as Hilda (25) or Charlotte (31) who also pursued their graduate studies in Canada and highlighted that their study programs were important places for them to meet new people when first arriving in their places of destination.

8.3.3.3 Joining Sports Clubs, Groups or Volunteering

In addition to these more institutional settings, my interviewees drew on several different strategies to build up their social networks and to make new friends. Among these strategies were joining a sports team or a club of some sort (e.g., outdoors club), participating in a variety of different courses (e.g., cooking, sailing, language courses etc.), or becoming engaged in volunteering activities. In many cases, these strategies allowed my interviewees to combine their hobbies or things they felt passionate about with the possibility to also get in contact with people and to expand their social networks. Lara (33), for example, told me that she had played handball in Germany for a long time and that when she moved to (name of city in Canada) for her post-doctoral position she searched for a handball team which she joined for the year she was living in Canada. She highlighted that being part of this team formed an important and big part of her social life as the team went to several national and international tournaments, that she met a lot of friends through this activity and that the team represented "a form of community". Lara also recalled that she participated in a sailing course and while she said that the sailing course was terrible, she met a person there who then invited her to join a running group and an ultimate frisbee team "and it was all a bit like a snowball effect". Joining sports teams or different clubs were also important for other interviewees. Anne (33) remembered that

when she first arrived in (name of the city in Canada) she went to an orientation day on the campus where she was studying and got information about the university's outdoor club. Being an outdoor enthusiast, she signed up for their mailing list. However, as she arrived in January, she only went on her first trip together with the outdoor club in June. When I asked why she joined the club, she emphasized that it was a good way to meet new people and make friends: "Yes, for sure! Yes! I think, I got to know 70 people there or so." She continued to explain that she was still in contact with a lot of these people and that they regularly visited each other. While many of the interviewees joined different clubs, sports teams or participated in different courses to expand their social networks and to build their social life others saw volunteering as an opportunity to meet new people. Emma (34), who had been volunteering for several different organizations since her arrival in (name of city in Canada) recounted:

> Well, the primary reason why I work as a volunteer is the desire to help. Second reason is the possibility of getting to know people. Because I think, people who volunteer for such organisations and donate their time must generally be nice people. And because I am making a conscious effort to meet friends and people outside of the circle of friends of my husband, I think it is a great possibility to meet people.

Others, who were involved in volunteering activities highlighted similar motives, namely, on the one hand, that they felt passionate about the causes, and, on the other hand, that it also offered a possibility for them to meet new people.

8.3.3.4 Contact to other Germans Living in Canada

For some of my interviewees it was also important to find other Germans who were living in the same places. To do so, some, for example, joined German regulars' tables that were organized in the cities they moved to in Canada, whereas others started to volunteer for German organizations such as their local German Saturday schools. Some also simply met other Germans through their workplaces, by joining online groups or through coincidence. Those of the interviewees who said that they were looking for contact with other Germans highlighted that it was important for them to speak German occasionally and it also gave them the

possibility to talk about their experiences and exchange information on life in Canada. Moreover, some emphasized that it was easier to relate to other Germans given that they could draw on a similar cultural background and socialization which created more familiarity between them. Although most of the interviewees who were interested in having contact with other Germans were successful in finding them, Nikola (28), reported that while she was looking for contacts with other Germans she had been struggling and, in fact, had made negative experiences in the attempt of doing so which discouraged her. She had, for example, tried to talk to Germans she ran across at multiple occasions who all usually "brushed her off" and were not interested. Likewise, being a trained teacher, she had messaged the German language school in (name of city in Canada) and was hoping to become engaged in the school or at least meet with some of the people from the school to exchange experiences and build contacts. However, she was told that because she did not have a work permit yet, they could not help her. Overall, these experiences were disappointing for Nikola, particularly because she had hoped that other Germans who had immigrated to Canada would have adapted to the friendly and open way of Canadians. However, her experience seemed to be the only ones of this kind among those of my interviewees who were interested in having contacts with other Germans.

8.3.3.5 Meeting People in Their Neighbourhoods

For some of my interviewees, the neighbourhoods in which they lived also became important places where they met new people and were able to build a social network. Some of those interviewees who had young children when arriving at their places of destinations, for example, highlighted the importance of playgrounds and daycare centers of schools for social encounters. Linda (47) told me that when she first moved to (name of city in Canada) with her husband and four-month-old child she went to playgrounds in an attempt to meet people:

> And then I put my still very small child into a swing and always talked very loudly in English to her to figure out if anyone would react to this. […] I still remember that thing with the swings very well. I thought it was a bit bizarre because a four-month-old child does usually not go to the playground, but I thought "I have to start somewhere".

She remembered that after a few weeks she indeed met a woman with her child who by chance also spoke German with her child when they were all walking to the playground. This person became a close friend of her, at least for a couple of years, and also introduced Linda to other people and families with children who were living in the neighbourhood and came to the playground with their children on a regular basis. Hanna (41) also recalled that she went to playgrounds, early years centers and other places for young children together with her two children in the hope of meeting people there. Moreover, she highlighted that once her oldest son started junior Kindergarten this made it easier to meet people because she was able to arrange play dates and invite the parents of the children over as well.

As the two examples above show, playgrounds in neighbourhoods were important meeting places for those with children. For other interviewees, their neighbourhoods also became important places for meeting people. For Lea (36) it was, for example, the dog park in her neighbourhood. She recalled that it was an easy place to meet people as "you stand around, and then you talk to each other. You're also there every night and then it's relatively easy to find, I also thought, the people were also relatively open-minded." Thus, she was quickly able to find two good friends there who were important contacts for Lea throughout her entire time in (name of city in Canada). Moreover, several of the interviewees highlighted that their neighbours became important social contacts for them in the beginning and became close friends over time. Carolina (33) told me that when her husband arrived about two months after she had first moved to (name of city in Canada) they moved into a nice alley building together. This is where they met and became friends with two of their neighbours who were living in the same building. These people became important contacts for Carolina and her husband as they not only "introduced them to the Canadian way of life" and explained them how things worked in Canada but also invited them to parties and other cultural events and introduced them to more people which allowed them to expand their social network.

8.3.3.6 Social Media and Other Strategies

In addition to these more common strategies of joining sports teams, clubs, groups, participating in courses or volunteering or meeting people in their neighbourhoods, some interviewees also mentioned that they made use of other strategies such as online dating, using social media or online groups such as meetup.com, going to church or taking their own initiative by either inviting people over to their places or starting their own activity groups (e.g., a knitting group or a road cycling group). Paul (43), for example, told me that when he first moved to (name of city in Canada), he signed up for online dating which is how he met his first girlfriend. While they were only together for about two months, this girlfriend gave him a "little crash course of life in Canada" and introduced him to other people. Marlene (38) emphasized that she was able to meet a lot of people through meetup.com which is an online platform that organizes different meetings for people who are interested in the same things or have something in common. As such, she, for example, joined a physics and a biotechnology meetup as well as meetups for Germans in the city in Canada where she was living. For Till (27), joining a church and visiting services as well as specific meetings that were organized by this church every week also presented a possibility to meet and get in contact with people.

8.3.4 Challenges Faced when Building a Social Network

Finally, it is important to highlight that while the interviewees employed different strategies to build up their social networks and make new friends, they reported several challenges encountered along the way. Different social rules and norms paired with different expectations or understandings of what the term friendship means, was one of the factors named by several interviewees making it difficult to form closer friendships. Regarding this, several interviewees highlighted that while Canadians are friendly and open towards newcomers it was hard and took a lot of time to form close friendships with them as their friendliness and openness was

perceived as being superficial. Nikola (28), for example, told me that she knew many Canadians through her Canadian partner who were always very friendly and asked her how she was doing and invited her to parties. However, she said that she came to the realization that even if people asked her how she was doing they were not really interested in getting a proper answer, that their friendliness remained on a superficial level and that it was therefore difficult to form a proper friendship "that challenges you mentally and spiritually" and which allows you to "talk about everything". Nora (33) also remembered how in the beginning of her stay she thought that she had a lot of friends because everyone was nice and friendly to her and asked her how she was doing. However, she learned very soon that that was not actually the case because asking how you are doing was simply a polite phrase. Helene (29) and her partner Peter (30) emphasized another point, namely their perception that Canadians are unreliable. While they perceived Canadians in general as very friendly and openminded and stated that it was easy to get in contact with them, they highlighted that it was hard to form closer friendships because they felt that Canadians did not always mean what they said and did not follow through with the suggestions they made. They underlined this point by stating:

> P: But then such things as, they would say while watching a game together: "Let's go brunching together the next day", or "Let's do this and that", or "Let's go for a bike ride next weekend". And then you plan accordingly and then you realize: "Hello? Anything happening? No!" Well okay, then we'll do something else. That's really annoying.
> H: You rely on what they say, but they don't really mean it.
> P: Yeah, they don't mean it. And that's.
> H: The first six months were really hard for us.
> P: What do you mean, hard? But yes, you had to get used to the fact that they didn't really mean what they said.

Similar experiences were also reiterated by other interviewees and underlined that it often took a long time to form closer friendships.

Another reason that was identified as making it difficult to form friendships and to build up a social network was the geographical location of destination – rural versus urban – of my interviewees. Specifically, several of them, such as Paul (43) or Marie (35), mentioned that

living in smaller and/or more rural cities/towns where people had known each other since their childhood and formed close-knit communities made it hard to become part of these groups.

Moreover, specifically for those interviewees who lived in the francophone parts of Canada, either not having any French skills at all or only having basic skills put a barrier to forming friendships and/or becoming engaged in society initially. Tobias (45), for example mentioned that while many Quebecois were trying to be conscious and talk English to each other when he was around, eventually they would fall back to speaking French which made it impossible for him to follow the conversations because he barely spoke any French. As a result of this, he highlighted: "And I did realize that in the end to fully belong it would be easier if you do somehow speak the language." He highlighted that not speaking French was "a real barrier" and, specifically in the beginning, he wished that he spoke French a bit better. These experiences reflect those of others with limited or no French skills who also emphasized that it was difficult to follow conversations for a long time as it required a lot of energy and attention, that it put a barrier to the activities they chose to participate in and that it, thus, overall made it difficult to connect with the local francophone population and to from friendships.

8.4 Finding Employment and Becoming Engaged in Working Life

The experiences of my interviewees regarding their working life differed significantly depending on their qualifications, language skills and, most importantly, if they had a pre-arranged position by the time they arrived in their places of destination or not. Those with pre-arranged positions, e.g., those who moved to Canada for a post-doctoral position or faculty position at a Canadian university or those whose work permits were sponsored by their employers, had a relatively easy start in the sense that they did not have to face the challenges of finding employment upon arrival, whereas, for those who did not have pre-arranged positions, finding employment in many cases became a challenge or at least more challenging than they expected initially. Most interviewees also reported that they had to adjust in one way

or another to working life in Canada irrespective of whether they had pre-arranged employment or not. In what follows, these challenges and adjustments that interviewees had to go through are explored in further detail.

8.4.1 (Non-)Recognition of Skills

Several interviewees who did not have a job when they arrived in their places of destination in Canada highlighted that it was difficult to find employment because the education, skills, and work experiences they acquired abroad were either not recognized or not valued in Canada. Nora (33), who did an apprenticeship in Germany to become a nurse and worked in that occupation for a year before moving to (name of city in Canada) with her husband (back then boyfriend), remembered that she was not allowed to work in her learned profession in Canada. Consequently, when she first arrived and received her work permit, she worked as a sales assistant in a store for a few months. Eventually she was able to make some changes to her visa which allowed her to work in the care sector. However, because her nursing education from Germany was not yet recognized she was still not able to work as a registered nurse but only as a nursing assistant which she did while also trying to get her nursing license registered in Canada. She told me that this was a long process that almost took two and a half years during which she had to do several tests, among other requirements. At the end of this process, she was told that her apprenticeship would not be recognized in Canada because she only had one year of work experience and that she thus could not work as a registered nurse. To obtain that title and work in her learned profession she was instructed that she would have to go back to university and study in a four-year nursing program at a Canadian university. For her, this was a frustrating and disappointing experience and if it had not been for her husband Henning (34) she would have likely returned to Germany after the first year of their stay.

Likewise, Leon (28) remembered that he was frustrated in the beginning when searching for work in (name of city in Canada). He had completed a master's degree in public policy with

a specialization in urban policy making in Germany. However, when arriving in (name of province in Canada), he realized that to work in this field he needed to be part of the "Planners Association" which was only possible for individuals who had obtained a certain university degree in North America. This made it extremely difficult for him to find employment in his field of expertise. He told me that he was not aware of this regulation before arriving in Canada and that it was "extremely frustrating". Moreover, he recounted that in the beginning of his stay in (name of city in Canada) when he was first trying to apply for positions, he also did not know that he needed to get his foreign degrees recognized in Canada:

> And I only found out about this two months later that the whole time something was missing. And then it took four months to be processed which was a huge loss and I thought "Okay, now I have to wait another four months for this and all the applications I sent before likely went to the bin straight away." That was really frustrating. (Leon, 28)

Other interviewees reported similar experiences and highlighted that their foreign credentials and/or work experiences were not recognized or valued in Canada and that not having any work experience in Canada made it more difficult for them to find employment. While they had what they perceived as good degrees from German universities, these were not of much value to Canadian employers who, for example, lacked knowledge about the German university system and specific study programs or employment experiences, and thus were not able to evaluate these degrees or experiences. Consequently, while these interviewees would have likely not faced any difficulties in finding a job in Germany, they were struggling to find employment at their places of destination in Canada. This was a frustrating and unexpected experience for many as the example of Emma (34) underlines who told me:

> Well, I know that with my experiences and my CV I would absolutely not have any problems finding a job in Germany. And now making the experience [= of not finding a job] here that is really difficult. Well, it's surprising, disappointing and, in the long run, getting one rejection after the other impacts your self-esteem.

In addition to these challenges, those of my interviewees who moved to the francophone parts of Canada and did not have sufficient French skills faced additional difficulties in finding employment. Having underestimated the level of French skills that was required for finding a

good job they either had to search for a long time or were limited in the jobs they could apply to as they were restricted to apply to organizations or institutions that were mainly anglophone.

8.4.2 Deskilling or Working in Non-Related Fields

As a result of these often-unexpected challenges, the time it took the interviewees to find employment was often longer than they had initially expected – a few months to almost a year to not having found employment yet – and meant that the first few months at their places of destination were quite stressful and, in many cases, frustrating and were characterized by applying for jobs for the most part. Moreover, this difficulty of finding a job in their learned profession also resulted in some of them working in other fields for a while to bridge the time until they found a "proper" job and/or tried to find other solutions. Both Peter (30) and Florian (27), for example, who had degrees in respectively engineering and management of transportation studies, worked in the video testing industry for about a year and Peter told me how frustrating it was for him to work in a part-time position in a field that he was not really interested in. Jutta (33), who had obtained a master's degree in economics, worked in a clothing store for a few months at the beginning of her second stay in Canada, and Emma (34), who worked as a consultant in Germany but was unable to find employment in her field in (name of city in Canada), decided to do some freelancing work for her previous employer in Germany as well as working as a translator on the side to bridge the time until she would be able to find a stable job. For others, such as Nils (44), who was working as an architect, it was not that difficult to find a job. He told me that it only took him about six weeks to find a job, however, he also highlighted that he was not able to start back at the same level that he held previously in Hong Kong but had to start in a more junior position and gradually had to work his way up again. There were also several of my interviewees who did not have a pre-arranged job, such as Anton (36) and Laura (35), who used the time upon arrival in their places of destination to take some time off from work either to relax a bit after leaving a stressful job in Germany or to figure out

what they wanted to do next, i.e., stay in their learned profession or maybe start over in a different direction.

Finally, Hanna's (41) case was a bit different from those above. While her husband had a job before moving to Canada as he was the main applicant for their express entry visa application, Hanna, who held a full-time teacher position in Germany previously, did not. Although she was keen to find employment and to start working again, she remembered that her family's situation did not allow for this as it would have been too expensive to pay for childcare for their two children. Consequently, she had to stay home with their children and take care of them. Having been used to working full-time in Germany this was a hard situation for her to adjust to. Moreover, not being able to work meant that initially and in contrast to her husband who used English daily at work, she was not able to improve her English much. She recalled:

> And my husband was participating in working life, that is, he was able to get out, he learned English, he was able to advance his English in a completely different way, he had contact to Canadians. I didn't have any of this in the beginning. I had my screaming children around me, in a house that was not furnished yet, in a country that I did not know, with new structures that were still foreign to me and that I still had to conquer.

Thus, for Hanna, in contrast to others, at least initially it was not the non-recognition of her skills that meant that she was not able to work but this was a result of the financial restraints that her family faced upon arrival in (name of city in Canada). This inability to work did not only involve a change of family roles that she had to adjust to but also resulted in her being isolated in the beginning of her stay and having a harder time to learn English and adjusting to her new life in Canada.

8.4.3 Adjusting to Their New Workplaces in Canada

The above-described challenges were faced by those interviewees who did not have pre-arranged jobs whereas those of my interviewees who already had a job when moving to Canada did not experience the same issues. Rather, those with pre-arranged positions experienced a

smoother transition into their new places of destination, as they sometimes received help from their employers who financed and organized their moves, helped them with visa regulations and other legal matters and/or provided them with some introductory information about their places of destinations and how things worked there. Frida (39) and her husband Tobias (45), for example, emphasized that the university that hired Frida has a special office that helps foreign hires with their relocation to (name of city in Canada) where the university is located. As a result of this service, they got help prior to their move, for example, with applying for their work permits and paying for the relocation, but also after their arrival in (name of city in Canada), for example, by getting information on which areas of the city would be good to live in, recommendations on childcare centers and other important information. However, what was the same for all interviewees was that they had to adjust in some way or another to their new workplaces.

8.4.3.1 Communication and Social Rules

Above, I already discussed that many interviewees had to adjust to new social rules and norms in their day-to-day lives, including small talk. This was also true for their working environment where they often had to learn to communicate in different ways than they were used to from Germany. Regarding this, several of my interviewees highlighted that Canadians communicated in a much less direct and non-confrontational way as compared to Germans who tend to be more direct and upfront about what they mean, what they want someone to do or what they think about certain aspects. Sophie (40) told me that the working hierarchy in Canada was flatter than in Germany, that everyone was more or less on the same level and that everyone was very friendly. She explained: “Well, you can’t be as direct as back home. […] And, therefore, it was a bit of a change. And I had to learn that a bit. And well I really had to learn that the hard way in the beginning in (name of city in Canada).” Likewise, Leon (28) told me how he usually speaks his mind and is very direct in his way of communicating with people.

However, when he moved to Canada and started to work there, he realized that this direct way of communicating was not much appreciated there and that it could result in his colleagues being offended. Thus, he had to scale back and adjust his way of communicating which he thought was still sometimes hard for him. Frida (39) highlighted another factor, namely the way of addressing people. She told me that she had to get used to the flatter hierarchies in Canadian universities and remembered:

> Yeah, I think, in the beginning, I called my colleagues, I addressed them formally, right. I used their last names when I talked to them and things like that. And I think they thought I was slightly weird.

She also had to get used to the flatter hierarchies at Canadian universities in another regard, namely that she as an assistant professor had an equal say in decisions made by the faculty. Regarding this, she remembered that in the beginning when she was sitting in a faculty or committee meeting, she was not quite aware of her role or position and thought that because she was "only" an assistant professor she did not have a say in things. However, her colleagues soon taught her that she was an equal member of the faculty and had every right to vote and make her opinion known. Thus, only being used to the relatively hierarchical German university system and not being familiar with the Canadian one in the beginning of her stay resulted in several "awkward behaviors" as she called it herself. Having to adjust to different – flatter and more relaxed hierarchical structures and power relations – was not only reported by those in academia but also by interviewees who worked in fields outside of academia. Often these flatter power structures were seen as something positive which made the working atmosphere more relaxed and comfortable. However, in some cases it also meant that sometimes the communication was not as straightforward as it could be, meaning that some of my interviewees had to read between the lines to understand what they were or were not supposed to do and/or how they were performing.

8.4.3.2 Different Rules and Regulations

In addition to these differences in terms of communication and interaction, some interviewees also had to adjust to new rules and regulations or working processes that differed between Germany and Canada and were specific to their fields of expertise. This was specifically true for technical professions, such as engineering or architecture, but could also be found in other professions. Paul (43) who worked in the field of topographical surveying told me that when he started to work in (name of city in Canada) he had to learn and get used to a few new formalities as the way surveying was done in Germany and in Canada differed to some degree. As an example, he mentioned that in Germany everything would be "measured and surveyed into the smallest detail" whereas in Canada things were not quite as rigid. Likewise, Laura (35) who works as a tax consultant underlined the need to learn new regulations when she started to work in Canada:

> I did not only have to learn things in two languages [=French and English] but as I said, I also had to learn the Canadian and the US law and consequently two legal foundations and two languages so to speak. Having to learn the respective terms and terminology that was quite a challenge.

These experiences were also reflected by others who worked in more technical professions.

However, they were also reflected by some of my interviewees who worked in academia which is often seen as a more universal field of employment as research is done similarly around the world. While this might be true for the pure science part of research/academia, some interviewees who worked in academia emphasized that the (administrative) working processes and working hierarchies still differed between the two countries. Frida who I mentioned above and who had been hired as an assistant professor by a Canadian university in (name of city in Canada) remembered that she was surprised that it was professors themselves who had to write their own funding applications and that this was not something that was delegated to their post-docs or doctoral students as she was used to from Germany. Moreover, she was impressed by the amount of time that professors invested in their own qualification, i.e., when their research advanced into a new direction or field that they were not familiar with they would learn

everything that was necessary instead of relying on their knowledge in the fields that they were experts in.

In addition to these adjustments which were mentioned by several interviewees, other adjustments that were mentioned but not quite as frequently were having to adjust to a more relaxed dress code, i.e., realizing that the normal working attire that they were used to from Germany was too formal, or that working hours were a lot more relaxed and flexible. However, these experiences varied widely and depended on the actual working place and the individual's situation.

8.5 Discussion of the Research Findings

This chapter explored the lived experiences of my interviewees during the initial phase of arrival at their places of destination in Canada. Often it is assumed that highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants, and especially those who are white, originate from a Western European country and move within the "global North", can easily adjust to and integrate in their new host societies and that they do not face any major challenges during their migration processes. This assumption has resulted in relatively little research being done on the lived experiences of these migrants during and after their migration processes. However, as demonstrated in chapter three of this thesis, those few studies that exist underline that even highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants might face challenges and hidden frictions when being internationally mobile specifically regarding employment (Harvey and Beaverstock 2017; Rashid et al. 2013; Richardson and Mckenna 2002), housing (Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Plöger 2017), their social and cultural integration into their host societies (Mulholland and Ryan 2014; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Hardwick and Tremblay 2013; Rashid et al. 2013), their family lives (Jansson 2016a; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Fast and Lindell 2016; Mclachlan 2007) or their legal status (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Thorpe 2012). These studies also highlight that

this group of migrants is not homogenous but that their experiences may differ depending on their individual characteristics, access to different types of capital, their family status and personal preferences (van Riemsdijk and Wang 2017a). The findings of this chapter contribute to and complement this literature. **In fact, they support some of the findings of the above-named studies but also contribute with new insights regarding some of the challenges faced and the different strategies that my interviewees used to address them.**

Specifically, this chapter demonstrated that in contrast to the assumption often made in research literature (Ossman 2004; Favell 2008; Vorheyer 2016) the highly skilled German migrants I interviewed did face some challenges when arriving at and integrating in their places of destination in Canada. While the degree to which they faced these challenges in their day-to-day life differed depending on their individual situation (e.g., age, family status, legal status, location of their destination, stage in their life course, previous migration experience (in Canada)), it became obvious that they all went through an initial phase of arrival during which they had to reconstruct their lives. This process involved four distinct spheres, **namely a) a first orientation at their places of destination, b) housing, c) social networks and d) the labour market**.

As part of their first orientation at their places of destination, my interviewees did not only have to take care of several administrative formalities such as applying for a health card and transferring their German to a Canadian driving license, but they also had to learn how certain systems (e.g., the health care, insurance, day care and schooling or banking systems) worked. While the former was seen as a time consuming and at times annoying but necessary task, many interviewees felt that it was relatively uncomplicated to take care of these administrative formalities. **The latter, however, presented some of my interviewees with challenges as the unfamiliarity of how certain things, e.g., the insurance system, worked at their places of destination in Canada resulted in some uncertainties among these interviewees**. For example, they were not sure if the contracts they were signing were

appropriate or not. Moreover, several interviewees faced difficulties in obtaining a credit card because they did not have a credit history in Canada. This was an unexpected challenge and was problematic because these individuals were not able to make any bigger purchases especially in the beginning when they would have needed it the most to cover many of their initial fixed costs.

In addition to these more administrative procedures, during this initial phase of their lives in their places of destination in Canada, my interviewees also had to acquire a geographical orientation in the cities they moved to. This included having to learn how to get to different places within the city as well as finding out where certain shops or specific products could be found. This lack of knowledge meant that, for some, doing certain activities (e.g., finding specific products) took a lot of energy in the beginning as they required having to do some sort of research and figuring things out. This presents an interesting finding especially considering that much of the literature on highly skilled and mobile individuals highlights how these individuals are detached from places and focuses on their mobile and fluid lifestyles or their transnational behaviour. **My findings however underline that even for these individuals and especially in their day-to-day lives, places remain important.** In fact, knowledge about the places where my interviewees are living is important for such mundane tasks as doing grocery shopping, finding certain products, or getting from one part of the city to another. Acquiring a geographical orientation of the places one moves to thus becomes an important part to successfully navigate this mundane day-to-day life and a lack of this geographical orientation can present individuals with challenges especially at the beginning of their stays.

Finally, during this first orientation at their places of destination in Canada, my interviewees also had to learn new social rules and norms. Having to participate in small talk in restaurants, shops or elsewhere was the most frequently mentioned aspect in this regard. Many interviewees highlighted that they were not used to this habit from Germany and, thus, initially thought it was “strange” or did not know how to react and respond to it. This was also

the case for several other social rules which often were particular to the specific cities where my interviewees were living, e.g., lining up for the bus or saying "thank you" to the bus driver, thus again underlining the importance of considering specific places when examining their experiences. My interviewees had to first learn about these rules – sometimes the hard way by being called out for disrespecting them – when first moving to their places of destination in Canada. It is interesting to notice that while many interviewees reported these or similar experiences of having to learn new social rules and norms, many of them thought that Canada/the Canadian society was not very different from Germany/the German society. Nonetheless, in line with other studies (Mulholland and Ryan 2014; Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Hardwick and Tremblay 2013), the results from the interviews demonstrated that **my interviewees did have to acquire intercultural competences and adjust to new situations even if Canada was perceived as being culturally similar to their home country**. This was not only true regarding social rules and norms but also in navigating different systems (e.g., insurance, health care, banking etc.) and learning how things function in their places of destination as demonstrated above. However, it is important to underline that for those interviewees who had previous experiences of living in Canada, this process of first orientation at their places of destination was less challenging as they were already familiar with a lot of aspects of life in Canada.

The second sphere of having to reconstruct their lives at the places of destination in Canada related to my interviewees' housing. This is an area that so far has only gotten little attention in research literature (Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Plöger 2017). My findings demonstrate that my interviewees utilized different housing strategies, e.g., moving in with their Canadian partners who already had an apartment or house, moving into student accommodation, moving in with colleagues from work, shared apartments or houses or moving in with their in-laws. While the forms of accommodation that my interviewees moved to upon arrival at their places of destination in Canada varied, **it became apparent that for many these**

initial places of living only became places of transition where they stayed for a short period before moving into more permanent places of living that were more targeted to their needs and wishes. Often these initial places of accommodation were convenient to stay at because they ensured that my interviewees had a place to stay when arriving in Canada. Staying at these places also allowed them to save money on rent and/or to search for a more permanent place to live while actually being on-site and having the possibility to look for apartment or houses in person. This is similar to the findings of Plöger (2017) who also found that highly skilled migrants often stay in temporary housing arrangements initially before they move to more permanent places of living that correspond to their own needs. However, **my findings were also able to nuance some of the challenges faced by my interviewees in their initial housing arrangements that contributed to them continuing their housing trajectories (an aspect that is explored in more detail in chapter nine) during their stays at their destinations in Canada**. Especially those interviewees who moved in with their parents-in law as a transitional step before finding their own accommodation mentioned that while they appreciated that they could stay with their parents-in-law, it also meant having to find compromises and only having limited privacy and independence. This was tolerable for a certain amount of time but not indefinitely and, thus, often resulted in my interviewees and their partners moving elsewhere later on. Challenges were also faced by other interviewees at their initial places of accommodation and often resulted in them moving to other places within the first year of their arrival. **These challenges at their initial places of accommodation were caused by being dissatisfied with them either because of the people with whom they shared these places (e.g., because they did not get along, there were too many rules or different standards of cleanliness) or because of their geographical location within the cities where they lived (e.g., "sketchy" neighbourhoods, too far away from downtown, no or limited access to public transportation).** Finally, it is important to underline that while many of my interviewees experienced some dissatisfaction or challenges with their initial places of accommodation, this

was not the case for everyone. Specifically, those interviewees whose Canadian partners already had an apartment or house seemed to be more satisfied and did not necessarily see the places they moved to as transitional places.

The third sphere of having to reconstruct their lives was related to having to build a social network and forming friendships at my interviewees' places of destination in Canada. The experiences in this regard differed among my interviewees. Those who had previous experiences in Canada and returned to places where they had stayed before were often able to draw on an already established social network and circle of friends which facilitated their arrival. Moreover, those interviewees who had a Canadian partner could draw on their partners' social networks including their families as well as friends who often integrated my interviewees into their activities and welcomed them in their families. However, several of these interviewees highlighted the importance of establishing a social network and forming friendships outside of their partners' circles. Establishing a social network and forming friendships was also particularly important for those for whom it was the first time moving and living at their places of destination in Canada and/or those who did not know anyone at the places they moved to. Regarding this, my interviewees highlighted that they encountered several challenges in the attempt to do so and especially when trying to form closer friendships with locals. This confirms findings from other studies (Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Ryan and Mulholland 2014; Rashid et al. 2013) which also found that one integration challenge that highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants faced in their new host societies was establishing social networks and forming close friendship ties especially with locals.

However, my findings complement these studies as they, on the one hand, provide information about which factors contributed to these challenges, and, on the other hand, identified several different strategies which my interviewees used to overcome these challenges and establish their social networks. Regarding the challenges, some of my interviewees emphasized that it was hard to form closer friendships because they thought that

there were d**ifferent expectations and understandings associated with the term friendship** and that while they perceived Canadians as open and friendly this openness and friendliness seemed superficial. Thus, while it was easy to get in contact with people, it was hard and took time to transform these contacts into close friendships. Moreover, some interviewees who lived in more rural areas highlighted that it was harder to form friendships in these areas because people had often known each other for their entire lives making it more difficult for my interviewees as "outsiders" to become a part of these close-knit communities. **Hence, there seems to be a rural-urban division when it comes to establishing social networks.** Finally, some interviewees, namely those living in the francophone parts of Canada, also underlined that **their limited or lack of French skills presented a barrier for getting in contact with people and participating in activities** when they first arrived at their places of destination. Regarding **the strategies my interviewees used to overcome these challenges and to establish their social networks, several different ones could be identified**. These included: a) **drawing on contacts from friends, family, or relatives** which meant that some interviewees had contacts they could get in touch with upon their arrival who helped them with their first orientation at their places of destination and sometimes these contacts transformed into closer friendships; b) **meeting people through their work places and/or for those who were students at university**; c) **joining sports clubs, groups, courses or volunteering** which allowed them to participate in an activity that they felt passionate about at the same time as meeting like-minded people; d) **establishing contacts with other Germans** (e.g., by volunteering, joining regulars' tables or online groups among others) which some thought was important to be able to speak in their mother tongue but also because they felt that other Germans could relate better to their experiences having a similar cultural background and socialisation; e) **meeting people in their neighbourhoods**, e.g. by going to playgrounds with their children, visiting dog parks if they were dog owners or simply befriending their

neighbours; and f) **other strategies** which involved social media, online dating or joining churches.

Finally, the last sphere that was involved in the process of having to reconstruct my interviewees' lives upon arrival in their places of destination was the labour market. The experiences regarding entering the labour market varied among my interviewees. Those who already had a pre-arranged position upon their arrival did not face any major challenges and often experienced a relatively smooth transition into their working lives. In fact, some of these individuals received support from their employers who helped them with their relocation and integration in the new living environment. However, **those of my interviewees who did not have a pre-arranged position when arriving at their places of destination in Canada faced certain challenges that were related to the (non-)recognition of their foreign credentials which was in turn closely related to a process of deskilling**. While research has addressed the challenges that highly skilled immigrants face regarding the (non-)recognition of their foreign credentials, this research often examines immigrants who originate from countries outside the "global North", whereas only few studies (Harvey and Beaverstock 2017) found that this was also a problem for highly skilled migrants who originate in countries of the "global North". My findings confirm Harvey and Beaverstock's (2017) results that these challenges are also faced by highly skilled migrants who for example originate in Western European countries, as the group of German migrants by choice that I examined. In fact, several interviewees reported that the education, skills, and work experience that they had obtained in Germany (or other countries) were not recognized or valued in Canada or that they first had to go through a process of recognizing their foreign credentials which was a long and complicated process. **This seemed to be an unexpected challenge which they had not been aware of before they left for Canada and which made it difficult for them to find employment at their places of destination** and meant that the process of finding work was a lot longer than they had expected it to be initially and/or that they had not found work yet when I interviewed them. **Additionally,**

some interviewees were not able to work in their learned profession because of the non-recognition of their foreign credentials. This experience was frustrating for those interviewees who were impacted by it as they often had what they considered good university degrees and/or valuable work experience with which they thought they would not have had any problems to find employment in Germany. For some, this experience also resulted in feelings of self-doubt and stress. Moreover, for some interviewees who moved to the francophone parts of Canada, their insufficient French skills became an additional barrier to entering the working market as many jobs even in the bigger metropolis required to be fluent in both English and French which was also unexpected for some. To overcome the above-described challenges, some interviewees decided to temporarily or for longer periods work in fields that were not related to their learned profession or tried to bridge this period by trying to create opportunities for themselves, e.g., by freelancing. Others had to start in lower positions than those they had held at their previous workplaces and had to work up their status again and/or had to work in occupations that were related to their field of employment but did not correspond to their education level (e.g., working as a nursing assistant instead of as a registered nurse which they had been in Germany). While some were able to overcome this process of deskilling over time, others were not**. Finally, while these challenges (non-recognition of foreign credentials and deskilling) were faced only by some interviewees who did not have pre-arranged employment, one challenge that all interviewees faced to a certain degree was having to adjust to their new work environment.** This process included having to learn to **communicate in different ways** (e.g., small talk, less direct and upfront communication), getting used to **flatter hierarchies** as compared to Germany as well as **learning new rules, regulations and work processes** that were specific to their respective occupation.

8.6 Conclusion of the Chapter

To conclude, this chapter explored the lived experiences of my interviewees at their places of destination in Canada during their initial phase of arrival. It demonstrated that while their experiences differed, German migrants by choice faced several (sometimes unexpected) challenges during this phase of their lives in Canada and often had to go through a process of rebuilding and establishing their lives at their places of destination. Four distinct spheres – i.e., first orientation at their places of destination, housing, social networks, and the labour market – were identified as the spheres in which this process took place. **Overall, these findings demonstrate that although it is often assumed that the migration processes of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants are uncomplicated and that they are able to integrate quickly into their new host societies because they possess high social, human, cultural, and economic capital, these migrants too face challenges and hidden frictions which impact their lived experiences**. Therefore, these need to be examined in more detail to obtain a better understanding of their migration outcomes as well as how they might impact future migration decision-making processes as I will demonstrate in the next two chapters.

Moreover, these findings also emphasize the importance that places still play in the lives of highly skilled and/or privileged and affluent migrants. While research often focuses on the place-detached character of their lives, **my research demonstrated that many of the processes my interviewees went through as well as the challenges they faced and the strategies they used to overcome them were related to their local places of living, i.e., the regions, cities, neighborhoods and sometimes even the apartments or houses in which they were living**. Thus, it is not only important to consider the transnational components of their lives as done by much of the research literature but also the many other places, spaces and scales across which their lives span. In fact, as argued by the approach of translocal geographies, considering these different places, spaces and scales becomes particularly important for obtaining a better understanding of migrants' lived experiences at their places of destination.

The importance of place and place attachment in the lives of my interviewees is also the focus of the next chapter which examines how my interviewees' lived experiences at their places of destination changed over time and how these experiences impacted their decisions of staying or leaving.

9 Understanding the Stays of Migrants in Their Places of Destinations as Ongoing Processes

The previous chapter explored the lived experiences of my interviewees in the initial phase of their stay in Canada at their places of origin and highlighted the different challenges and adjustment processes they had to go through. This third analysis chapter examines how their lived experiences in their places of destination changed over time, specifically focusing on how they formed attachments to these places and how their lived experiences impacted their migration decision-making processes. In doing so it highlights how these moves and my interviewees lives in their places of destination can be interpreted as mini trajectories themselves which develop over time, e.g., from their initial phase of arrival to a more routinized and mundane day-to-day life, and, during which migration decisions are re-evaluated and -negotiated. To achieve this, the chapter is divided into two parts: The first part analyses how my interviewees lived experiences changed over time as they became more and more settled in their lives at their places of destinations as they start to develop day-to-day routines and form attachments to these places. The second part explores how their migration decisions are re-negotiated and -evaluated in ongoing processes over time during their stays at their places of destination.

9.1 Moving Towards a Day-to-Day Life and Forming Attachments to Places of Destination

The previous chapter highlighted the different processes my interviewees had to go through during their initial phase of arrival (e.g., orienting themselves at their places of destination, finding accommodation, establishing social networks, and entering the labour market), as well as the challenges some of my interviewees faced during this time. It also demonstrated that depending on their personal situation, e.g., having a Canadian partner, having lived in Canada or elsewhere previously or their life stages among other factors, the experiences they made during this initial phase of their time in their places of destination in Canada differed with some

facing less challenges and/or using different strategies to deal with specific situations. However, overall, it became apparent that this first phase of arrival was characterized by having to establish their lives at their places of destination and finding their ways around. Below I explore how their lived experiences changed over time after this initial phase and once they were becoming more familiar with life in Canada in general and at their specific places of destination specifically. In exploring these lived experiences, I particularly focus on how my interviewees formed closer attachments to these places and developed feelings of home and belonging. In doing so, I first reflect on socio-cultural processes that were involved in forming these place attachments and feelings of home and belonging. Secondly, I then explore more geographical and place-based factors that impacted these processes.

9.1.1 Socio-Cultural Processes that are Involved in Forming Place Attachments and Feelings of Home and Belonging

Over time, my interviewees were able to establish their lives at their places of destination in Canada more and more. In this process, they started to adopt and internalize new social rules and norms that they had learned, to establish their daily routines and to participate in the "normal" day-to-day life in the cities where they were living as well as successfully building up a social network and close friendships. These different processes contributed to my interviewees' feelings of being at home and belonging to the places they had moved.

9.1.1.1 Adopting Social Rules and Norms

While many interviewees had to learn new social rules and norms when they first arrived in their places of destination and sometimes thought that these were "weird" or "exaggerated" over time they got used to them and often started to appreciate them a lot and also internalized them. So much so that when they returned to Germany to visit their family and friends, they started to miss them, and, in some cases, even felt alienated during their return visits. This was,

for example the case, regarding the Canadian politeness and friendliness which was often reflected in small talk in restaurants or grocery stores and/or asking people how they were doing. While many interviewees had to get used to this type of interaction and other social rules and norms when they first arrived in Canada, they soon became familiar with them and started to interact with others according to these social rules and norms even when visiting Germany. Hilda (25), for example, told me:

> H: Ehm, what else? That I sometimes feel foreign when I return to Germany.
> I: How so?
> H: Well, certain habits like apologizing for everything, to always ask how people are doing. Last time I was in Germany a few months ago and went to REWE [= a German grocery store] I asked the cashier: "How are you?" And then the cashier said: "What?". Yeah, things like that.
> I: Mhh.
> H: I thought to myself "Okay". I think that by now my habits are more Canadian and I try to translate them directly into German which goes wrong sometimes, yeah.

Having internalized Canadian habits and social rules and norms was also reflected in the narratives of other interviewees and, in some cases, it was identified as a factor for having fully arrived in Canada and having become a part of the Canadian society or having made Canada a part of oneself. Linda (47) reflected on this aspect when she told me about an experience, she had made with friends visiting her from Germany who told her how much she had changed and how much "North Americanized" she had become. While she had assumed that she had changed over time hearing this from an outsider made it more apparent for her and made her realize how over time this side of her had grown and become more important. For Paul (43) having learned and being familiar with how things work in Canada and how to navigate and interact in certain situations over time also contributed to him feeling at home there. Likewise, others highlighted that over time they had become familiar with the social rules and norms and how things generally were working in their places of destination. This process of learning, familiarizing, and internalizing Canadian social rules and norms took varying amounts of time for different interviewees, from several months to several years. However, irrespective of how long this process took, the knowledge of how things work in Canada (or at their specific places of destination in Canada), how people interact with each other and what the social rules and

norms are contributed to my interviewees feeling more and more at home in their places of destination and in Canada as a country as such. Finally, some interviewees, such as Lea (36), felt that the Canadian way of being, i.e., their openness and friendliness, fitted their personalities better which made them feel at home there. Lea emphasized:

> Well, back then, when I went to Canada, I found the Canadians to be really nice and such. And, also, in a way "Here [= in Canada] I am actually at home in the sense of who I am as a person, how I interact," and, therefore, I thought Canada was really pleasant for me. And I actually really felt at home there.

9.1.1.2 Daily Routines and Finding Stability in the Day-to-Day Life

Closely linked to this factor of being familiar with and having internalized Canadian social rules and norms and its importance for feeling more and more at home is the aspect of developing routines and participating in the "normal" day-to-day life in their places of destination which was also an important factor for my interviewees to feel more at home. Regarding routines, Benjamin (37), for example, told me:

> Indeed, and then, I think always roughly after one year, when you passed the first year, then you start to look forward to things because things start to repeat themselves then. And then you start to, or at least I started to find out what I like, and I started to look forward to that and to actively seek it out. And I believe it takes at least a year to find out your preferences and to find a certain kind of regularity and to start to feel at home then.

Likewise, Charlotte (31) stated that being able to participate in the same kind of activities as back in Germany, e.g., going on bike rides during the weekends to explore the surrounding area, gave her a certain routine and created a feeling of familiarity and comfort.

Moreover, Benjamin (37) emphasized that finding a permanent employment position gave him the feeling of having more fully arrived and having found his place in society. It also gave him the stability of knowing that he and his wife would indeed stay and settle in (name of city in Canada) in the long run which gave them the possibility to start looking for a house and start their family planning as well as finally allowing him to feel at home there without any reservations. According to him, this was not possible before when they were not sure yet if they would move elsewhere again or not. Indeed, employment was identified as another factor by many of my interviewees that contributed to them feeling at home and integrated at their places

of destination in Canada. Not only did it help them in getting more structure in their day-to-day lives, but it also gave them a purpose and provided them with the feeling that they actively contributed to their new host society. Sonja (39) highlighted that for her finding employment was an important factor for getting into a "normal, regular daily routine" which helped her with feeling more settled and at home and becoming part of society. Likewise, Jutta (33) mentioned that for her finding employment helped with developing a daily routine which in turn helped her to feel more at home in (name of city in Canada). In addition to that, she also underlined how for her having a work that satisfies her and gives her the feeling of doing something meaningful and contributing to something was an important factor to feel comfortable and at home in a place. Annika (31) stated that she felt integrated and at home because she participated completely normally in life in (name of city in Canada), i.e., she did not seclude herself, she worked like everyone else and participated in everyday life like any other Canadian.

This leads to the importance of participating in the "normal" everyday life in Canada which many of my interviewees also referred to as an important factor for feeling at home. This participation in the "normal" day-to-day life was not only achieved by having employment but also by making use of community services such as going to community centers or bringing their children to swim classes as highlighted by Frida (39) and her husband Tobias (45); watching typical Canadian sports such as Hockey or Curling as highlighted by Paul (43) and Nikola (28) among others; participating in holidays or celebrations such as Canada day as highlighted by Nikola (28) and Florian (27) among others; going to a cottage during weekends as highlighted by Luisa (31); or participating in typical free time activities such as ice skating, hiking, camping or skiing as, for example, highlighted by Hilda (25), Leon (28) or Petra (31). Participating in these day-to-day activities gave these interviewees a sense of belonging and feeling integrated in their places of destinations which ultimately also contributed to feeling more at home at these places.

9.1.1.3 Establishing Social Networks and Close Friendships

Closely linked to the importance of participating in everyday activities was also the establishment of social networks and close friendships. In fact, it was often through friends or social contacts that my interviewees participated in everyday activities. Consequently, almost all interviewees emphasized the importance of having a social network and close friends for them to feel comfortable and as a part of society that belongs there. As highlighted in the previous chapter, for some interviewees building a social network and forming close friendships was hard and took quite some time, and, thus, for many this feeling of being integrated and belonging on a social level only grew over time. During the interview Frida (39), for example, told me: "Well, you do need a bit of a network to feel comfortable and it's true, that only started over the past one to two years" which was about three years after she had initially arrived in (name of city in Canada). Likewise, Hannes (34) emphasized the importance of being socially included but also that for him and his wife it was only during their second year in (name of city in Canada) that they felt as if they had succeeded with that. He explained that during their first year he and his wife spent a lot of time together and had to try to find their way around and explore what was available. It was only during their second year that they started to have more contact with other people who felt like true friends which made it more fun to do activities together and helped them with feeling at home in (name of city in Canada). Carolina (33) emphasized that for her having friends who were from Canada respectively the city where she and her husband were living was an important factor to feel fully integrated: "And that's what it means for me to feel integrated, it's that you have friends, that you have friends from this country [= Canada] and that you don't just interact within, yes, your own cultural circle." She continued to explain that through their local friends, they were able to get information about and participate in different local/neighbourhood events and activities which they would not have known about otherwise. This made it possible for them to participate in the "normal" everyday life in (name of city in Canada) and feel as a part of it. These feelings and experiences

were also reiterated by other interviewees, such as Nora (33) and Henning (34), who highlighted that for them it felt as if they had fully arrived when friends started to invite them to holiday dinners, e.g., for Thanksgiving, as it meant that they had become part of the everyday lives of their friends. Nora explained:

> Well, that's usually things that they would normally celebrate with their families, but when they start to invite you [to these events], then it's like: you have arrived, you belong and are part of their everyday life and their life and they want you to be part of it. And I feel that this is something that is really nice. Yes, in general all these birthdays, if you are supposed to take part in them and are allowed to do so, then things have worked out.

9.1.2 Geographical and Placed-Based Factors that are Involved in Forming Place Attachments and Feelings of Home and Belonging

In addition to these more socio-cultural factors impacting my interviewees experiences of forming attachments to their places of destination by feeling at home, integrated, and belonging to society, more geographical or place-based factors also placed an important role for the development of these feelings. These factors were, on the one hand, related to their housing situation and trajectories but, on the other hand, also to the regions and cities in which they were living.

9.1.2.1 When a House Becomes a Home

As highlighted in the previous chapter, many, though not all, of my interviewees were not satisfied with the initial form of housing when they arrived at their places of destination in Canada. There were several reasons for this, including the people they shared their accommodations with, that their housing only represented a temporary place of living, or the location of their housing. As a result of this, many of them moved again within the first couple of weeks or months after their arrival. However, in many cases their housing trajectories did not necessarily end after one move (e.g., from a temporary to a more permanent housing arrangement) but many of them moved multiple times (e.g., from a temporary form of accommodation to an apartment and eventually to their own house) within the same city. In

many cases, these multiple moves of my interviewees were caused by a desire to either move out of their temporary to a more permanent housing arrangement and/or the desire to move into a specific neighbourhood.

However, before exploring these moves in more detail, it is important to highlight that not all interviewees who moved multiple times did so out of a desire to move into a certain neighbourhood or into a more permanent place of housing. For some, moving multiple times within the same city was the result of circumstances. This was the case for Hilda (25), for example, who recalled that she moved four times during the first four years of her stay in (name of city). She emphasized that this was not because she necessarily had intended to do so but rather because of uncontrollable circumstances such as, her landlord deciding to sell the house she was living in or another landlord deciding that she did not want to rent the property any longer. For others, these moves were caused by taking up employment in another city. In most cases moving to another city for work was caused by my interviewees own desire or because they received a better job offer. Petra (31), for example, initially moved to (name of city in Canada) to be able to be together with her boyfriend who she had gotten to know during a university exchange year in the same city. While she was able to find work and lived there for almost four years, she eventually got a better job offer in another city where she then moved to. Moving due to a better job offer or because one voluntarily decided to change one's employment was common for most interviewees who moved from one city to another. One exception to this was the case of Hanna (41) and her family who had to move to another city because her husband – who was the main breadwinner of the family – lost his job in the city they had moved to initially. Not having any means of supporting the family in this city, he looked for employment elsewhere and was able to find a job in another city close by where Hanna and her family then moved to.

While in the above examples, moving to a different place or city was more or less a necessity, as highlighted before, many of my interviewees moved multiple times more so

because they wanted to move from a temporary to a more permanent housing arrangement and/or because they were unsatisfied with their initial place of accommodation. For these interviewees it was only over time and when moving to different places that their houses or apartments became homes and they started to feel more comfortable and happier in them. These feelings of comfort and home were attributed to several different factors and are explored in more detail below.

9.1.2.1.1 Arrival of Belongings from Germany

Several of my interviewees who moved into temporary places of accommodation initially where they stayed for a month or two and then moved into more permanent places of living emphasized that the arrival of their belongings that they were able to ship to Canada – which often overlapped with them moving into these more permanent places of accommodation – meant that they started to feel more at home in their houses or apartments. Frida (39) and her husband Tobias (45) remembered that the arrival of the container with all their belongings made them very happy. Initially, they lived in a furnished apartment for the first four to six weeks after arriving in (name of city in Canada) which was a bit tiring for them as they did not have any of their belongings. Moreover, being in an unfamiliar environment was especially hard for them as they had a small child. However, after this initial period they were able to move into their own apartment. This was around the same time as their container arrived and having all their belongings and things with them in this new place was a great feeling for them. Likewise, for Sonja (39) who did not feel at home in the house she and her husband moved into after a few weeks of having lived with her parents-in-law, the arrival of the container with all their belongings from Germany made a big difference. She told me:

> It became a bit better when our container with all our belongings arrived and we were able to, yes, that was somehow really like a piece of home for me, a part of me that arrived. And then it started to slowly feel like home more and more.

Moreover, she went on to explain that over time they furnished and arranged their house better and better and it started to feel like home more and more and at some point, it was no longer a strange house that smelled weirdly but had truly become their home. While they lived in this house for several years, felt comfortable there and called it their home, Sonja told me that this was not the end of their housing trajectory in (name of city in Canada) as she and her husband bought a house about a year before the interview where they were now living. She recalled that buying their own house had been a long process as it seemed impossible to find anything in (name of the city in Canada) that fulfilled all their criteria. However, eventually they found a house and were "really happy" there. Not only did it offer them enough space inside and a garden outside but also the location of the house was ideal as it was just at the edge of the downtown area which meant that they were able to walk to places, had grocery stores close by and were not dependent on a car or public transportation.

9.1.2.1.2 Neighbourhoods and the Importance of Housing Locations

The factor of location and moving to different neighbourhoods that were more targeted to their needs and desires was also mentioned by others as an important factor in feeling more comfortable and at home in their apartments or homes. Consequently, over time and often once the interviewees had gotten to know their places of destination better, several of them looked for housing in specific neighbourhoods or areas in the city where they were living. Lara (33), for example, recalled that she spent the first two months in an apartment that she sublet and used that time to look for a more permanent place. She told me that she had "very specific" criteria in mind when looking for her own place, namely, she wanted to stay in the same neighbourhood that her temporary accommodation was in as she liked that neighbourhood a lot. Moreover, she stated that she did not want to share an apartment, and, thus, was looking for her own place to live in, that she was looking for something that was furnished and that she also

wanted to find an apartment that had daylight, and, thus, was not a souterrain. When asking why she liked the specific neighbourhood she wanted to stay in, Lara explained:

> I found that it was, I really like to work in cafés and there were incredibly many cafés in which one could work. It was close enough to university but not directly on campus where you would have been completely […] you wouldn't have been able to experience (name of city in Canada) there [= on campus]. And it was a little bit, it wasn't downtown, and it was very relaxed and everything, no high rises, just neighbourhood homes. Everything was around the corner. Well, the organic food store and everything you need for your daily life. In my case that's coffee. And it was located, in the end my apartment was two streets down from the beach. And yes, it was nice. […] Both from the general atmosphere as well as from the location it was ideal for me.

Similar to Lara's experiences, other interviewees highlighted that when being unsatisfied with their initial housing arrangement and/or knowing that it was a temporary place to stay at, they searched for housing options in specific areas or neighbourhoods in the cities that they were living in that were targeted to their needs and desires regarding the ambience/environment of the neighbourhood but also access to daily necessities that corresponded to their lifestyles. Factors that impacted these decisions were, for example, access to public transportation, closeness to their (and their partner's) workplaces, having grocery stores and other amenities within walking distance, proximity to their partner's family or close friends, access to nature, parks etc. or dominant language spoken in a neighbourhood. Annika (31), for example, mentioned the importance of their house being in the middle of her and her partner's workplaces and having a park and river close by. Linda (47) highlighted that she and her ex-husband first lived in a predominantly francophone neighbourhood in (name of city in Canada) and eventually moved to a more anglophone neighbourhood which made her life easier and a bit more relaxed given that she only had limited French skills at the beginning of her stay. She also highlighted that she had everything she needed within walking distance including groceries, her children's schools, and her previous workplace. Likewise, Ute (28) and her husband Lutz (32) emphasized that they specifically looked for a more permanent place to stay at in (name of city in Canada) that was in a trendy area with grocery stores, shops, and restaurants within walking distance to accommodate the fact that they only had one car so that Ute would be able to have things within walking distance while Lutz used the car to get to and from work. Finally, Anton

(36) mentioned, among others, the importance of being close to public transportation to be able to get to different places in the city but also the proximity to be close(r) to his parents-in-law.

9.1.2.1.3 Housing Quality and Moving in with One's Partner

For others, it was not so much the factor of location but the quality of housing or that they moved in with their partner that was important for them to feel more at home and settled. Benjamin (37) recalled that he moved into his wife's (back then girlfriend) apartment when he moved to (name of city in Canada) initially. However, he was not feeling super comfortable or at home there. One factor he attributed that to is that the apartment was clairaudient, and they could hear everything from the other apartments and especially the one above. He told me that after two years they moved into another apartment which helped him to feel at home more:

> Well, and when we moved into the new apartment, it was much nicer. Well, it was also an old building, but it was just newly renovated in a nice way. I think that inherently helped me to feel at home. (Benjamin, 37)

In contrast to that, Charlotte (31) emphasized that for her moving in together with her wife (back then girlfriend) was an important step for feeling as if she had fully arrived in Canada and starting to feel at home. During her first year she lived in (name of city in Canada) where she was conducting her PhD studies and commuted to see her now wife (back then girlfriend) during weekends. However, moving in with her was a big step as it meant that she was able to participate in a normal day-to-day and family life instead of being in her "university bubble". Not only did moving in with her wife give Charlotte the security that their relationship was working out and that "the crazy step" of moving to Canada and being with her wife was indeed a "step for her life" but also her wife's family completely immersed and integrated her into their family giving her a support network and people who were there for her no matter what.

9.1.2.1.4 Owning Property

Buying a house or other property was also identified as an important factor for feeling more at home and developing stronger forms of attachment to their places of destination as those interviewees who were homeowners emphasized in their interviews. Henning (34) and his wife Nora (33) had first lived in a house that they shared with one of Henning's colleagues. As they did not enjoy sharing housing they eventually moved to a house in a different part of (name of city in Canada) and were quite happy there for a while. However, their garage got broken into multiple times and, at some point, when chasing some of the thieves, Henning got stabbed into his leg with a knife. After this event they decided that it was time to move to a different part of the city and to buy their own place which was located in a suburb of (name of city in Canada) but was close to Henning's work. When talking about the "gorgeous" house they bought and the neighboudhood it was located in both of them got very excited and told me:

> N: Yes, that was great. That was a great decision that we moved there.
> H: Yes, yes, yes.
> N: Simply regarding the circle of friends, that was completely different, you really got to know people who were living close by there. And it was a really nice community, because it was located close to a lake and we were able to go there often and to do some courses. You [= to her husband] participated in a mini-sailing course on the lake.
> H: At the lake, yes, yes, that's true.
> N: Yes, yes, it was simply so, it was so beautiful there.
> H: And it was like, it was kind of a typical Canadian housing estate. All the houses are, well they are in different coulours, blue, green, red, something like that. And well, but because of that there were a lot of young families, well people who were our age, right.

They went on to explain how because it was a new housing estate and a lot of people had recently moved there and were new and looking for contacts it was easy to meet people and make friends. Moreover, they emphasized at multiple occasions how "gorgeous" and "beautiful" their house was and that buying the house was one of the highlights of their stay in Canada. It gave them stability and made them realize that they had "really arrived and that it was the right decision" for them to have taken the step of moving to Canada. Henning and Nora also underlined that they were proud of being homeowners and having been able to afford buying a house on their own without any support especially considering they were "foreigners" in Canada. They thought this would have never been possible for them to achieve in Germany

especially at their relatively young age. Likewise, other interviewees highlighted that they thought that they would not have been able to afford buying a house in Germany at the stage they found themselves in their lives. Moreover, others also emphasized that owning their own house gave them a feeling of being settled and having fully arrived in their places of destination. It made them feel comfortable and at ease and gave them a sense of stability and security, feeling at home and being able to live their lives the way they wanted to and made them happy.

9.1.2.2 Regional and City Characteristics

Finding appropriate housing – both in terms of location in the city as well as quality of the housing – was an important factor for my interviewees to become more settled and feel comfortable and at home. However, the attachments they formed to the cities or regions as such that they were living in and how satisfied they were with what these cities and regions had to offer also played a significant role. Several interviewees also underlined the importance of living in multicultural cities which they perceived as facilitating integration and feelings of belonging.

9.1.2.2.1 Satisfaction with Cities and Regions

The interviewees highlighted different factors that determined their satisfaction with the cities or regions they were living which contributed to their processes of forming place attachments. These factors ranged from accessibility of public transportation to different festivals, cultural events or activities available, to the infrastructure and building style of the city or accessibility to nature that certain regions offered. For Sonja (39) the region to which she moved in Canada which reminded her of Norway or Scandinavia in general made her feel comfortable there from the beginning. Moreover, she highlighted the accessibility to nature and the sea as well as the vastness of the region which gave her a positive feeling. However, it was not only the landscape but also the “extremely friendliness” of the people living in this region that contributed to this

feeling. Likewise, Petra (31) mentioned the importance of the accessibility to nature and the outdoors – in her case it was the accessibility to mountains that the region she lived in offered – which made her feel as if she belonged there. Being an outdoor and landscape enthusiast the possibility of being able to go hiking during the weekends meant that she was able to relax and reenergize. For Anton (36) the conditions that the region he was living in presented were also important factors as they offered him exactly what he needed in that the weather conditions – i.e., "wickedly cold" winters as well as nice and warm summers – were ideal for all the things he liked, namely road cycling, swimming and being in the water as well as snowboarding. Moreover, he highlighted that he appreciated the many green spaces and parks in (name of city in Canada) as well as the beaches and an island close by. He also mentioned that public swimming pools were free of charge in the summer which was great for him as he was a passionate swimmer. In contrast to that, Lea (36) was amazed by the building style of (name of city in Canada) when she first arrived and felt at home there from the beginning:

> I still remember that I thought I really enjoyed the arrival and the drive in the taxi to (name of neighbourhood), well these houses with the stairs on the outside and then we drove through a park and so forth. […] But I thought that visually it was really beautiful. And well, in that moment, to say I fell in love sounds a bit corny, but I immediately felt very much at home.

Helene (29) who was living in the same city as Lea, emphasized that for her (name of the city in Canada) was "the perfect city to live in". She explained this, on the one hand, by saying that (name of city in Canada) had the perfect size as you were "able to do everything by foot or bike" and were not dependent on public transportation which she thought "was a real luxury" as it meant to escape the stressful commute to work and being stuck in traffic yams etc. This made her life less stressful as compared to Germany. On the other hand, she highlighted that she felt "very comfortable" and "secure" in this city. In contrast to her previous place of living in Germany she was not afraid to walk around somewhere on her own. Moreover, she thought that the people were "simply really nice", and she felt as if she was treated a lot better than in Germany. People were happy and friendly and seeing the positive expression on people's faces created a "pleasant atmosphere". According to Helene, people were truly enjoying their lives

every second of the day and this was something that she had not noticed in Germany. All these factors contributed to her feeling comfortable and at home in (name of the city in Canada). The only thing that was missing for her were her family and friends from Germany to make it completely perfect. These feelings were also reiterated by Nikola (28) who lived in a different city in Canada and highlighted that she felt "very comfortable" there because she felt secure and was not afraid that something bad would happen to her. Like Helene, she also highlighted that people were friendly and willing to help each other and that this made a huge difference to her: "And as I said, I feel, anytime I go outside, people are smiling at you, they open the door for you and you simply just feel good."

9.1.2.2.2 Multicultural and Diverse Societies

Moreover, while not directly referring to the city Nikola was living in but rather to Canada as such, she told me that she felt that being in Canada gave her the possibility to develop her personality and to "flower up". Whereas in Germany she had always felt as if she could never be herself and was somehow restricted in her choices or the ways she had to perform, for example regarding her career paths or the way she dressed, she felt that this pressure was not present in Canada. She also emphasized that she encountered difficulties in Germany because of her migration background – she was born in Bosnia but moved to Germany at the age of two and became a German citizen. She told me:

> And that was my, always my feeling that I couldn't be myself. And often I was, or someone asked me in a club: "Where are you from?" Then I say: "Well, (name of city in Germany)." "No, no, where are you really from?" "Yes, from (name of city in Germany)." "Are you German?" Then I say: "Yes!!" "You're not German." Well, then it was always like, and I thought: "Yes, actually I am. I moved to Germany when I was two and I have a German passport, I am a citizen and everything." Well, I find these things, in Canada no one is interested in that and then I can simply be who I really am here. Well, I don't need to be ashamed of who I am. I don't need to dress in a certain way to please people. I can simply be who I am. (Nikola, 28)

Nikola attributed this, among others, to her impression that Canada was a multicultural country where many people have an immigration background and, thus, have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This aspect of Canada being perceived as a multicultural country was

also emphasized by many other interviewees. Some, specifically, underlined the multicultural character of the cities in which they were living which made it easy to feel included and welcomed as many people living there, had come from elsewhere or had an immigration background. Others highlighted this aspect and the importance it had for making integration easy and ensuring that one felt as though they belonged, in a more general reference to Canada as an immigration country. For Sophie (40) the understanding that people come from everywhere around the world and that "no matter where you are from you are treated equally" contributed to her feeling comfortable and happy in Canada. Anton (36) also underlined that he felt he already belonged to Canada because:

> Well, the entire society is mixed together, well apart from the oppressed part. But, because of that, I think, that you're automatically already a part [of society] when you arrive here as an immigrant, because almost everyone is [an immigrant]. Most people are immigrants even in the first generation I believe.

These impressions were shared by many of my interviewees and were perceived as contributing to their integration and making it easy to feel as though they belonged. Finally, it is important to mention that while many interviewees started to develop feelings of home and belonging to Canada or their specific places of destinations and even the accommodations they inhabited, many still felt that Germany likewise remained their home and that their German side was an important part of their identity too. In fact, even though many of the interviewees felt as if Canada as a perceived country of immigration made it easy to feel welcomed, become integrated and a part of society that belonged many still did not identify themselves as being Canadian because, in most cases, they were not born in Canada and neither had obtained Canadian citizenship. One interviewee[37], for example, stated:

> As a Quebecer? That is difficult. As a Canadian that is difficult too because Canada is so heterogenous and until today I can't really say what a Canadian actually is. And since I am not born here. Well, I think, I rather feel as a Montrealer than a Canadian.

Thus, rather than seeing themselves as Canadians, they identified themselves with the cities or regions they were living in and felt more like "Torontonians" or "Montrealers", for example,

[37] In order to avoid revealing their identity, the name of this interviewee is not mentioned here.

or simply like Germans living in Canada. Due to space limitations in this thesis and the fact that this aspect of split/dual belongings and identities has been explored in detail already by other scholars (Spickard 2013; Klok et al. 2017; Kaya 2019; Tsolidis 2014; Valentine, Sporton, and Nielsen 2009; Yeoh and Huang 2000), this aspect is not further explored here.

9.2 Re-Evaluating and -Negotiating Initial Migration Decisions – Should I Stay, or Should I Go?

The first part of this chapter explored how my interviewees lived experiences changed over time with a specific focus on how these changes contributed to them feeling more and more at home at their places of destination. The main reason was that they formed attachments to these places through different processes, e.g., becoming more familiar with how things work in their places of destinations or Canada more generally, participating in everyday activities, daily routines, housing, activities, and amenities in the neighbourhoods or cities they were living in etc. This second part of the chapter analyses in more detail, how these lived experiences of my interviewees at their places of destination impacted their migration decisions. Specifically, it focuses on how my interviewees stays in Canada can be interpreted as mini trajectories that evolve and change over time and during which their migration decisions are re-evaluated and re-negotiated depending on their lived experiences as well as their personal situation and result in decisions to prolong their stays at their places of destination in Canada. I start with an in-depth presentation of one specific case from my interviews which illustrates this pattern of mini trajectories particularly well and can be seen as representative for the processes and experiences that many interviewees went through, namely: a) that initial migration intentions are re-negotiated and -evaluated in ongoing processes over time and are impacted by lived experiences at their places of destination as well as life course events, and b) that immigrating to Canada often is a “step-by-step” process. In a second step, I then further emphasize these two main points by putting them in the context of the experiences of other interviewees.

9.2.1 Prolonging One's Stay Several Times – The Case of Henning (34) and Nora (33)

The story of Henning (34) and his wife Nora (33) is a good example for how my interviewees stays in their places of destinations can be interpreted as mini trajectories that change and evolve over time and during which initial immigration intentions are re-evaluated and -negotiated in ongoing processes. Henning initially moved to (name of city in Canada) in 2007 after he received a one-year job offer from a Canadian company through a contact he had made during a previous internship in Bangladesh. Always having wanted to live abroad for a longer time, Henning decided to take this opportunity and to move to Canada. Nora and he had been a couple for about three years at that point but were not yet living together and Nora decided to move along as she was afraid that their relationship would not last otherwise. While Henning moved to Canada on a one-year work and travel visa, Nora followed him two months after on a visitor visa. Their initial intention was to stay in Canada on a temporary basis for the duration of one year maximum. Deciding that they would only stay for a year made it easier for both to make the decision to move. Henning underlined:

> And then we did it. It was just so simple, because I just thought: "Yes, it's a work and travel visa, if things don't work out somehow or go wrong then I will be back after a year anyway and it doesn't matter if it's only a few months or a year. The idea was never to emigrate there, but the idea was really just to go there for a year.

Likewise, Nora told me that it was easier for her to decide to move along because they were planning to only go to Canada for a year. Being twenty-two at the time she thought that gaining the experience of living abroad would be something positive and that she could easily start working in her old job again and pick up where she left upon her return. However, their initial intentions soon changed.

For Henning, the first year went well and he enjoyed his life in (name of city in Canada), meeting new people and making new experiences, improving his language skills and exploring the country. Nevertheless, after a few months, he decided to see if he could get employment

elsewhere, partly because he thought he could get a better salary elsewhere and partly because he thought that if he were only staying in Canada for a year, he should try to gain more work experiences by changing companies. However, when he told this to his employer, they offered him a better contract and to help him obtain a work visa after the expiration of his work and travel visa. Thus, for him, the decision to prolong his stay in (name of city in Canada) was not a difficult one. For Nora, however, the first year did not go that well. She was struggling to adjust to life, having a hard time making friends and feeling homesick often. While initially she was in Canada on a visitor visa, she managed to obtain a work and travel visa after a few months which allowed her to work, though not in any social or care professions. Consequently, she first worked as a cashier in a store. However, eventually she was able to get an exemption for her visa which allowed her to work in these professions. Subsequently, she was able to start working as a nursing aid, however, due to different regulations she was not able to work in her learned profession as a nurse. Nora emphasized that because of these negative experiences she would have definitely returned to Germany after a year if she had been on her own. However, because Henning was with her and it was going well for him workwise and she was still being hopeful that her nursing degree would be recognized in Canada eventually, after a lot of discussions they decided to stay for another year.

This gave both time to establish themselves and their lives in (name of city in Canada) more, to become familiar with how things work and to establish social networks and form closer friendships. As a result of this, Nora told me that after about two years she changed her perspective and was feeling more comfortable in (name of city in Canada). From that point onwards she said that she and Henning started to look in the same direction and were both happy to stay in Canada longer. When asked what exactly changed for her after these two years, she explained:

> I think, I am a creature of habit. I suddenly knew where to do groceries, where you should go to and where rather not. And then it was suddenly also our home, like this house or the apartment that we had there. It was, I knew where my job was, I did get to know my colleagues better, I was able to judge things better. I wasn't able to do any of this during the first year and that was difficult for me.

Thus, for her establishing daily routines, participating in day-to-day activities, knowing how things work in the city she lived, establishing closer friendships as well as working were important factors for her to feel more comfortable in her new life and to develop ties to the place and city where she was living.

Thus, over time, Nora and Hennig got more and more settled in (name of city in Canada) and started to feel at home there. They were not only able to establish a close circle of friends but also participated in everyday life through different events and activities and felt completely integrated into society. Moreover, after three years of having lived in (name of city) they bought their own house which they liked a lot and where they felt very much at home (as highlighted in the first part of this chapter). Henning explained how becoming more and more settled, feeling integrated and at home, having many close friends and owning a house "full of stuff", cars and other belongings "made it harder and harder to return". They told me that they more or less discussed every year if they should stay longer or not because at times they were still longing for Germany, were not happy with the health care system in Canada, did not enjoy the long winters, were not sure if they wanted to grow old in Canada, were thinking about their own parents and also where they wanted their future children to grow up later. However, ultimately, they always decided to prolong their stay because things were going well for them, they were enjoying life, had a good salary and were able to afford a high standard of living, had close friends, felt at home, and it was the easiest option to stay.

This trajectory of getting more and more established and settled over time in Canada was also reflected in Henning's and Nora's visa/legal status trajectory which evolved from a temporary to a permanent status. Initially, they moved to Canada with a temporary status of a work and travel visa (in Nora's case first a visitor visa and then a work and travel vias). When the work and travel visa expired Henning's work sponsored him on a two-year work permit which automatically offered Nora the possibility to receive a two-year open work permit as his spouse. At that point, Henning applied for permanent residency through a PNP that was

specifically targeted to engineers. He received his PR status in 2010 and Nora, as his common-law partner was automatically granted the same status. This gave them stability and the security that they could stay in Canada long term. Eventually, they even applied for Canadian citizenship (while making sure to also obtain the retention of their German citizenship status) because as Nora highlighted "We had simply settled in and it was a great life und we actually also felt like Canadians. It was our home. And then we thought that we fulfilled all criteria". While they applied for their Canadian citizenship while they were still living in Canada and did so before they even started to discuss the option of returning to Germany in a serious manner, given that the processing of the application took a long time, they were only able to obtain their Canadian citizenship once they had already returned to Germany.

The case of Henning and Nora is exemplary for many of the interviewees in two ways: First, it demonstrates how an initial immigration intention – in their case the intention to only move to Canada for a year – is re-evaluated and re-negotiated over time based on their lived experiences as well as important life course events (e.g., buying a house) and resulted in changes to this initial intention. Second, it emphasizes how for many interviewees their immigration to Canada was a step-by-step process during which they slowly transformed their status from a more temporary to a more permanent one. Below these two points are explored in more detail by reflecting on all interviews.

9.2.2 Re-Evaluating and Re-Negotiating Initial Immigration Intentions

As demonstrated by the example of Henning and Nora above, migration intentions were often re-evaluated and re-negotiated in ongoing processes during which initial immigration intentions changed and stays in Canada were prolonged. Many of the interviewees, especially those, who did not move to Canada to join their Canadian partners, initially moved with the intention of only staying in Canada for a limited amount of time, e.g., often only for a year or for the duration of their work contracts, because they wanted to gain international experiences and/or because

they moved over for an internship or an academic position as a post-doc, for example, which is usually limited to a certain time period. Consequently, several of the interviewees highlighted that their migration intentions were temporary when they moved initially. Klaus (36), for example, who went to Canada for an internship said: "Well, the plan was [...] I will return after a year" and later he emphasized: "Well, the intention was never to say: I will spend my life there [= Canada]." Likewise, Hannes (36), who went to Canada for his post-doc emphasized: "In the beginning, my original plan was to go there [= Canada] for a year and then immediately to return afterwards." These examples reflect those of others who initially had planned to stay in Canada for a limited amount of time only.

Others highlighted that they moved to Canada on what could be described as a "trial-and-error" basis. They went over with an open mind, the idea of seeing how things would develop once they were over there and the knowledge that they could always return to Germany in case things did not work out the way they were hoping for. Marlene (38), for example, emphasized that while she transferred from Germany to Canada within the framework of her company and initially only had a three-year work permit, she did not go over on an assignment that was limited to a certain amount of time. Instead, she received a permanent position, and, thus, it was up to her to decide whether she wanted to stay in Canada longer than those three years or return to Germany. In contrast to that, Annika (31) who moved to (name of city in Canada) to be together with her partner told me:

> And I always told myself that if I am not happy then I can simply return. It's not as if I can't reverse this [= the move to Canada]. Well, I thought, I will simply do it and it'll be a good experience and in the worst-case scenario, I speak French and return to Germany. […] Well, really, in my head it was like 'Okay, I will try it now and then we'll see, maybe I will return in two years'.

Many other interviewees likewise stated that they had a "plan B in their pockets" and that they would be able to easily return to Germany in case things did not work out or they changed their minds. This was also the case for those who had plans of staying in Canada long term. As such, Hanna (41) who moved to Canada with her husband and two children because they had fallen

in love with the country during previous trips also stated that while they were planning to settle in Canada long term, they knew from the beginning that they would always have the security of being able to return to Germany as the working contract of Hanna's husband in Germany allowed him to work for another company for the duration of eight years during which he would have the possibility to return to his German employer and start working there again. Likewise, Hanna, who was a public servant in Germany would be able to start working in her old profession should they have to return. Others such as Florian (27) who moved to Canada to be together with his wife (back then girlfriend) highlighted that while he intended to stay there long term, he would always have the possibility to return to anywhere in Europe if things would change because of his German passport.

Irrespective of what my interviewees initial intentions for immigration to Canada were – temporary, permanent, or open to either option – most of them re-evaluated and -negotiated these intentions over time. This process of re-evaluating and -negotiating was impacted by their lived experiences in their places of destination in Canada as well as by life course events and resulted in the interviewees deciding to prolong their stay in Canada beyond the initially intended time period. In the case of some, who had planned to stay for a longer time period or long-term, it also resulted in the decision to return to Germany or move to other places. While the former is explored in more detail below, the latter will be the focus of the next analysis chapter which analyses the return and onward migration experiences of the interviewees.

Similar to the example of Henning (34) and Nora (33) the decision to prolong their stays was often caused by the perception that my interviewees had only just arrived fully at their places of destination (i.e., understood how things work in Canada/at their places of destination, established their social networks and close friendships, started to feel comfortable and at home etc.) at the time that they had initially planned to return and/or that things were going well for them, they were feeling at home and enjoying life, and, therefore, felt that it did not make sense to give everything they had achieved in their places of destination up by returning to Germany.

This is captured particularly well by Lea (36) who had moved to Canada together with her boyfriend at the time (now ex-boyfriend) on a one-year work and travel visa and emphasized these factors when she told me:

> But essentially, I really liked my job, the apartment that we had was somehow really nice, it was big. Then with Wuffy, that's our dog, it was also kind of great and back then we simply felt, I really felt very comfortable in my life there. […] And then I didn't wanna go back. Well, the first year somehow passed by really quickly and then we'd only kind of furnished the apartment after a year. I kind of started to get the feeling 'Okay, now I know where everything is kind of, or at least the most important things.' And then I thought 'To return now feels totally bananas because essentially you have put a lot into this, and, somehow, if you now give all of this up again that does kind of not make sense.' And then, exactly, we simply stayed on.

For others it was a combination of factors that ranged from their relationship to their places of living/housing arrangements or their age and family status that made them decide to prolong their stays in Canada and/or stay long term. Marlene (38), for example, initially moved to a major city in Canada where she lived and worked for three years. During that time, she met her Canadian boyfriend who was living in a different part of the country. She eventually decided to join him in (name of city in Canada) and to move in with him. When reflecting on her plans for the future, she told me:

> Yes, it's kind of strange, but I think, I am simply ready to put down roots. I think, it's just time for me. Well, I am 38 years and I have the feeling that becoming a bit more settled would be quite nice. And I really love, I love this house [= her boyfriend's house] and my boyfriend and this place here is, well, it is in the mountains […] and it is a bit like (name of place of birth in Germany). Well, the landscape is similar.

This quote draws the attention to the impact of relationships and families as well as my interviewees stages in their life courses respectively significant events in their life course which also impacted the re-evaluation and-negotiation processes of their initial immigration intentions. For example, especially those who had children and were in a relationship with a Canadian, highlighted the importance of giving their children a sense of stability and security by staying in the same environment during their children's formative years. In other cases, important life course events, such as a particularly negative experience, the birth of a child or losing one's employment also significantly impacted decisions of staying or leaving. The

example of Vanessa (45) underlines the importance of life course events for the re-evaluation and -negotiation of migration decisions and how these processes can take place over a long period of time. Vanessa who was married to a Canadian told me that after her children were born, she started to regret having moved to Canada. Not only was she missing the support from her family, e.g., not having anyone close by who could come to babysit or help with things, but she was also sad because she could not expose her children to more of a German environment culturally speaking. She told me that until one year before the interview she always wanted to return to Germany and investigated different options of moving back, such as applying for positions there, because as she said:

> I never really, yes essentially, I did not, suddenly I did not feel at home [in Canada] any longer. Or rather in between two chairs, you know? Always like: 'Okay, I do like it here, but I miss my family, I miss my culture, the language and I, the weather'.

As a result of these feelings, she took her family to Germany as often as possible. Being a professor at a university meant that she had the possibility to spend longer periods of time in Germany with her family during her sabbaticals. Vanessa highlighted that for her it was a long process of negotiating back and forth with herself about what she really wanted and where she wanted to live. In fact, for her it was a process that took sixteen years as it was only after her last sabbatical in Germany in 2015/16 during which she and her children made some negative experiences that she reached a turning point in this process of re-evaluating and -negotiating her options of staying or leaving. She explained this decision by reflecting on the negative experiences – rants by Germans against foreigners, one of her sons being called the N-word because he had a slightly darker skin tone although he is Caucasian among other reasons – which made her realize that her "children are not at home in Germany" and that they as a family "are not welcome in Germany right now due to the political circumstances". As a result of these very significant events in her and her children's life Vanessa finally decided that Canada was the better place for her and her family to live which helped her to accept it fully as her home. Likewise, Linda (47) who at the point of the interview had lived in (name of city in Canada)

for fourteen years, emphasized how an important life course event can impact a re-evaluation and -negotiation process. In her case, this process of reconsidering whether to stay or leave was started because she lost her job in the year before the interview:

> […] there was a time where I said: 'I could absolutely not imagine, especially with the children, to return, or to move back to Germany'. In the meantime, I feel a bit more neutral about this, among others because I do not have a permanent position here any longer. […] and realizing that social benefits don't work the same way as in Germany makes it [= to return to Germany] at once pretty attractive again.

While Linda ended up staying in Canada for her children's sake, this example nevertheless shows how unexpected life course events can impact migration decisions and their re-evaluation and -negotiation even if people have lived at a place for a long time. This goes hand in hand with the statement of several of the interviewees who at the time of the interview were relatively settled in Canada and were planning to stay long term but emphasized that they could imagine to return to Germany in case they would no longer be able to guarantee their financial security, their parents in Germany got sick, or, their perspective on life in Canada and feeling at ease and comfortable there would change. Anton (36), for example, said that he did not have any plans of moving back to Germany as he and his partner felt very good and comfortable in their life in (name of city in Canada) and he did not want to give up everything he preferred about his life in Canada. However, he highlighted that if this should ever change, they would reconsider their decision.

9.2.3 Visa and Legal Status Trajectories

As these examples and the more in-depth description of Henning's (34) and Nora's (33) case showed, many interviewees did not necessarily have the intentions of staying in Canada for a longer period of time and/or went to Canada on a trial-and-error basis initially. However, over time, they re-evaluated and -negotiated their initial intentions and in many cases decided to prolong their stay in Canada. In some cases, these re-evaluations and re-negotiations only resulted in prolonging their stays by one or two years in addition to their initially planned time

in Canada, whereas others prolonged their stays multiple times throughout their stays and/or decided that they wanted to stay in Canada permanently. This process of only slowly and over time making the decision to stay another year, years or permanently is also reflected in the visa and legal status trajectories of the interviewees. In fact, only a minority of my interviewees moved to Canada with the status of being a permanent resident. The majority came to Canada on temporary visas, such as visitor visas, work and travel visas, study permits, or temporary work permits and only over time either prolonged these visas/permits, transformed their status to a more permanent one or were intending to do so. Anne (33), for example, who moved to Canada in January 2010 to conduct her PhD arrived on a three-year study permit. Realizing that it would take her longer than those three years to complete the PhD she was able to prolong the study permit for another three years which gave her enough time to successfully defend her PhD thesis. After having finished her PhD studies she decided to stay in Canada and apply for a post-doctoral position. At this point she had the possibility to apply for a post-graduate work permit in the province that she had completed her PhD studies. This meant that she was able to obtain a three-year open work permit which allowed her to work as a post-doctoral fellow. When I interviewed Anne, she mentioned that she would not be able to extent this work permit but that the next step for her would be to apply for permanent residency which she was aiming to do in the next month. She explained:

> Yes, well I aim to do that [= apply for PR status] next month. Well, that involves different steps to do so and all in all it also costs about 2,000 dollars. And because of that, after my PhD I wasn't sure if I wanted to stay or not. And I thought: 'Okay, I can get the work permit in any case after, then I can still think about whether I want to have residency or not.'

Others, such as Charlotte (31) or Hilda (25) had also arrived in Canada on a study permit and were able to either prolong this permit as in the case of Hilda, or eventually to apply for permanent residency as was the case for Charlotte who was sponsored by her wife.

Several interviewees arrived on temporary work permits which they were either able to extent or to transform into a more permanent status if that was wished. Hannes (34) and Carolina

(33) who both moved to Canada on a one-year work permit for a post-doctoral position both were able to extent their permits for another year as they decided to prolong their stay before returning to Germany. Others, such as Paul (43) or Marlene (38), who initially moved to Canada on a closed work permit which was sponsored by their respective employers both applied for their PR status as soon as that was possible. While Paul made used of the PNP in the province where he was living, Marlene did not specify through which program she applied. Frida (39) and her husband Tobias (45) first arrived on a three-year work permit which they were able to extent one time for another two years. After that, they decided to apply for permanent residency to be able to stay in Canada beyond five years. For them, this was a long elaborate process. Living in the province of Quebec, they first had to apply for the *Certificat de sélection du Québec* which required Frida as the main applicant, among other things to proof her French language skills by taking a language test.

Those of the interviewees who arrived on a tourist visa or a work and travel visa, made use of different possibilities to either prolong their visas and/or transform them into more permanent ones. Klaus (36), for example, who arrived on a one-year work and travel visa for an internship was able to extent his stay because his employer offered him a job as well as to sponsor him for a two-year closed work permit. Others, who made use of a tourist or work and travel visa to join their Canadian partners often made use of the option of family sponsorship to transform their status into a more permanent one. Emma's (34) case exemplifies this. She moved to Canada to join her Canadian boyfriend and told me that when she first arrived in January 2015, she held a visitor visa. While she obtained a work and travel visa in June of that same year, she chose to first prolong her visitor visa and only activated the work and travel visa in February 2016. Emma explained that she did so to have some time to look for employment and, thus, not lose that time on the one-year work-and travel visa. She and her boyfriend got married in the summer of 2016 and subsequentially applied for her PR status through spousal sponsorship. At the same time as they submitted the application for her PR status, she also

applied for an extension of her work permit and was granted a two-year open work permit to bridge the time until her PR application was processed. At the point of the interview, Emma was still waiting to hear back about her PR application and highlighted that it was a long and tedious process. However, not everyone who moved to Canada to join their Canadian partners made use of the family sponsorship. Annika (31) and Benjamin (37), for example, both applied for permanent residency on their own through the skilled worker program of Quebec.

Those relatively few of my interviewees who entered Canada with a PR status had predominately been sponsored through the family sponsorship by their Canadian partners and had submitted their application from outside of Canada. This was the case, for example, for Leon (28), Sonja (39), Marie (35) or Jutta (33). Most of these interviewees however, had previously been in Canada for shorter periods of time already as demonstrated in chapter seven. Consequently, they had previously made use of temporary visas or permits such as study permits or work and travel visas, to navigate their relationships. Therefore, their migration experiences can also be classified as a step-by-step process. One exception to this was Hanna (41) and her family who received PR status through the skilled worker program prior to moving to Canada.

This trend of a step-by-step migration process could also be observed among those interviewees who had not yet moved to Canada but were planning to do so in the future. The majority of them were planning to move to Canada on temporary visas or work permits, whereas only two of them Lukas (33) and his husband Emil (37) had plans of making use of the express entry system and apply for permanent residency through the skilled workers program before moving to Canada.

9.3 Discussion of the Research Findings

This chapter explored how the lived experiences of my interviewees at their places of destination changed over time after their initial phase of arrival and adjustment. I focused on

this aspect because research so far often explores aspects related to the transnational lives of highly skilled and mobile individuals and emphasizes the "placeless" character of their lives without considering that a large part of their lives still takes place in specific localities and local places, namely the places where they are living. However, as demonstrated in chapter three of this thesis, several studies are starting to underline that highly skilled and/or mobile individuals are not completely detached from places and localities (K. Walsh 2006; Fast and Lindell 2016; Plöger 2017; Allon, Anderson, and Bushell 2008; Kannisto 2017) and scholars such as Meier (2015a), Mulholland and Ryan (2017), and Van Riemsdijk and Quingfang (2017a) have called for more research that examines the lived experiences that highly skilled migrants and mobile individuals make in their local lives as well as the importance that place still plays in their lives. **The findings presented in this chapter thus follow this call and line of research by contributing to a better understanding of my interviewees' lived experiences and their place-based behaviours.** Specifically, by exploring their lived experiences at their places of destination in Canada, the first part of this chapter demonstrated how my interviewees formed place attachments and developed feelings of home and belonging over time. **Two different spheres were identified in which these place attachments were formed, namely a) socio-cultural processes and b) geographical and place-based factors**.

Socio-cultural processes involved the adoption of social rules and norms as well as becoming more familiar with how different things work at their places of destination, establishing daily routines and participating in what was perceived as the "normal Canadian way of life", as well as establishing social networks and forming closer friendships. My interviewees highlighted that over time they got used to and even internalized the new social rules and norms they had learned during their initial phase of arrival. They started to appreciate these rules and norms and to act according to them which made their social interactions and participation in society more seamless. Moreover, they became more familiar with how different processes and things worked in Canada in general or the cities in which they were

living. **This familiarity resulted in them identifying more and more with Canada and their specific places of destination, feeling as though they had fully arrived, had become a part of society and feeling more and more at home there**. These findings are similar to Nowicka's (2007) who also emphasized familiarity as an important factor of home-making strategies and forming attachments to the local places where highly mobile individuals dwell. However, while she refers to infrastructure as being important for creating this familiarity, my results broaden this view to also include familiarity with social rules and norms as well as other societal processes.

Closely linked to this process of creating familiarity is the importance of establishing daily routines that many of my interviewees mentioned. They highlighted that these daily routines were only established over time and once they had become more familiar with their places of destination and could easily navigate through them. Moreover, several interviewees mentioned that being able to participate in activities that were similar to those they had done in Germany/their previous place of living as well as finding employment and entering working life facilitated this process of establishing daily routines. Specifically, entering working life gave a structure and regularity to their days as well as a sense of purpose because they were now actively contributing to society. **Overall, establishing daily routines thus contributed to feeling more settled, at home and belonging to society**. Indeed, the role of establishing daily routines as an important factor of home-making practices as well as forming place attachments has also been identified by other studies (Germann Molz 2008; Nowicka 2007; M. Butcher 2010; K. Walsh 2011; Gomes 2019; S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015). However, in addition to daily routines, **my interviewees also emphasized that participating in what they perceived as the normal day-to-day life at their places of destination and participating in what they perceived as typical Canadian activities (e.g., by making use of local community services, watching Canadian sports, celebrating Canadian holidays,**

organizing cottage weekends, or going ice skating, hiking or camping) contributed to them feeling at home as it provided them with a sense of belonging and integration.

The relevance of participating in the day-to-day life is also underlined by the last socio-cultural process that was found to be impacting my interviewees' forming of place attachments and feelings of home and belonging, namely establishing social networks and close friendships. These networks and friendships (which often took a long time to establish) were important facilitators for enabling my interviewees to participate in everyday activities to which they otherwise would not have had access. Moreover, **having a well-established social network as well as close friends made them feel comfortable at their places of destination as well as it created a sense of belonging as they were feeling integrated in society**. This weight that is placed on establishing social networks supports the findings of other studies which highlight that home-making practices are shaped through the interaction with others which creates an emotional attachment to places (Germann Molz 2008; M. Butcher 2010; Gomes 2019; Plöger 2017; Nowicka 2007).

In addition to these socio-cultural processes, geographical and place-based factors were also important in forming attachments to the places where my interviewees lived. These factors were, on the one hand, related to their housing experiences, and, on the other hand, to the specific regions and cities in which they were living.

Like other studies on the housing practices of highly skilled migrants (Meier 2015b; Plöger 2017), my research found that many of my interviewees did not stay at the initial housing arrangements they moved to upon their arrival at their places of destination in Canada but continued their housing trajectories. Many (though not all) did so because they wanted to improve their housing arrangements and find a place that fitted their individual needs better, and it was only over time and with these moves that they were starting to feel more at home at their places of destination. **Several different factors that contributed to this process of feeling more and more at home were identified. These included a) the arrival of belongings**

from Germany (for those who were able to ship them over) which meant that a part of their previous lives were with them in Canada and created a feeling of comfort and happiness, b) moving to specific neighbourhoods in a city that were chosen based on their individual needs and their lifestyle, c) the quality of housing or moving in with one's partner which contributed to feeling more settled, and d) buying a house and owning property which provided them with a sense of stability and security and the feeling that they had fully arrived and were at home in these places now. This is in line with other studies that explored the home-making and housing strategies and experiences of highly skilled and mobile individuals (Nowicka 2007; Germann Molz 2008; K. Walsh 2006; 2011; Plöger 2017) and highlights that specific places (in this case the houses and apartments in which my interviewees lived), as well as place-based factors (e.g., choosing to move to specific neighbourhoods) remained important factors for them.

In addition to the importance that was placed on housing in the process of forming closer place attachments and feelings of home and belonging, my findings also demonstrated that being satisfied with the region and cities where my interviewees lived impacted these processes. The criteria that impacted their level of satisfaction differed and ranged from such factors as access to public transportation and infrastructure, availability of different activities and events, access to the outdoors, the building style, feeling secure, or the attitude of people living in these cities or regions, among others. When talking about these criteria, my interviewees often made use of what Mulholland and Ryan (2017) refer to as "comparative epistemologies", i.e. they stated that the places where they were living in Canada fulfilled certain of these criteria whereas that had not been the case at the places where they previously lived in Germany. **In this way, these practices of contrasting contributed to forming a sense of belonging and identification with their places of living in Canada and thus also to my interviewees developing a sense of home to these places.** This practice of comparative epistemologies was also used by many interviewees to highlight the multicultural character of Canada and/or the

cities in which they were living (in contrast to Germany) which according to them made it easy to feel welcomed, to become integrated and to feel as a part of society that was included and belonged there. These feelings were mutually ascribed to Canada and the cities or regions in which they were living. Regardless of this, however, it was demonstrated that my interviewees did not see themselves/identified themselves with being Canadian. Rather they identified with the cities or regions in which they were living or saw themselves as Germans living in Canada more generally.

The second part of this chapter highlighted how these lived experiences and the place attachments that my interviewees formed impacted their future migration decisions with a focus on the choice of prolonging their stays in Canada. Two processes that were closely linked to each other were identified in this regard, namely a) the so called "year-by-year planning" (a term that I am borrowing from Yanasmayan (2015, 26)) and b) step-by-step immigration.

Year-by-year planning refers to the process by which my interviewees re-negotiated and -evaluated their initial migration decisions (whether to stay or leave) in ongoing processes and often though not necessarily on a yearly basis during their stays in Canada. In fact, in many cases, the initial migration intentions of my interviewees were either temporary (i.e., for the duration of a year or two to gain international experience) or on a "trial-and-error" basis (i.e., they moved to Canada with an open mind and the knowledge that they could always return to Germany at any point). Regardless of what their initial migration intentions were (temporary, permanent, or open to either), these intentions were often re-negotiated and -evaluated over time and resulted in prolonging their stays (decisions for return or onward movements are explored in the next and last analysis chapter). **These decisions were impacted by their lived experiences at their places of destination in Canada as well as by life course events.** In many cases, and specifically for those who moved to Canada to gain international experience, decisions to prolong their stays at the end of their initially planned stays were associated with positive lived experiences at and place attachments which they had

developed to their places of destination in Canada. Decisions to prolong one's stay were also impacted by factors such as having bought property, relationship/family status, or the place in one's life stage. For others, significant life course events such as loosing one's job could start these processes of re-negotiating and re-evaluating migration decisions even after a long period of time and when being perceived as relatively settled at their places of destination. **These findings demonstrate and underline the importance of seeing migration movements as ongoing processes that evolve and change over time and are never necessarily final**.

The **process of step-by-step immigration** is closely connected to the process of year-by-year planning because the practice of continuously re-evaluating and –negotiating initial migration intentions also impacted my interviewees' visa and legal status trajectories**. As a result of the fact that many of them initially moved to Canada with the intention of only staying on a temporary or a trial-and-error basis, the majority of them moved to Canada on temporary visas (e.g., visitor visas, work and travel visas, study or work permits) and only over time either prolonged their statuses or transformed them into more permanent ones.** To do so, they, for example, were able to extent their work permits with the help of their employers, made use of different provincial nominee programs to apply for their PR status or drew on the possibility of family sponsorship to obtain their PR status. While some went through this process of step-by-step immigration while they were living in Canada, for others, it involved a process of moving back and forth between Germany (and possible other countries) and Canada on temporary visas or permits several times before they finally obtained their PR status in Canada (often through spousal sponsorship). Overall, this process of step-by-step immigration was the most common way of immigrating to Canada with only few entering (or planning to enter) the country with the status of a permanent resident.

Both of these findings are in line with the results that Yanasmayan (2015) found in her study on highly educated Turkish migrants in three major European cities and their decisions of either extending their stays or returning to their country of origin. Moreover, they do not only

underline the ongoing character of migration decision making processes but also how, as a result of this, the boundaries between temporary and permanent migration movements are becoming increasingly blurred, something which research is slowly starting to acknowledge (Kordel and Weidinger 2019; Gladkova and Mazzucato 2017; Rashid et al. 2013; Benson and Osbaldiston 2014a). This challenges the traditional understanding of migration as being a one-time event that results in the permanent settlement of individuals at their places of destination.

9.4 Conclusion of the Chapter

To conclude, this chapter explored 1) the lived experiences of my interviewees at their places of destination in Canada after their initial phase of arrival and specifically how these experiences contributed to the development of place attachments and feelings of home and belonging, as well as 2) how these experiences impacted their future migration decision making processes.

Regarding the first, two different spheres, i.e., socio-cultural processes (adoption of social rules and norms, establishing daily routines as well as forming close friendships and social networks) and geographical and place-based factors (housing, neighbourhoods, cities, and regions) were identified. **Overall, these findings underline and confirm that highly skilled and mobile individuals, such as migrants by choice, are not completely detached from places**. Rather, their everyday lives are closely tied to the local places of living because their houses or apartments can be found in these places, it is in these places that they establish networks and interact with other people and it is in these places that they have to perform their day-to-day activities. **These findings also demonstrate that home is not necessarily one thing but can be many different things which are associated both to concrete places across different scales – not only related to the national and transnational level (which has been predominately explored in research so far) but also to regions, cities, specific places within**

cities, houses/apartments, or even specific belongings) as well as to symbolic spaces which create meaning.

Regarding the second, it was demonstrated that the lived experiences at my interviewees' places of destination in Canada did indeed impact the process of future migration decision making. In fact, as these decisions were often formed in ongoing processes during which initial migration intentions were re-negotiated and -evaluated over time – a practice that defined as year-by-year planning – the experiences which they made in their day-to-day life as well as significant life course events played an important role in these processes. Particularly for those who had initially planned to only stay for a temporary time, positive lived experiences at their places of destination resulted in the decision to prolong these stays. This pattern of continuously re-negotiating and re-evaluating (initial) migration decisions also resulted in a process of step-by-step immigration to Canada, i.e., either extending one's temporary visas or permits or transforming these into more permanent status over time. **These findings underline the importance of understanding and exploring migration as ongoing processes that evolve and change over time which can result in multiple different and not initially anticipated outcomes.**

10 Returning to Germany or Moving Onward

The previous chapter first explored how my interviewees lived experiences changed over time in their places of destination in Canada and specifically focused on how they formed attachments to these places as well as feelings of home and belonging. It then highlighted how their stays in Canada can be interpreted as mini trajectories that evolve and change over time and during which their migration decisions are re-evaluated and re-negotiated and specifically focused on how these re-evaluation and-negotiation processes can impact their decisions to prolong their stays at their places of destination. This chapter continues along the same line by examining how my interviewees lived experiences triggered them to either return to Germany or to move to another country. These return or onward movement decisions are at the center of the first part of this chapter. In the second part of this chapter, I focus on the return and onward movement phase and specifically examine the return or onward movement experiences of my interviews at their places of destination in Germany or another country.

10.1 Understanding Return and Onward Migration Decisions

In total at the time of the interviews, fifteen of the interviewees had returned to Germany, or, in two cases, moved to another country after having previously lived in different places in Canada for varying amounts of time. The time they had spent in Germany or in another country since their return or onward movement varied from just a few weeks or months to several years. Overall, my interviewees named a variety of different reasons that impacted their return decisions which can be sorted into the following categories: a) family, b) work, c) other. However, when examining these decisions in more detail it became apparent that simply listing these reasons one-by-one does not do justice to the complexity that lies behind them. Like the decisions to prolong their stays at their places of destination these return or onward movement decisions were also impacted by my interviewees lived experiences at their places of destination in Canada as well as – and often more importantly – they were triggered by significant life

course events such as giving birth to a child, loosing one's job, or receiving a job offer elsewhere or the stages in their life courses that they found themselves in. However, while these decisions were often triggered by such a life course event or being at a certain stage in one's life course, they were not the only reasons lying behind my interviewees decisions to return or move onward. In fact, it was often a combination of multiple reasons that impacted these decisions as I demonstrate below.

10.1.1 Children Are the Future – Birth of a Child as the Trigger for Returning to Germany

For several interviewees, important life course events such as giving birth to a child and transitioning into parenthood were the triggers behind their return decisions to Germany. This was particularly the case for German-German couples. Often these couples initially moved to Canada on a temporary basis but had prolonged their stay over time because of the positive experiences they made at their places of destination. However, the birth of their child resulted in them re-evaluating and -negotiating their lives and their migration decisions and lead to the decision to return to Germany. This was also the case for some, who had initially planned to stay in Canada for a longer period but with the birth of their child re-negotiated and -evaluated these intentions and decided to return to Germany earlier.

For Nora (33) and Henning (34), for example, who had extended their stay in (name of city in Canada) multiple times (as demonstrated in the previous chapter), it was only when their first son was born that they made the decision to return. They gave the following reasons for this decision:

> H: Yes, we always talked and talked and talked and talked. And then, when Paul [= their son] was born we just said, if we wanna try it, then we need to do it now and if we don't try it, we will always have some regrets. And that was essentially the reason why we did it in the end.
> N: Well, there were not different factors that started to appear in our lives then but we rather said we should try it out because the feeling of home or the loss of Germany that we were experiencing the whole time, or this feeling of "How could it be in Germany?", we would have to simply try it out again, because in ten years we'll not do it any longer. By then the children will be in school, so we would really have to try it now. And we will try it. And probably Paul was maybe the decisive factor, but.
> H: Well, yes!

> N: Well, yeah. I always say not so much but yeah actually he was the factor. Well, if he would not have been born then we would have likely said again: “Oh, let’s stay another year.”

Thus, while they had debated whether to stay in Canada or return to Germany multiple times during their seven-year stay in (name of city in Canada), they had ultimately always decided to stay and it was only when their child was born that they had enough of a motivation to take the decision to return to Germany. However, while the birth of their son and their wish to ensure that he (and possible future children) would be able to spend time with their grandparents was the main trigger for their return to Germany, Hennig and Nora also mentioned several other factors that they had contemplated about while living in (name of city in Canada). These factors included that they were still longing for Germany, that they did not want to grow old in Canada because of the harsh winters and that they were not happy with the Canadian health care system. In addition to these factors, they also emphasized their curiosity about how life “is really like in Germany”. Both left Germany when they were in their early twenties and while Nora had only worked in Germany for a year, Henning did not have any working experiences in Germany at all. Moreover, the return to Germany was seen as an opportunity for Nora to work in her learned profession as a nurse again as she had not been able to get her qualifications recognized in Canada. Finally, they also realized that childcare was a lot more affordable in Germany and they had the impression that the childcare system was better structured and organized there as compared to where they were living in Canada. Nora (33) emphasized this point when she told me that she had visited a few potential day care centers for her son when they were still living in (name of city in Canada) but they “really were a catastrophe” especially compared to what they were offered at the place they returned to in Germany. She mentioned the many outdoor areas and the “great playgrounds” that were according to her typical for many kindergartens in Germany whereas in Canada, or at least at the place they were living in Canada, kindergartens and day care centers often only had an area made of concrete “with a swing and if they were

lucky a few plastic slides". Taken these reasons together, the birth of their son was the final trigger for Henning and Nora to decide to return to Germany.

With this in mind, it is important to highlight that they both thought that the decision to return to Germany was "much harder" than the decision to move to Canada because when they initially moved to Canada they were just out of university respectively had just started to work and were still flexible and not settled whereas when they made the decision to return they had settled in their life in Canada, made roots, owned property and other belongings and had transitioned into family life. Therefore, they always thought about the return to Germany as a "trial" which could be reversed if they were not satisfied with their lives in Germany upon return. If that would be the case, they kept themselves the loophole of being able to return to Canada as they had the resources and contacts to re-establish their lives relatively quickly in (name of city in Canada) and also had been able to obtain dual German and Canadian citizenship which ensured them entrance to Canada at any point.

While Carolina (33) and her husband decided to prolong their stay in (name of city in Canada) after their first year because they enjoyed their lives there taking advantage of all the outdoor possibilities (e.g., hiking, skiing, going for walks on the beach), had established a good social network and were able to travel and explore lots, the arrival of their daughter also triggered their decision to return to Germany. Carolina highlighted that while they enjoyed their lifestyle and the high quality of life, they were able to have in (name of city in Canada), there was a lot of uncertainty if they would have been able to maintain this lifestyle with a child. In addition to that "there were a lot of (other) uncertainties" too regarding childcare, employment, and their legal status. She emphasized:

> That was the next thing, there would have been so many uncertainties in Canada. Childcare is very expensive in (name of city in Canada), well, it is really unlikely that you would get a job directly in (name of city in Canada), that means we would have needed to reorient ourselves within Canada. Then I was not sure how an application should actually be designed. […] And simply as a result of the fact that my work permit would have expired at the same time and I would have needed an open work permit, or rather, I think that's when your Canadian employer has to support you so that you can stay there, everything was just really insecure. And I wanted to have a little planning security, especially with a child. Well, you somehow need to have some financial security.

In addition to these factors, she also mentioned that prolonging her post-doctoral position for another year was not an option because she was not striving towards an academic career and, thus, staying too long in this post-doc position would have made her more unattractive for the free market. Thus, while it would have been an opportunity to extent their stay in Canada it would not have helped her in advancing her career. Moreover, during the time she had been in (name of city in Canada) no other job opportunities or contacts to create such opportunities developed. Other factors she mentioned were the possibility for her and her husband to take another half year of parental leave together in Germany and being closer to their families as it would be a lot harder to visit in case anything ever happened, especially with a child. Finally, Carolina also mentioned two other interesting factors: On the one hand, she emphasized that she preferred the working structure in Germany. She explained that in Canada, or at least at the place she used to work, things were less organized and structured and often working and private life mixed whereas she preferred an 8am to 5pm workday during which she could work efficiently without any interruptions for small talk etc. On the other hand, she highlighted that her husband did not want to return to Germany for several reasons and that it was a long discussion between the two of them before they ultimately made the decision to return.

Finally, for Lutz (32) and Ute (28) the arrival of their first child also resulted in a re-evaluation and re-negotiation process of their migration intentions. Initially, they had planned to stay in Canada for a longer period of time than the one year they ended up doing. However, once their daughter was born, they started to reconsider these initial intentions and started to think about returning to Germany as Ute (28) explained: “Well, the idea of having a child is completely different from the praxis of having a child.” She and her husband went on to tell me that they started to compare their lives and the possibility to raise their daughter in (name of city in Canada) where they were living in Canada and in Germany. Especially, seeing their siblings raise their nieces and nephews on the farm of Lutz family where they were surrounded by the extended family, including grandparents and a great-grandmother, and, where they thus

could count on the support of their family made them realize that this was what they wanted for their child too. Lutz (32) said:

> Indeed, we compared it with each other: how do we raise our daughter and how does my brother raise his children here, on the farm? They have completely different possibilities and experience kind of a lot more as one could ever offer a child in such as small city as (name of city in Canada).

Later, they added that they also thought that "it would be nice if their daughter could grow up with her uncle and aunt and cousins". Thus, like for Henning and Nora, for Ute and Lutz the wish to return to Germany was also triggered by the birth of their child. However, as for the other couple a variety of other factors also impacted this decision. Ute and Lutz also mentioned the high costs of childcare as well as the quality of day care facilities which was often poor compared to the standard in Germany and the lower standard of the health care system compared to Germany. In addition to this, they, also referred to career related factors. Specifically, for Lutz who was working as a bush pilot in Canada and eventually planned to transition to work as a pilot for a big airline, it seemed to make more sense to return to Germany at this point so that he could "get a foot in" and "find a good job" before he was too old. Triggered by the birth of their daughter and taking the other reasons together, it thus made sense for the couple to transition back to life in Germany after only a year in Canada.

10.1.2 Choosing or Losing Employment – Work-Related Triggers Impacting Return or Onward Movement Decisions

Significant life course events such as losing one's employment or receiving a job offer in Germany were also named as triggers for either returning to Germany or moving to another place by several interviewees. In addition to that, being at a stage in the life course where career development opportunities are important also triggered such decisions.

Lena (36), for example, who had prolonged her stay in (name of city in Canada) several times and even received her PR status, highlighted that receiving a job offer in Germany was the final trigger for her and her Canadian husband to move back to Germany:

> So, in principle I already had an employment contract for (name of city in Germany) while still being in Canada. And that was like a final point where we said 'Okay, it's very concrete.' And what would have happened if I had not gotten to know my boss [= her boss in Germany] and I would have had to apply for jobs here [= in Germany], I don't know if we would have actually done it.

However, while the job offer was the final trigger for the decision to return, several other factors impacted the decision to do so too. In fact, Lena explained that the desire to return was a process that slowly evolved over time while she was living in (name of city in Canada). She highlighted that over time she started to miss Germany more and more and was longing for certain aspects such as the "German culture in the sense of sitting and eating together in a cozy environment" as well as that Germany was more "subdued" than Canada, i.e., there were more hiking paths or paths in general connecting different places or little cabins you could sleep and and/or stop for a bite to eat at in Germany as compared to the Canadian "wilderness". This gave her a sense of freedom in Germany to simply be able to go for a walk or hike without having to worry about anything, while the Canadian "wilderness" made her feel restricted. Moreover, specifically, when she and her husband started to think about their own family planning, the wish to return to Germany became more dominant because she felt strongly about wanting to raise her children in Germany. The desire to return to Germany was also impacted because she started to miss her family while living in Canada and that she was starting to think: "Okay, the dog is getting old, the parents are getting old, my niece and nephew are growing up and I am missing all of that." As a result of these factors, it became important for her to move back to Germany. Finally, there was also another important factor that impacted the decision to move back to Germany for Lena, namely that her Canadian husband was at a time in his employment career where he was looking for a change. Having worked for the same employer for five years he was eager for new challenges and to take the next step in his career. Therefore, he was willing and open to move elsewhere. Thus, while the job offer that Lena received was the ultimate trigger for them to return several other factors related to their life course, (e.g., family planning,

career stages) as well as emotional and cultural aspects overlapped and impacted the return decision.

Likewise, for Klaus (36), who initially went to Canada for an internship and prolonged his stay after his Canadian employer offered him a fixed contract and helped him to obtain a work permit, it was a job offer that triggered his decision to return. However, his situation was different from the one described above in that at the time he received the job offer he had been moving in the opposite direction, i.e., he was thinking about applying for his PR status in Canada, and, in fact, already had all the necessary documents at home. In addition to that, he had also started to apply for other jobs and to build up professional networks in (name of city in Canada) to pave his future path. However, when his father offered him the opportunity to take over some shares of the family business and to join the management team in a leading position of the same business, he changed his mind as he saw it as a good opportunity to further advance his career. Thus, without this lucrative job offer from his father he would have likely stayed in Canada long term as he emphasized that he would not have returned for "just any job" that he could have also done in Canada.

Petra's (31) case was unique in that it was not herself but her boyfriend who received a relocation offer by his company which resulted in them first moving to the Netherlands for one and a half years and then relocating again to the US where they were living at the time of the interview. Petra had lived and worked in (name of city in Canada) for four years together with her husband (back then boyfriend) before she received a job offer in another city in Canada where she moved to the year before they both moved to the Netherlands. As her partner was not able to move along to (name of city in Canada) for several reasons and because Petra was not that satisfied with her job in (name of city in Canada) and wanted to move back to Europe for a while when her partner received the offer to be relocated to the Netherlands, they took this opportunity. She explained this decision:

> Yes, and then I said: No, this is not really my dream job [= the job she had in name of city in Canada] and it'd be great to be closer to home and the place where they relocated us to was exactly two hours from (name of hometown in Germany). And then we said let's do it.

Petra further underlined that this desire to return to Germany or move to somewhere in Europe at least for a longer period of time was sparked by wanting to be closer to her family again. Not only were her parents getting older but also her sister had given birth to her first child and Petra thus wanted to be able to spend more time with them again. Moreover, she also highlighted that she was missing life in Germany in general and specific aspects of it in particular such as not being as dependent on cars in Germany as compared to Canada, the food and even the "churlishness" of Germans. In addition to this, she also specifically underlined the "Being-Outside-Culture" not in a sense of doing outdoor and nature activities such as hiking, but rather in the sense of having access to cafés and beer gardens:

> […] they [= Canadians] haven't really figured out the whole thing with cafés and beer gardens [laughs]. And exactly, that you can really simply just go to the nice café around the corner. And yes, this […], simply this type of cultural life" (Petra, 31).

Finally, Petra also mentioned that at the time she and her partner were starting to think about their own family planning and that she felt strongly about wanting to raise her children in a similar environment to the one that she grown up in. She explained:

> Yes, it might sound a bit silly, but because I want my children to be like me [laughs]. No, well I am aware that that won't work but just that they maybe go through the same education system and are exposed to the same values as I did, because I thought it was really nice the way I was raised.

This was also the reason why she and her husband, although they had taken another relocation offer to move to the US after one and a half years of living in the Netherlands, were planning to move back to Germany after a year in the US. Petra's case shows that while the trigger that made the move to the Netherlands and after that to the US was the relocation offer that her husband received the decision to take up this offer was also impacted by several other factors including wanting to be closer to family in Germany, not being satisfied with the employment in Canada, missing certain aspects about life in Germany and family planning considerations.

For other interviewees it was the stage that they found themselves at in their working careers that impacted the decision to return to Germany or to move elsewhere. Hannes (34) who went to (name of city in Canada) for a post-doctoral position together with his wife "did not see any perspectives in his field of specialty" in Canada. Thus, while they had prolonged their stay in Canada once and while his wife would have liked to stay in Canada even longer, when Hannes was able to secure a position as a junior professor in Germany, they made the decision to move back. Similarly, Luisa (31) who had lived and worked in Canada for several years eventually decided to return to Germany because she wanted to advance her career. She was looking for new challenges as her job in (name of city in Canada) had become repetitive and she did not see many chances for development there any longer. Ultimately, it was the possibility of being able to take evening classes at a university and to obtain a degree in international management that resulted in her decision to return. In Lara's (33) case, the decision to leave Canada after a one-year post-doc position was linked to the stage of her career path that she found herself in. Knowing that she wanted to stay in academia, her goal was to spend two years doing a post-doc before trying to find a more permanent position. During these two years she wanted to spend one year in (name of city in Canada) and the second year she wanted to work together with a specific professor in her field who was working at a university in the Netherlands. As a result of this, after her one-year stay in (name of city in Canada) she moved to the Netherlands where she was still living at the point of the interview.

Finally, for one of my interviewees, Hanna (41), the negative experience of her husband, who was the main breadwinner of the family, losing his job multiple times in Canada resulted in the family's decision to return to Germany although their initial plan had been to stay in Canada long term and although at the time of their return decision, they felt fully integrated and at home on a social level. The multiple job losses caused a lot of stress for the family and at times threatened their financial security. They were a constant worry for the family because they happened not only once but several times and often came out of nowhere. Both Hanna and

her husband were trying to be positive about this situation. They were trying to see which experience they could take out of this situation and look into the future with a positive mindset. Often her husband was able to find a new job quickly because he had a relatively good network. However, Hanna stated that this mindset was only possible for a certain amount of time and that at some point when they went through yet another job loss, they reached a point where they could no longer see anything positive. At this point, they had to evaluate what they wanted for their lives. Hanna described this evaluation process in the following way:

> And then, at some point you clearly have to consider: What is really important here? We can't travel. We only need to hit a major bump, and everything is gone. We would have needed to put money aside for the kids in case they wanted to start studying sooner or later. We can't do that at all right now. Which perspectives are there for me, even with a PhD? You have to be completely honest with yourself, well, I would be foolish to think, I would be able to get any positions at a university. To teach German or to do something else that's also relatively limited. To start becoming acquainted in a new sector, I am too old for that and I am not in the mood for that. […] And then, at some point you realistically had to say: 'Okay, what do we still want out of our lives? What do we want for our children? Can we do it here? Can we do it in an acceptable way and in a way, we are comfortable and do not risk our health and our lives, yeah, in the long run? And to all these questions we had to clearly say: 'No! It does not work that way.'

Thus, the combination of not being able to live the lifestyle they were hoping to offer themselves and their children, having no financial security in Canada, no realistic job prospects for Hanna and job insecurity for her husband resulted in Hanna and her family making use of their "plan B" – i.e., the opportunity of her husband to return to his old employer in Germany – to avoid further "suffering" for both themselves and their children. However, Hanna also justified the return by explaining that because her children – who were born in Germany before she and her family moved to Canada – "were at an age that they could still easily readjust" to life in Germany as well as her parents and parents-in-law still being at an age where they could enjoy time with their grandchildren was also a reason for returning to Germany if not the most important one.

10.1.3 Relationship Breakup as a Trigger for Returning to Germany

In the case of one of my interviewees, Lea (36), the breakup with her boyfriend was a life course event that triggered her decision to return to Germany. Lea had initially moved to Canada on a

one-year work and travel visa together with her German boyfriend, but they had both prolonged their stay multiple times since because they were enjoying their life in (name of city in Canada). However, after about three years they broke up. While Lea decided to prolong her stay for another year at that point because she wanted to give herself time to work through this experience but also because she felt comfortable in her life there, liked her apartment and had a good circle of friends, the experience of splitting up with her boyfriend who was buying property in Canada and planned to stay there in the long run started a process of re-evaluating and re-negotiating what she wanted for the future herself. Ultimately, several factors impacted her decision to return. First, she mentioned that at the time the economic situation in (name of city in Canada) was not great and that she was not sure how much longer the company she was working for would survive. The prospect of losing her job and the knowledge that it would be hard for her to find a new one especially as she did not speak any French impacted her decision to return. In addition to that she stated that her job in (name of city in Canada) had gotten monotonous and that she was not enjoying it much any longer. Returning to Germany and applying for jobs there she was hoping to find a position that was more exciting and challenging. Lea also mentioned that she was missing her parents and friends in Germany, and especially because her parents were getting older, she wanted to be closer to them again. Moreover, she could not imagine growing old in (name of city in Canada) because of her perception that the old age security and protection was not sufficient in Canada. Finally, she also mentioned the obstacle of having to apply for her PR status if she wanted to stay in Canada for a longer period. She emphasized that at the point she took the decision to return to Germany she was under the impression that she could no longer prolong her work permit, and, thus, the next step for her to be able to stay in Canada would have been to apply for her PR status. However, as she was living in the province of Quebec and was not in a relationship with a Canadian that would have been able to sponsor her, she would have needed to demonstrate her French skills which were rather rudimentary. She explained that learning French and going through this whole process

seemed too much work and was not important enough for her. Consequently, her stay in Canada which was never meant to be permanent to start with, came to a "natural end" at this point and she decided to return:

> I would have needed to go through this process of permanent residency. Then with French, it was kind of, it did kind of, it was not important enough for me then and then I returned.

Thus, while for Lea the breakup with her boyfriend was the ultimate trigger for her to start to think about returning to Germany, it was a combination of different factors including the economic situation in her place of destination and the potential challenge of having to find a new job in (name of city in Canada) without proper French skills, not wanting to go through the process of applying for her PR status in Canada, not wanting to grow old in her place of destination in Canada, looking for new challenges in her working life and wanting to be closer to her family and friends in Germany again that impacted her decision of returning to Germany.

10.2 Return and Onward Migration Experiences

The first part of this chapter explored the reasons lying behind my interviewees return or onward migration decisions. It highlighted that while there was often an overlap of different factors impacting these decisions, they were frequently triggered by certain life course events or impacted by the stage that my interviewees found themselves in their life courses. In the second part of this chapter, I focus on the lived experiences that my interviewees made upon their return to Germany or their movement to another country. Specifically, I highlight how these return or onward migration movements are similar to the step of moving to Canada as they involve many of the same organizational and social processes, e.g., having to take care of administrative procedures, having to re-establish their lives (housing, employment, social ties etc.) and going through a phase of reverse cultural shock. Like when they moved to Canada, it took time for them to settle and completely arrive at their places of destination in Germany or other countries.

10.2.1 Return to Germany or Onward Movement to Another Country is Like the Initial Step of Moving to Canada

Although most of the interviewees who left Canada moved back to Germany – i.e., their home country and a place they were familiar with as they had lived there for most of their lives and were socialized in its society – many highlighted that they had to rebuild their lives completely upon their return to Germany. This is exemplified, for example, by Klaus (36) who said "I started from scratch again in Germany. Well, that was quite difficult, but yes," or Lena (36) who emphasized "Of course, for me it was something new again. Well, it was also a return but not to the same city as before. Well, it was kind of like a new beginning." Not only did returning to Germany mean having to start their lives over again, but many also stressed that the processes involved in returning to Germany were similar to those that they experienced when they first moved to Canada or which they had made during previous moves abroad. As such, the procedures and organizational tasks involved in both movements were similar. Not only did my interviewees have to take care of logistical matters (e.g., arrange the move, organize a container for shipment of their belongings etc.) but they also had to make decisions about where in Germany they wanted to move to, they had to find accommodation and new places to live in, arrange and/or search for jobs, (re-)establish their social networks and friendships, register with authorities, and, those with children had to organize their children's schooling or day care arrangements and ensure that they settle in well into their new lives. Therefore, as highlighted by the following quote by Hanna (41) who returned to Germany together with her husband and their two children after almost six years in Canada, the return to Germany had to be just as well prepared as the move to Canada and required a lot of energy:

> How all of that worked. […] You need to think about important things, I don't know, when you arrive back here. Well, things related to insurance, your employer, where you have to register again, how you organize the first few weeks, where do you find a new apartment, how does it work with the container, when does it arrive, do you have to store it somewhere, how do you finance everything, things like that. Yes, all these things we had to manage. With the support of my parents-in-law, but also parallel to university, school, and work and all this, yes, yes. (Hanna, 41, Interview Transcript 32, April 19th, 2017)

The same was true for the experiences of onward migrants, who also had to go through similar steps as those described above when relocating. However, in addition to that, they also had to adjust to a completely new society and cultural system again, as well as potentially learn a new language, which comes with its own set of challenges and difficulties. The following sections explore the processes of a) finding accommodation, b) going through a phase of reverse culture shock, c) (re-)establishing social networks, and d) re-integrating into the labour market in more detail.

10.2.2 Places of Destination and Finding Accommodation: Cities, Neighbourhoods and Housing

The return movements to Germany or onward movements did not only require my interviewees to make decisions regarding which cities they wanted to move to, but they also had to find and arrange housing for them/their families.

10.2.2.1 Deciding on a Destination in Germany or Another Country

The cities or regions my interviewees moved to upon their return to Germany or onward movement to another country where either determined by the location of their pre-arranged jobs or by my interviewee's own preferences. Lena (36), Carolina (33) and Hannes (34), for example, all were able to secure a position in Germany while they were still in Canada, and all moved to the cities where their workplaces were located or to close-by cities. Likewise, Lara (33) and Petra (31), who both moved to the Netherlands moved to the specific cities there because of their own or in Petra's case her partner's employment which they already had secured while they were still in Canada. Others, such as the couples Ute (28) and Lutz (32) as well as Henning (34) and Nora (33) were flexible in choosing their destinations and ultimately both decided to move to the same city as their parents/parents-in-law or close by. Nora explained her and her husband's thought process in deciding where to move to:

> No, no. No, that's right, well, we thought back and forth a lot because the great thing when you start to think about returning is that you could go anywhere. All options are open for you and we said: 'Oh man, let's go to Munich, where you really have this Bermuda Triangle, with Italy and Switzerland and you can ski and you can, you're kind of in the middle of it all and you can travel so much and the weather is great.' But then we thought, we'd have to start from scratch again [if we moved there]. Then you'd have to make friends again […], then we'd kind of do exactly the same things as we did in (name of city in Canada) and we were a bit tired of that. We actually wanted to get back to our roots a bit. And one of the reasons why we returned is that our, that Paul's [= their son] grandparents simply can spend more time with him. And then it wouldn't make much sense to move to Munich, then they wouldn't really see each other much.

Because of these factors, they decided to move to the Northern part of Germany where Nora's parents were living. In fact, they moved to (name of city in Germany) that was less than 30 minutes from Nora's parents' home. The desire to move to the same city (or close by) as their parents or parents-in-law was closely tied to the fact that for these interviewees the decision to return to Germany was triggered by the birth of their children and the wish that these could grow up with their grand-parents and extended families around them.

10.2.2.2 Finding Accommodation and Housing Arrangements

My interviewees experiences regarding housing differed and depended on their situation. While some moved into temporary housing arrangements, others were able to pre-arrange more permanent places of living. Regardless of their form of initial accommodation, several interviewees continued their housing trajectories after some time and in those cases of specific please-based criteria become important for the choice of housing.

Those who moved into temporary housing used this initial time to look for more permanent places to stay for which they often used specific criteria. When Klaus (36) first moved back, for example, he moved in with his parents who lived in a small town. He described this time as at times challenging not only because he moved back in with his parents but also because living in a small town required a lot of adjustment as he had lived in a major city in Canada before. However, after about a month, he was able to find an apartment and moved to (name of city in Germany), i.e., a bigger city close by to his parents' hometown and their family business that he started to work in. When asking why he decided to move to this specific city,

he explained that having previously lived in (name of city in Canada) he "needed a major city" and (name of city in Germany) was the closest he could get to that. He highlighted among others that (name of city in Germany) offered a bit more cultural diversity, the possibilities to go out for food and drinks to a variety of different places and a bit of night life even though the last factor got less important for him now that he was a father. Carolina (33), her husband and their six-months old daughter also moved into temporary housing that was provided by her employer when arriving in (name of city in Germany). She remembered:

> Then we were lucky as (name of employer) provided us with a room in their guest house for two months, but you obviously don't feel, you arrive there and it's absolutely not a home. You know it is a transitional phase, you have to orient yourself further. My husband looked for apartments constantly. (Carolina, 33)

Not only was this initial phase exhausting because they had to search for apartments which was particularly difficult in the region that they lived in because it was densely populated, but also, once they had found an apartment, Carolina mentioned that they slowly had to build up their household again. While they had been able to store a few items with their parents during the time they were in Canada, they did not have a bed or other major furniture pieces, for example, and, thus, "had to rebuild everything again" which required a lot of energy.

Those who moved into more permanent housing arrangements were often able to secure these prior to their return to Germany with the help of their parents or parents-in-law. Lutz (32) and his wife Ute (28) as well as their daughter were, for example, able to move into an apartment on the farm of Lutz parents which made their move "relatively uncomplicated". Others, such as Hanna (41) and her family relied on the help of her parents-in-law who looked at different options for them. She told me:

> Well, my parents-in-law were so kind and looked at houses for us and had also seen this house [= the one where Hanna and her family was currently living in]. And they [= her parents-in-law] own several houses and rent them which means they do know exactly what to look for. And we have a very trustful relationship with them and had discussed everything beforehand. (Hanna, 41)

These experiences of receiving help from their parents or parents-in-law regarding finding accommodation are also reflected in the experiences of others who did not move into temporary housing arrangements.

10.2.2.3 Continuation of Housing Trajectories – The Importance of Specific Locations

Irrespective of whether my interviewees had pre-arranged housing or first moved into temporary housing and then into more permanent places, it is important to highlight that their housing trajectories did not necessarily end there. Some, for example, either bought houses and/or moved to other cities a few years after their return to Germany. Lena (36) and her husband, for example, first moved into temporary housing – in their case a furnished apartment in (name of city in Germany). Not knowing (name of city in Germany) they used the first few weeks to get an impression of the city and to decide which quarter they wanted to move to and eventually found an apartment that was in a pre-World-War-II tenement which they loved. However, as the rent for this place was expensive, they eventually – about two and a half years after their return to Germany – decided to buy a house instead. When telling me about the location of their house, Lena explained that they decided on (name of city in Germany) as their new place of living:

> The factor here was that it was close to my parents, close to his [= her husband's] work, it's about sixteen kilometers for him [to get to work]. For me it's longer, I almost have 40 kilometers [to drive to work]. […] But exactly, the train connection, the bus here drives, well, that's not as great, but otherwise the location is pretty good, also with regard to the general education system.

Like Lena, other interviewees also highlighted how they were looking for specific regions or areas that fulfilled certain criteria when they continued their housing trajectories, these involved closeness to work, access to infrastructure, but also wanting to live in certain neighborhoods of cities, among others. Lea's (36) case was slightly different. She first moved to (name of city in Germany) where she lived in several different apartments that she was subleasing from other people for varying amounts of times together with her American boyfriend who she had met in

(name of city in Canada) shortly before moving back to Germany. However, after these two years, they decided to move to (name of city in Germany) because they did not enjoy life in (name of city where they lived initially). Lea told me:

> (Name of city in Germany) was indeed simply, the weather, ehm yeah and the people. There were, you only see other Germans around you […] and then somehow, there's nothing else and we both thought that was boring.

Moving to (name of city in Germany) where they had only lived for a few weeks at the point of the interview, they were hoping to find a more open, culturally diverse, and international environment.

10.2.3 Reverse Culture Shock

Many interviewees went through a phase of reverse culture shock when they returned to Germany. This was particularly with respect to the norms and mentality of how people interact with each other. While many of the interviewees had gotten used and incorporated the friendly, positive, open, and helpful way Canadians interact with each other, when they returned to Germany, they emphasized that they realized that Germans were not as open and friendly but often rather grumpy or withdrawn. These feelings and impressions are captured particularly well by Carolina (33):

> Well, this mentality, that was really like this reverse culture shock, when you come back [to Germany]. How grumpy the people are for the most part, and how little community, I thought that was the most shocking, how little community there was. That people directly expect something mean from you, when you look at them. [...] Well, and in the beginning when I returned, I really thought "This is insane," and I thought "Why do we do this to ourselves? What's the meaning of this? How can you live together like this? That is not a community."

She went on to explain these feelings by highlighting that she had the impression that whenever she tried to approach someone, for example, to ask for help or what time it was, they would "fall into a panic mood," be sceptic and kind of "expect the worst". Moreover, she emphasized that it seemed as if everyone in Germany was just thinking about their own advantages and that she experienced people as "very egoistic" compared to Canada where she perceived everyone to be nice and respectful and even drug addicts were standing up in the bus to offer her a place

when she was pregnant. Thus, she felt as if in Canada there was less of a competition against each other (e.g., who has the bigger car, the nicer garden etc.) but people were much rather focused on being and acting as part of a community that respected each other. Thus, having experienced how open, friendly, helpful, and respectful Canadians were, she had a hard time readjusting to the way that people interacted in Germany and found this behaviour quite unintelligible.

These experiences were also echoed by several other interviewees who returned to Germany. For example, Nora (33), Henning (34) and Ute (28) all mentioned that they initially felt that people in Germany were rude or unfriendly when they returned to Germany as they, for example, did not interact in small talk or asking each other how they were doing. However, all three stressed that while they were still missing the Canadian way of interacting with each other, over time they had gotten used to the German way again and it had become their normal. Lea (36) also emphasized that it was hard to adjust back to the cold and distant way of people in Germany which she put in contrast to the openness and politeness of people in (name of city in Canada) where she had been living. She exemplified this with the examples of people lining up for the bus, people holding up doors for each other and people typically asking each other how they were doing. She felt that these positive experiences had changed her and made it more difficult to readjust to life in Germany. It also made her feel as if she was not "the best version of herself" in Germany. Moreover, like Carolina she highlighted the defensive attitude as well as that people constantly thought about their status and having the best of everything which she felt was wearing and put a lot of pressure on people.

Erik highlighted another factor in terms of social interactions that he had to readjust to when he initially returned to Germany, namely punctuality. During his time in Canada, he had gotten used to it not being a big problem if people ran late to their meetings by a few minutes. However, when returning to Germany he said that "every now and then he had put his foot in it" because he did as he "was used to from Canada". He also mentioned that the hierarchy

structures were a lot flatter in Canada as compared to Germany which he had to get used to again. Moreover, it was hard for him to understand the negative and critical voices about immigration in Germany having experienced the openness and diversity in Canada. A similar point was made by Klaus (36).

As highlighted above, many of my interviewees realized that they had changed over time and adjusted to Canadian values and norms of social interactions and had to readjust to life in Germany. In addition to this, Hanna (41) highlighted that these experiences made her feel foreign when she returned to Germany initially and that it required time to readjust to life there. She illustrated this well when she told me about the first few days and week after her and her family's return to Germany:

> You don't have to fool yourself that the first days, weeks are normal. They are not normal. You have not quite arrived yet. You still have the feeling, the Canadian sense of time. You still have a different perspective on life. You dress differently. You have more English things on your mind that come up all at once. You have, you realize that the reactions from your surroundings are different. They see you differently. You are still foreign. You still seem kind of foreign because you talk differently, your kids are different, you move different as a family because you lived completely differently for the past six years. […] You realize that you attract attention that you are different and that you need time to arrive. (Hanna, 41)

This quote emphasizes an important point, namely that it is not only Hanna and her family who feel foreign, but also that they are perceived by others as still not quite fitting in. Thus, the re-adjustment process involves not only the interviewees themselves but also society at large.

Lara (33) was one of the two interviewees who did not return to Germany after her stay in Canada but instead moved to another country, namely the Netherlands. She highlighted that she was not only confronted with somewhat of a language barrier but also had to adjust to the different characteristics of the cities that she had lived in in Canada and was now living in in the Netherlands. Whereas (name of city in Canada) had offered a lot of outdoor activities, nature, and lots of space, (name of city in the Netherlands) was more focused on culture (e.g., museums) and had a big food scene (e.g., people liked to eat and drink a lot). This contrast between the two cities (more so than necessarily between the two countries) made it "extremely difficult" for her to adjust to life in her new place of destination particularly because it cut 90%

of the activities that she had participated in and was used to from her life in (name of city in Canada). In addition to that, she also mentioned that she experienced a contrast between the open and considerate way that Canadians interacted with each other, whereas in (name of city in the Netherlands) she had the impression that "everyone more or less does their own thing" and people were less considerate. She was not sure if this was only the case for the city she was living in or if she could attribute this factor to the Netherlands as a country. However, she mentioned that she did not feel this way or had these impressions when she returned to Germany from a previous stay in Canada during her PhD. This is noticeable considering that several of my interviewees who returned to Germany mentioned that they experienced Germans as less considerate as demonstrated above.

Finally, it is important to mention that not all interviewees experienced a reverse culture shock or experienced it to the same extend. While Luisa (31) mentioned that she had to adjust to several factors at work (these are explored further down), she emphasized that because she had visited Germany regularly during her last stay in Canada and it was the third time overall that she returned to Germany from Canada after having lived there for longer periods she was used to the process involved in returning and navigating between the two countries. For Lena (36) it was her second time returning to Germany from Canada too. While after her first return to Germany she went through a phase of revers culture shock and was homesick for Canada, the second time around she was happy to be back. While she did miss the social aspects of being in Canada, i.e., the nice, friendly, and open way of interacting with people and being tolerant toward diversity, she enjoyed being close to her family and being able to benefit from the "cozy atmosphere" in Germany, i.e., "this beer garden culture and this sitting together sociably".

10.2.4 (Re-)Establishing Social Networks

Most of the interviewees who returned to Germany or moved to another country after their stays in Canada emphasized that upon their arrival in their new places of destination they had to (re-

)establish social networks and revive friendships to some degree. The extent to which this was necessary depended on where they moved to, i.e., if they returned to places in Germany they had lived in previously, moved to a completely different area or city in Germany, or moved to a city in a different country altogether.

10.2.4.1 (Re-)Establishing Social Networks in Cities of Previous Living in Germany

For those who moved back to the cities or regions in which they had lived before their moves to Canada, it seemed a bit easier to re-establish their social networks as in most cases they still had some contacts and friends who lived there. Nevertheless, it often required some form of re-activation or navigation of these friendships and social networks as in some cases, such as for Hannes (34), the contact with friends had gotten less and less over the time they spent in Canada, whereas in others, such as Hanna's (41), they realized that both them and their friends had changed over time. According to Hanna, such changes, however, could be navigated "through a respectful, open contact". Hanna also emphasized that when she and her family returned, they did not only have to navigate the changes they had undergone with their friends, but also with other family members, e.g., her parents. This often required a re-negotiation of family roles and expectations upon return as my interviewees, for example, slipped back into the roles of being daughters or sons which required them to participate in family events and gatherings, among others. This had not been the case for them in Canada with their families being far away. This factor was also mentioned by others such as Klaus (36), Carolina (33) or Ute (28). It is important to underline here, that this re-negotiation of family roles and expectations was not necessarily seen as something negative as in fact several interviewees had specifically returned to be closer to their families, but it was nevertheless a process which they underwent. Nora (33) mentioned another point that required some navigation and negotiation when (re-)establishing friendships, namely, how to communicate about her experiences in Canada with others who had never lived abroad. She realized this when she first joined some mummy-groups and had the impression

that talking about her time in Canada came across as being arrogant to others and also felt as if many people were not interested in hearing about these experiences.

For others, who returned to the same cities or regions in Germany, establishing social networks or forming new friendships was a bit harder as they had left during a time period where a lot of their friends left these cities, e.g., because they finished their university degrees or went to work elsewhere. Klaus (36), for example, highlighted that while he returned to the same city in Germany where he had previously studied and there were still some people that he knew from university living there, having been away for three years his closest friends were either in Canada or had moved away. While he was able to revive some of his old friendships, Klaus also told me that he had to meet new people and build up new contacts. He did this by joining a soccer team, moving into a neighbourhood that was relatively young and where many people lived who were at the same life stage as him, as well as joining a work-related association. Others, such as Luisa (31), highlighted that she made new friends through her evening classes at university but also at work and through sports. Later, she also established a wider social network through her husband and when their child was born just a few months before the interview, by joining baby playgroups.

Finally, it is important to highlight that one of my interviewees, Lea (36), mentioned that she was disappointed when returning to Germany because she had been hoping that the contact with her friends in Germany would become stronger and more intense again. However, because many of them had children by that time and were according to her busy with their family and working life, this was not the case. Lea herself had not established any new friendships either because she was working long hours at her job, did not participate in any groups or activities that would have allowed her to meet new people and because she was not sure, as she put it, “how much of the German population I would classify as interesting […], well, interesting for me”. She explained this last point by saying that a lot of the people she had met in (name of city in Canada) had different backgrounds and it was interesting and fun to

learn about their stories, whereas she felt as if most people in Germany had a similar background to herself and stated that because of that she didn't "have the incentive to expand [her social network] further in Germany".

10.2.4.2 Establishing Social Networks when Moving to a New City in Germany

Particularly those interviewees who moved to a new city/region in Germany, had to establish a social network from scratch. Carolina (33) who moved to (name of city in Germany) together with her husband and their six-months old daughter told me that it was hard in the beginning because they did not know anyone and that it was more difficult to make contacts because they were a bit more restricted in what they could do with a young child. Moreover, in contrast to her time as a PhD student and a post-doc during which everyone had been more or less in the same stage of their lives, in her new job people were a bit older and already had families. She mentioned that just because she got along with them at work did not mean that she necessarily met with them in her private life too. While it was difficult to meet people in the beginning, Carolina emphasized that over time they were able to meet more people, for example, by getting to know neighbours, meeting people on the streets in their neighbourhood or meeting other parents when they went to the playground with their daughter. She also told me that joining a basketball team was an important facilitator for her in meeting more people and she regretted that she had done so only after about a year and a half of living in (name of city in Germany):

> And unfortunately, I only looked for a basketball club relatively late, because usually it is always my hub, because you get to know, through sports it is easy to meet people who are on the same wavelength as you.

Overall, Carolina stated that it was only now, i.e., about two years after they had returned to Germany and moved to (name of city in Germany), that she and her husband were slowly starting to feel as if they had arrived more fully. However, she also raised an interesting point, namely that maybe these experiences had not so much to do just with them moving back from Canada to Germany but also that for them several other transitions in their lives occurred at the

same time, e.g., transitioning into parenthood, having to adjust to a new work place and having to work while taking care of a baby, moving to a city that was completely unknown and where no social networks pre-existed and moving to a highly urban region in Germany. All these changes taken together made it hard to identify which factors actually impacted their experiences or as Carolina put it: “Is it life with a child that suddenly restricts us, the freedoms that we previously had in Canada that we suddenly don’t have any more? Is it the system in which one lives?” Thus, it is not only important to consider the national level, i.e., moving from Canada to Germany, but also other units of analysis that are related to smaller entities such as the cities and regions between which individuals move as well as their personal situations and the stages in which they find themselves in their life trajectories.

Lena (36) mentioned similar factors. Initially she did not know many people in the area she and her husband moved to. While she had many friends in Germany, they all lived in different cities and regions of the country that were further away. Over time they met a few people and had some acquaintances and once their children were born, they also started to meet more people. However, as Lena put it, “you need to live at a place for a long time for something like this [= strong ties and friendships] to establish” and the three years she and her husband had been living in (name of city in Germany) were according to her maybe not long enough for that.

10.2.4.3 Establishing Social Networks when Moving to Cities in Other Countries

Those of my interviewees who moved to cities in other countries than Germany did not only have to establish a new social network but also faced specific challenges in this process that others who returned to Germany did not. For Lara (33) it was not only moving to a new city that made it harder for her to establish a social network but also the language barrier she faced as she moved to the Netherlands and only spoke basic Dutch. While she told me that she had

been able to get to know people at work relatively quickly, she was having more trouble to participate in social activities, such as joining a handball team, because of the language barrier:

> I think that the language plays into it. Well, I for example went to handball practice a couple of times and it was really, I really realized that that [= the language] is an extreme barrier. And that kept me from going there again.

She went on to explain that this language barrier also limited the number of activities that were available to her, especially those that were targeted to locals, as she would, for example, not feel comfortable to join a Dutch theatre group given that she did not feel as if she was able to express herself well enough. While Lara told me that she had started to get more involved in different activities now (roughly one and a half years after she arrived there) she emphasized that it had taken her a lot longer to meet people and join activities than in (name of city in Canada) and that she was mainly doing activities, such as singing in a choir or being in a theatre group, with other internationals where the main language spoken was English. Lastly, Lara also mentioned that because (name of city in the Netherlands) was only about two and a half hours from her hometown in Germany she spent a lot more time visiting friends and family there and cultivating her friendships with people there.

10.2.5 Reintegration into the Labour Market

For many of the interviewees the reintegration into the job market at their places of destination in Germany or other countries was relatively uncomplicated from a logistical point of view as most had already secured employment in Germany or another country before their moves or were able to secure a job within a relatively short amount of time. Some also saw their return or onward movements as possibilities to try out something new in their working lives. Despite these positive experiences regarding finding employment some reported that they were experiencing some challenges when re-adjusting to their new working environments at their places of destinations. These three points are explored in more detail below.

10.2.5.1 Employment Situation upon Arrival at Places of Return or Onward Movement Destinations

Overall, most of my interviewees were able to work in their learned professions and were able to obtain a similar position to what they held during their time in Canada, and many did not experience any major challenges in finding employment upon their return or onward movement. In fact, several interviewees had already secured a job at their places of destination before they moved there. Hannes (34) and Henning (34), for example, applied and were able to secure positions in Germany prior to their return. Lara (33) was able to secure a scholarship for her second post-doctoral position in the Netherlands before she moved and Lena (36) got to know her German employer in Canada who offered her a contract before she returned to Germany. Others, such as Lea (36) and Lutz (38) mentioned that the first few weeks of their return were a bit stressful as they had to apply for positions and they were nervous about whether they would be able to find employment or not. However, both were able to secure employment within the first few weeks to months after their return. While Lea ended up working for her old employer (who she had worked for before moving to Canada), Lutz found employment with an airline in Germany.

For Petra (31) who moved to the Netherlands, finding employment was more difficult because as she highlighted, on the one hand, the economy in the Netherlands had not yet fully recovered from the economic crisis, and, on the other hand, she only had limited Dutch skills. Given that (name of city in the Netherlands) was close to the German border, she eventually decided to look for employment on the German side and after about six months she was able to start a job.

Some of the interviewees who returned to Germany were also not in an employment situation yet. Ute (28), who had only been back in Germany for about two months and was the mother of a seven-months old baby, told me that she had started to apply for different positions, that she had a job interview scheduled for soon after I met her and was hoping to get back into the labour market in the next one to two months. Nora (33) was also planning to start looking

into applying for jobs in her learned profession as a nurse a few months after our interview. She and her husband had initially decided that she would stay at home with their son during the first year after returning to Germany in the fall of 2014 so that they could "settle as a family and learn to live this life [= the life in Germany] again" and ensure a smooth transition for their son. After this first year, however, she got pregnant again and gave birth to their daughter in the spring of 2016 about a year before the interview. During the interview she told me that she was optimistic about finding employment relatively quickly once she started to apply to jobs as nurses were a sought-after profession and she still had some contacts from before her time in Canada.

10.2.5.2 Return or Onward Movements as a Possibility to Re-Direct Career Path or Trying Something New

Several interviewees used or were thinking about using their return to Germany or their onward movements as a possibility to slightly redirect their career paths by trying out something new and/or moving into a slightly different section of the field they were working in. Hanna (41) who had started a PhD position during her time in Canada and was still completing her degree when she returned to Germany with her family highlighted that she had started to investigate different options of either starting to work in her old profession as a teacher or several different other possibilities that she could imagine. These options included going into university teaching and instructing students who want to become teachers, moving towards research on the development of schoolbooks, or potentially working for a schoolbook publisher, among others. Henning (34) also explained that he saw the return to Germany as an opportunity to try out something new and work in a slightly different area of application:

> Here also as a civil engineer. This time in a construction company, not a planning office as in Canada, but a water construction company. [...] Yes, and that was planned. I wanted to move away from the planning and more toward constructing. Yes.

Likewise, Carolina (33) emphasized that after her return to Germany she switched from doing active research herself as she had done previously during her PhD in Germany and her post-

doc in Canada, and, instead started to work as a scientific coordinator. For Luisa (31), her return to Germany also came along with changes as she decided to expand her knowledge by studying a degree in international management during evening classes while working full time.

10.2.5.3 Re-Adjusting to Working Environment

Based on the above displayed information, it seems as if the reintegration into the employment market went smoothly for most interviewees who returned or moved onwards not only did most already have employment when they returned or were able to find employment within a short amount of time, but also most were able to work in a similar position to the one they had held in Canada previously. However, on a more emotional or cultural level, several interviewees had to re-adjust to working life in Germany. These interviewees particularly highlighted the different ways of how people interacted with each other in German and Canadian workplaces. Hannes (34), for example, mentioned that people were a lot less willing to help each other, whereas in Canada he had made the experience that people were friendly and helpful and tried to help even if they might have not had the answer to a problem. For him this was a "huge adjustment", and he was missing how things worked at his old workplace in (name of city in Canada). Henning (34) also highlighted that according to him people in Canada were more polite, friendly, and cautious when communicating with each other in the workspace, whereas in Germany, respectively Belgium (where he was sent to work by his new employer for the first few weeks after his return from Canada), it was more direct and "a bit rough". According to him, people in Germany were, for example, not asked if they could stay longer but it was expected, and whereas a boss in Canada would ask their employees if they had time to do something, in Germany they would say "Why is it taking this long?". Henning said that entering working life was "the biggest shock" that he experienced when he returned and that in the beginning it really threw him off and he was thinking that he should resign. However, over time, he did eventually get used to these differences and adjusted to them. Others, such as Luisa

(31) emphasized that they had to get used to not being on first name terms with colleagues at work. Like the experiences of most of my interviewees when adjusting back to live in Germany in general, one could thus say that they went through a culture shock at their workplaces too. Other challenges that were faced, were often related more to the specific work environment that my interviewees worked in. As such, some, for example, had to learn a variety of new tasks or gained new responsibilities as was the case for Klaus (36), Hannes (34), Lena (36) and Luisa (31).

While several of my interviewees mentioned that they had to adjust to certain things in their working lives, one exception to this was Carolina (33), who was "very happy" with the working environment and climate at her new position in Germany and thought it was "more attractive because it was more structured and less airy-fairy". This made sense given that one of the reasons why she decided to return was that she was not happy with the way that work was structured and organized in the lab she was working for in (name of city in Canada).

10.3 Future Mobility Intentions

From the above sections on my interviewees experiences upon returning to Germany or moving to another country it becomes obvious that they went through a phase of having to re-establish their lives at their places of destination regarding housing arrangements, adjusting to cultural differences, as well as their social and working lives. It was only over time that they settled more and more back into their lives again. Despite this, however, it is important to keep in mind that their return to Germany or onward movement to another country did not necessarily represent the last step on their migration trajectories. In fact, most of the interviewees who returned or moved to another country were either open to moving again in the future or had already taken active steps in trying to achieve this. The reasons and motivations for these intentions varied depending on my interviewees situations and in some cases were more clearly present than in others. Therefore, the last part of this chapter examines my interviewee's

thoughts on their future mobilities. In doing so, I aim to highlight the importance of not seeing their return or onward migration movements necessarily as their final step of their migration trajectories but rather just as another step on this trajectory that may or may not continue in the future depending on how their lives unfold.

10.3.1 General Openness to Future Mobility

After their return to Germany several interviewees kept an open mind about moving abroad again in the future. However, in most cases, they did not have any concrete plans of doing so yet. Rather, they employed similar practices as when they had been living in Canada (e.g., year-by-year planning) or highlighted that they would be willing to move abroad if an opportunity came up. For example, both Lena (36) and Luisa (31) were open to move again in the future. Lena, who was living in (name of city in Germany) together with her Canadian husband and their two children, explained that while she was in Canada, she "lived there from one year to the other" without making any firm decisions of how long she wanted to stay there or not, "simply looking where live would take" her. She stated that she and her husband kept this philosophy alive even when they returned to Germany and she told me "[…] because we both, even now we say that we surely won't grow old in (name of city where they are currently living) but somehow we will move. I don't know, our dream right now is to buy a house at a river in the Netherlands". Thus, while Lena and her husband had not taken any concrete steps yet to move to another country again, they were open and relatively convinced that they would do so at some point in the future. Likewise, Luisa (31), said that she and her husband could imagine moving to Canada again in the future. Luisa had already moved between Canada and Germany three times in her life, first when she was a child as she was born in Canada by German parents, and, later twice during her adult life. While her husband only knew Canada from the two times they had visited together, he was open to the idea as "he really liked being in Canada" and thought that "Canadians were so warm and open". Moreover, as Luisa was able to pass on her

Canadian citizenship to their son, she was keen on showing him Canada at some point. However, Luisa emphasized that they did not have any concrete plans yet and said: “

> But yes, I think it's just a future project, or if it would somehow happen, or something like that, then we would surely move to Canada, then there would actually not be anything that would keep us here, that would hinder us from moving.

Others, such as the couple Henning (34) and Nora (33) were generally open to moving again in the future but had just bought a house and, thus, were relatively settled at the moment whereas for Klaus (36) the family situation did not allow to move abroad as his wife did not have any interest in living abroad.

10.3.2 Dissatisfaction with German Academic System and Future Mobility

Some interviewees, such as Hannes (34) were not only open to another move abroad in the future but had already investigated different possibilities. Hannes and his wife had both enjoyed their stay in Canada, where Hannes did a post-doc. While his wife would have loved to stay in Canada for a longer period, they ultimately returned to Germany because Hannes was able to get a position as a junior professor at a German university. However, not being happy with the German academic system, respectively the lack of perspective that is given to young academics in the German system (i.e., according to him there are barely any tenure track positions and as a junior professor you are hired for six years but after that your contract is not prolonged) Hannes was open to move abroad again, for example, to Canada or Australia. In fact, he told me that he had applied for a lecturer position with a tenure track option in Australia a year ago. While this position did not work out, he stressed that he was still considering other options for the future and was determined to go abroad again for at least three to six months during his current contract as a junior professor. Hannes emphasized that New Zealand would be a great destination because as he said:

> […] well, what I took away from the abroad experiences in Canada, is it is important to not just take into consideration the job, but also actually consider where you go to, if you can imagine feeling comfortable there.

Thus, because of his experience in Canada he determined that other factors for deciding where to move to, such as feeling at home or being comfortable at a place, were more important than necessarily just taking into consideration the job opportunities. Lara (33) who moved to the Netherlands for her second year of post-doc where she was still living at the point of the interview as her contract had gotten prolonged was in a similar position as Hannes. She told me that eventually she was hoping to get a permanent position at a university in North America, preferably Canada because she thought that both the university system as well as the way of living were "very attractive" there. While she was also open to the possibility of moving to other countries, e.g., Scandinavian countries or Australia, she could not imagine a return to Germany at least if she stayed in academia because like Hannes, she found the German academic system "extremely unattractive".

10.3.3 Life Stages and Future Mobility

Considering the life stages in which my interviewees found themselves upon their return or onward movement was also a determinant factor in their decisions about future mobilities. Petra (31) had moved twice already after her time in Canada. She first moved to the Netherlands together with her husband. After one-and-a-half years there, they moved to the US where she was living at the time of the interview. While their ultimate goal had been to return to Germany, and they were still thinking about moving there in the future, when Petra's husband received the relocation offer to the US, they decided to take the opportunity. Petra explained the thought process by highlighting the importance of considering the life stage at which they found themselves in:

> And we thought back and forth for a long time. We also thought about if he should resign and if he should try to find something in Germany while I was still having my job there. That was definitely also an option. But ultimately, we said to ourselves: 'Okay, we are 31 and 32 years old and at some point we would like to have a family and now is probably the last time that we can really simply do it [= move to another country]. We don't own any property, we don't have kids, well, everything is easy. And in the end, we were not ready yet to really settle long term in Germany.

Later she highlighted that they however only intended to stay in the US for a year and that they had agreed that her husband would resign after that year and they would both look for positions in Germany as Petra still wanted to return to Germany and live there again for a longer period of time especially with family planning and wanting to be closer to her own family in mind.

Likewise, Carolina (33) reflected on factors related to the stage in life that she and her husband found themselves in when talking about the possibility of future moves. While she was sure that she and her husband would move again in the near future – in fact, she told me that she was expecting another baby and that while she was on maternity leave, she would start to apply for positions elsewhere – she did not know yet whether that move would be within Germany or to another country. She further reflected on these two options: On the one hand, she highlighted that because they now had a daughter and were expecting their second child it was less likely that they would move to a completely new country because this would require them having to start completely over again and establish their lives anew (administrative tasks, housing, employment, social network etc.) which was a lot harder and "enormously strenuous" with children. On the other hand, Carolina said that she had the feeling that she at this point really "wanted to arrive somewhere and to feel at home". Therefore, if they indeed moved abroad again, they would likely only move to Canada as they were already familiar with life there and knew what to expect. In addition to that she mentioned that she and her husband were at a stage in their lives in which they also had to start thinking about their provisions for old age so that they would have securities for when they were older. Moreover, it would not get easier for her husband to find a job the older he was getting, and they were also thinking about not wanting to "pull out their children from their environment" too many times which was why they intended to move only once more and then ideally settle at this place for a longer period of time. Irrespective of whether this final move would be within Germany or to another country, the most important factor in this decision was that they would decide based on the place because

they said: “At some point we need to live at a place where we actually feel really comfortable”. Carolina also mentioned an interesting point, namely that it was difficult to know where exactly that place was because of all the different moves she had done and the different countries she had lived in during her live, she did not really know any longer where home was:

> And sometimes I feel as if I don’t have a home anymore. […] Well, I don’t think we will stay in (name of city in Germany where they are currently living). But I don’t know either where we will move to, if it will be in Germany or rather elsewhere? Well, but I don’t have this “this-is-my-home-feeling” and “that’s where I need to move to”. I don’t know where I want to move to.

All she knew was that the place she wanted to move to should ideally be close to nature and with access to greeneries as Carolina did not enjoy the densely populated region they were living in right now.

10.3.4 Non-Fulfillment of Return Expectations and Future Mobility

Finally, for some interviewees, the non-fulfillment of their expectations toward their return also impacted future mobility decisions. While for some of my interviewees their expectations toward their return to Germany – e.g., being closer to their families, the wish to live in a Germany again because of cultural aspects (nature and gastronomy), or, achieving financial security – were fulfilled, for Lea (36) this was not the case. Upon her return to Germany the contact to her family and friends was less frequent and close as she had been hoping for, working life was stressful with long working hours, she was missing the Canadian mentality, did not feel comfortable in Germany any longer and did not have the feeling as if she fitted in there. Her return thus resulted in a “disillusion” of her expectations. She described this feeling in the following way:

> And I have to say, back then, when I arrived here, I envisioned a kind of fantasy [...] And I think many people experience this when they return to Germany. It is a kind of disillusion that you somehow have and that‘s why I decided for myself that Germany does not need to be the country, or will not be the country, where I will grow old.

Because of these negative experiences and the disillusion upon her return specifically regarding the intensity of contact to her family and friends, Lea was considering leaving Germany again

and to move elsewhere. To give Germany another chance, she and her fiancé (who was from the US), decided to move to (name of city in Germany) on a two-year trial basis as they perceived this city as being more diverse and international. However, during the interview, Lea already highlighted that it was unlikely that they would stay there because according to her the social structures and other social aspects were not strong enough in Germany to keep her there. While she still saw Germany as her home, in the sense of it being the place where she was born, after her return from Canada, she did not feel at home in Germany any longer in a social sense. Specifically, she stated that she was longing for "warmer social structures" as she had experienced them in Canada and North America in general because she felt that she and her personality was able to blossom in that kind of environment. Therefore, she thought that it was quite likely that she and her fiancé would move to the US in the future to be in such an environment and to be closer to her fiancé's family. However, Lea underlined that she would only do so if she and her partner would be able to have a secure source of income there.

10.4 Discussion of the Research Findings

This chapter explored the return and onward migration experiences of German migrants by choice who had previously lived in Canada.

The first part of the chapter focused on the decisions and triggers behind return or onward migration movements. **Three main triggers for their return to Germany or to move elsewhere were identified. These were: a) the birth of a child, b) employment, i.e., receiving a job offer from Germany or elsewhere, loosing employment, career stages, and c) relationship break-up.**

Giving birth to a child and transitioning into family life was particularly a trigger for returning to Germany for German-German couples who had moved to Canada together. **This experience of becoming parents and being responsible for a child resulted in a process of re-negotiating and -evaluating their current lives in Canada and the decision to return to**

Germany. The reasons for this were the wish to be closer to one's family for support and for children to grow up close to their grand-parents and other relatives as well as childcare considerations (childcare in Germany was cheaper and perceived as being better than in Canada). These findings are similar to other studies which also found that considerations related to children impacted return decisions for some (Eich-Krohm 2012; Richardson and Mckenna 2002; Chacko 2017). In addition to this, however, my findings demonstrated that for these individuals, other factors such as the perception of the health care systems of both countries, career related factors, curiosity about "adult life" in Germany, not wanting to grow old in Canada because of the harsh winters or visa regulations also played a role in these decisions. Thus, while there was an overlap of different factors impacting their return decisions, it was ultimately the birth of a child that was the determinant trigger to return for these German-German couples.

Employment opportunities or the lack thereof played an important role in the return or onward migration decisions for German migrants by choice**. In fact, receiving or being able to secure a job (offer) from Germany or elsewhere or, in one case, loosing employment at their places of destination in Canada were the tipping points for the decision of returning to Germany or moving elsewhere**. Four different scenarios were identified in this regard: First, specifically, for those, who were already thinking about returning to Germany (e.g., because they were missing their families, were starting to think about their own family planning with the wish to raise their children in Germany, and/or were missing certain cultural and culinary aspects in Germany), receiving a job offer from Germany or places close by to the German border resulted in putting the wish of returning into action. However, in some cases, these moves were also conditional to the career stages of their Canadian partners and their partners' willingness to move along. Second, receiving an unexpectedly good job offer, such as taking over shares of a business and being offered a management position, resulted in the decision of returning to Germany even if there had been plans for staying in Canada

longer/long-term. This links back to the idea of chance which I explored in the first analysis chapter and highlights that unexpected events can result in changes to migration and settlement plans. Third, for some of those who saw their stay in Canada as a good opportunity to advance their careers, these career considerations also impacted their decisions to return to Germany or move on to a different country that offered them the best perceived possibilities for continuing their career paths. This confirms the findings of other studies which highlight the importance of the perceived possibilities for career advancement for mobility decisions (Bauder 2015, 85; Raghuram 2013; H. Alberts 2017; Van Mol and Timmerman 2014; Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015; Tharenou and Seet 2014). Fourth, and finally, the experience of job insecurity which was caused by losing one's job multiple times and also resulted in financial insecurities and not being able to attain the wished lifestyle for the family caused a process of re-negotiating and re-evaluating initial migration intentions and resulted in the decision to return to Germany although the initial plan had been to move to Canada on a permanent level.

The experience of breaking-up with one's partner was also identified as a trigger that started a process of re-negotiating and -evaluating migration decisions which eventually resulted in a return to Germany. This presents an interesting addition to other studies which highlight family or relationship related factors for return or onward migration decisions (H. Alberts 2017; Eich-Krohm 2012; Chacko 2017; Konzett-Smoliner 2016; Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration 2015) but with the exception for Yanasmayan (2015) do not specifically refer to break-ups. As with the two other triggers that were found, breaking-up was however not the only reason for this decision but it was also impacted by others, including missing family and friends, not wanting to grow old in Canada because of the perception that old age protection was not as good there as in Germany, employment related factors, the prospect of living in the francophone parts of Canada without proper French skills as well as the obstacle of having to apply for permanent residency.

Thus, overall, return or onward decisions were impacted by multiple different and overlapping factors that were related to family, employment/career, legal status and social security considerations as well as cultural aspects and the life stages of my interviewees as well as their partners' or families. This is in line with other studies which also highlight that migration decisions (both immigration and return migration) are impacted by a multitude of different overlapping factors and reasons as well as individual characteristics and stages in one's life course (Steiner 2019; Chen 2017; Yanasmayan 2015). **However, more importantly, my findings demonstrated that while return or onward movement decisions were impacted by different and often overlapping factors, it was often only when specific life course events happened which either resulted in transitions (e.g., transition to parenthood) or turning points (e.g., an unexpected job offer) that these decisions were put into action.** Thus, these life course events can be seen as the ultimate triggers behind these movements.

The second part of the chapter focused on the lived experiences of German migrants by choice upon their return to Germany or their onward movements to other countries, processes which have only gotten sparse attention in research literature so far. Thus, the findings of this part of the chapter present an important contribution to the research literature and the understanding of return and onward movements of migrants by choice. **It was demonstrated that these movements implied many of the same steps and procedures as their moves to Canada had and for many these moves meant having to rebuild their lives completely**. Specifically, four spheres of this re-building process were identified and examined in more detail, namely, a) deciding on destinations and finding accommodation, b) going through a phase of reverse culture shock, c) (re-)establishing social networks, and d) re-integrating into the labour market.

The cities where German migrants by choice moved to upon their return or onward movements were either determined by the location of their pre-arranged jobs (i.e., moving to

the city where their new workplace was located or close by) or by the desire of wanting to be close to one's parents and/or parents-in-law. Two different strategies regarding housing in their places of destination were identified: First, moving into temporary housing arrangements which allowed to search for more permanent places of living at their places of destination and were thus seen as a transitional phase only. Second, moving to houses or apartments which were seen as places to stay in on a more permanent basis and which had often been arranged with the help of parents or parents-in-law while still residing in Canada. Regardless of the housing arrangements upon return or onward movements, housing trajectories were sometimes continued and, in these cases, specific place-based criteria that fitted their individual needs and desired lifestyles impacted housing choices**. These housing strategies and behaviours are similar to those that my interviewees applied when they moved to Canada. They also present and interesting contribution to the literature on return or onward migration as to the best of my knowledge, housing arrangements and strategies have not been explored so far**.

Confirming the findings of other studies (Tharenou and Seet 2014; Andreason and Kinneer 2005; Morano-Foadi 2005; Barrett and Mosca 2013; A. Butcher 2004) **those of my interviewees who moved back to Germany also reported going through a phase of reverse culture shock even though they returned to their home country where they had grown up and experienced their socialization**. During their time in Canada, they had internalized many of the social rules and norms (e.g., regarding social interactions) and, thus, found it hard to readjust to those that were common in Germany. As a result of this, many highlighted that they experienced Germans as unfriendly, grumpy, or only thinking about their own advantages among other factors, upon their return or were struggling with other factors such as punctuality or different hierarchy structures. Not only did these differences require a process of re-adjusting to German social rules and norms which was only achieved over time but for some these differences also resulted in feeling foreign in Germany when first arriving back there. However,

it is important to highlight that this experience of going through a phase of reverse culture shock was not the case for everyone. **Especially those, who had moved back and forth between Canada (several times) before did not report going through a revers culture shock.** This hints at the acquisition of cultural or mobility capital which helps individuals to navigate these situations in a better way the more they participate in them.

Returning to Germany or moving onward to other countries also meant that my interviewees had to **invest some time and effort into either re-establishing their social networks upon return to their places of destination and/or having to start building themselves a new social network altogether**. Depending on where my interviewees moved to and if they could draw on pre-existing contacts at these places or not, these processes varied in length. This complements other studies which for example find that the processes of social re-integration take longer and are more challenging then expected and can also result in feelings of exclusion or non-belonging (Dürrschmidt 2016; Konzett-Smoliner 2016). Moreover, those who did not return to Germany but moved to cities in other countries also faced language barriers as challenges in this process which sometimes resulted in them mainly socializing with other internationals. **In addition to these findings, my research, also made contributions to the understanding of how returnees or onward migrants (re-)establish their social networks.** Specifically, many interviewees, irrespective of whether they returned to Germany or moved elsewhere, highlighted that they used strategies such as joining sports teams, choirs, different groups, or other activities to (re-)establish their social networks. The neighbourhoods that my interviewees moved to and/or specific places in these neighbourhoods (e.g., playgrounds) were also mentioned as important places to meet new people. Thus, many of my interviewees utilized similar strategies to those they had used at their places of destination in Canada to build up their social networks again.

Regarding my interviewees' reintegration into the labour market at their places of destination upon their return or onward movements it was found that finding employment

seemed to be relatively uncomplicated. **In fact, many already had secured positions before they moved to these places or were able to find employment within a short amount of time**. Those who were not yet working had either only recently arrived and were still in the process of applying for positions which they were optimistic to obtain or had chosen to not work for a while due to childcare considerations. This contrasts with other studies which found that returnees can sometimes face difficulties in finding adequate jobs and being able to use their acquired skills from abroad (Chen 2017; A. White 2014b; Konzett-Smoliner 2016). In addition to this, it was also identified that **return or onward movements were seen as a possibility by some to re-orient their working careers slightly or to try out something new**. Finally, as when moving to Canada, it was also demonstrated that **several interviewees had to go through a phase of re-adjusting to their new working environment regarding the ways of communication and interaction with each other which presented them with some challenges initially**. These points have to the best of my knowledge not been explored by other studies yet.

The third and last part of this chapter analysed the future mobility intentions of those interviewees who had returned to Germany or moved onward to another country after their stays in Canada. It became clear that most of them kept the door open for a future move either back to Canada or to another country and some had even either tried to find new possibilities to move abroad and/or had already moved another time. **Four different factors were identified as impacting (this openness to) future movements, namely a) being ready to consider future possibilities that might come up and/or continuing the practice of year-by-year planning, b) dissatisfaction with the German academic system paired with lifestyle considerations (for those working in academia), c) the life stages of my interviewees and family considerations, d) the non-fulfillment of pre-return expectations**.

Regarding the first, several interviewees highlighted that they were generally open to moving again in the future if a possibility to do so would come up but did not have any concrete

plans right now. These interviewees often continued to employ a “we shall see” attitude and employing a practice of year-by-year planning which have been identified in previous chapters as impacting the decisions to leave and stay.

Regarding the second a few interviewees who had either returned to Germany or moved to another country emphasized that their dissatisfaction with the German academic system, e.g., the lack of/limited possibilities to obtain permanent positions and the insecurities that came with this, motivated them to either search for possibilities to move abroad again or resulted in them not wanting to return to Germany. While finding stable and secure positions which would allow them to advance their academic careers would be the most determining factors for their future moves, these individuals however also underlined the importance of lifestyle considerations for such moves. Again, this can be linked back to the literature on academic mobility which emphasizes the importance of career development factors for the decision to be internationally mobile (Bauder 2015, 85; Raghuram 2013; H. Alberts 2017; Van Mol and Timmerman 2014). However, it also specifically underlines that it is not only career factors but also the dissatisfaction with the German academic system that functions as a motivator for leaving Germany or not returning there.

Regarding the third, it was identified that the different life stages at which interviewees found themselves impacted future moves. Specifically, it was demonstrated that some, namely those who did not have any attachments in form of, for example, owning property or having children, decided to take up another opportunity of moving abroad, while for others, who had started their own family, it seemed more unlikely that they would move abroad again in the future considering that such moves were perceived as becoming more difficult with children.

Finally, regarding the fourth and final factor, it was demonstrated that the non-fulfillment or pre-return expectations, for example in terms of family and friendship ties, but also experiencing difficulties in adjusting back to life in Germany because of experiencing culture shock, resulted in the wish to move again in the future. This is in line with other studies

that show that experiencing difficulties and feelings of non-belonging upon return as well as the non-fulfillment of remigration goals can result in the decision or wish to re-migrate again (Abdelhady 2008; Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Tsuda 2003; A. White 2014b; Ralph 2009; Konzett-Smoliner 2016).

10.5 Conclusion of the Chapter

To conclude, this chapter identified three different triggers that resulted in the return or onward movement of German migrants by choice who had previously lived in Canada, namely the birth of a child, employment (i.e., receiving an (unexpected) job offer from Germany or elsewhere, loosing employment, career stages) and relationship break-up. However, while these were the main triggers behind their return or onward migrations, it is important to highlight that as with emigration decisions, other factors that often overlapped also impacted these decisions. These included factors relate to family, employment/career, legal status, social security, cultural aspects, and my interviewees life stages. **Overall, these findings highlight the importance that major life course events which, for example, result in transitions from one life stage to another or in turning points in individuals' life trajectories have on the return or onward movements of German migrants by choice**. Often these events are related to family or relationship considerations and, thus, underlined the relevance of emotional, affective, or relational factors in migration movements. While employment which is often related to a more economic understanding of migration movements, was also identified as one of the factors causing return or onward movements it is crucial to underline that these employment-oriented factors were often (though not always) not associated with the improvement of one's financial situation but rather related to the opportunity to advance one's career or chance (i.e., receiving an unexpected job offer).

Moreover, this chapter explored the lived experiences of German migrants by choice at their places of destination upon their return or onward movements. It demonstrated that while

their experiences differed depending on whether it was their first time returning or moving onward or not or whether they returned to cities/regions where they had lived before or moved to other places, these movements involved many of the same organizational and social processes than their initial moves to Canada had and often required them to rebuild their lives. This process involved four distinct spheres, i.e., deciding on destinations and finding accommodations, experiencing revers culture shock, (re-)establishing social networks and re-integrating into the labour market. **Overall, these findings do not only contribute to the very limited research on the return or onward movements of migrants by choice but more importantly, they also demonstrate that although it is often assumed that especially return movements should be relatively uncomplicated as individuals move back to a country they are familiar with, they still face challenges and hidden frictions which impact their lived experiences. Moreover, these findings raise the importance of considering other levels than just the (trans)national, as it was demonstrated that the specific places of destination (i.e., regions, cities) impacted the return or onward movement experiences to a significant extent**.

Finally, the last part of this chapter demonstrated that most of those German migrants by choice who returned or moved onward displayed a general openness to future movements abroad or had already undertaken such moves or attempted to do so. This openness was impacted by four different factors, i.e., employing a "we-shall-see" attitude and/or continuing year-by-year planning, dissatisfaction with the German academic system, family and life stages, and the non-fulfillment of pre-return expectations. **Overall, these findings demonstrate that the idea of mobility/being mobile played an important role in the lives of my interviewees even after their returns or onward movements and was not only kept alive but put (or attempted to put) into action by some**. Thus, the return or onward movements of my interviewees did not necessarily present an endpoint to their migration trajectories but rather another point on these trajectories that might or might not continue in the future further

underlining the importance of understanding migration as an ongoing process that changes and evolves over time.

11 Discussion

The previous four chapters presented the analysis of my research data and highlighted the most important findings for the different topics explored in each of them. This chapter brings these findings together by proposing a model to conceptualize the migration-decision making processes of migrants by choice which helps to obtain a better understanding of their movements and the factors impacting them. It then discusses the wider implementations of this model and my overall findings for research on migration in general. It also presents some reflections on how these findings can help to inform policy makers to implement policies that more accurately reflect the actual behaviour of migrants. To do so, five specific contributions that this dissertation makes are discussed in more detail, namely the importance of a) challenging the sedentary bias in migration studies, b) moving away from a strictly national and transnational perspective on migration movements, c) considering the lived experiences as well as the challenges and hidden frictions of highly skilled migration movements, d) challenging a purely economic or political understanding of migration processes and e) exploring the dissonance between policy intentions and the actual behavior of migrants.

11.1 Conceptualization of Migration Decision-Making Processes of Migrants by Choice

Before presenting the model that I propose to conceptualize the migration decision-making processes, it is important to briefly reiterate some of the most important findings of this dissertation which have informed the development of this model.

11.1.1 Experiences During the Different Stages of Migration Trajectories and Processes of Negotiating Belonging and Integration

Regarding their lived experiences during the different stages of their migration trajectories and their processes of negotiating belonging and integration (research question one), it is important to highlight that overall, the **different stages of the migration trajectories of German migrants by choice were similar** and involved many of the same organisational and social processes that they had to go through. Thus, irrespective of whether they moved to their places of destination in Canada, returned to Germany or moved onward to another country they had to go through a **phase of (re-)establishing and (re-)building their lives**. Moreover, and contrary to common perceptions that the migration and integration processes of migrants by choice are uncomplicated because they possess high social, human, cultural, and economic capital, these migrants too **faced (often unexpected) challenges and hidden frictions** during these phases of (re-)establishing and (re-)building their lives. While the strategies they employed to overcome these were similar during all stages of their migration trajectories, these strategies as well as the extent to which they experienced such challenges and hidden frictions were impacted by **place-specific factors** related to their local places of living, e.g., the regions, cities, or neighbourhoods they were living in rather than just to Canada, Germany, or other countries. Moreover, and closely linked to the above, places and spaces across different scales (e.g., regions, cities, neighbourhoods, specific places in neighbourhoods, houses/apartments, and even symbolic spaces) remained important for the lived experiences in their day-to-day life and specifically their experiences of **belonging and integration**. German migrants by choice can thus not be seen as being completely detached from places as is sometimes suggested by the literature on mobile individuals. Therefore, to obtain a better understanding of the lived experiences of migrants by choice in general, it is important for research to **explore other levels than just the (trans)national**, a point that I will get back to later in this chapter.

11.1.2 Leave – Stay – Return: Factors Impacting Migration Decisions

Regarding their decisions to leave, stay, return, or move onward (research question two), it is important to highlight that the reasons lying behind these decisions of migrants by choice were motivated by a **variety of different and overlapping factors** (e.g., family/relationship considerations, employment/career, life stages, language skills, lifestyle considerations, social security, or cultural aspects) as well as a general willingness (or perceived necessity) of gaining international experience and/or wanting to continue migration trajectories. However, these movements only happened if in addition to these factors **specific triggers** were present. For moves to Canada these triggers were related to **love, chance and chance encounters as well as dreams,** whereas return or onward movements were triggered by major life course events that resulted in phases of transition or turning points and were related to the **birth of a child, employment (e.g., receiving an unexpectedly good job offer) and relationship break-up**. Finally, decisions to prolong their stays at their places of destination in Canada were often related to the **positive lived experiences** they made at their places of destination which were closely linked to the place attachments and feelings of home and belonging they formed to these places. Based on these findings it became obvious that the reasons and motivations lying behind the decisions of migrants by choice to leave, stay, return, or move onward were predominantly impacted by **emotional, affective, relational, and ideational factors as well as chance**. While economic factors did play a role, these were often related to prospects of career advancements rather than wanting to improve one's financial situation. Therefore, it is important that theory-making explaining migration movements moves away from a purely economic and political understanding of migration and considers these harder to capture "human" aspects of migration processes as discussed in section 11.2.4.

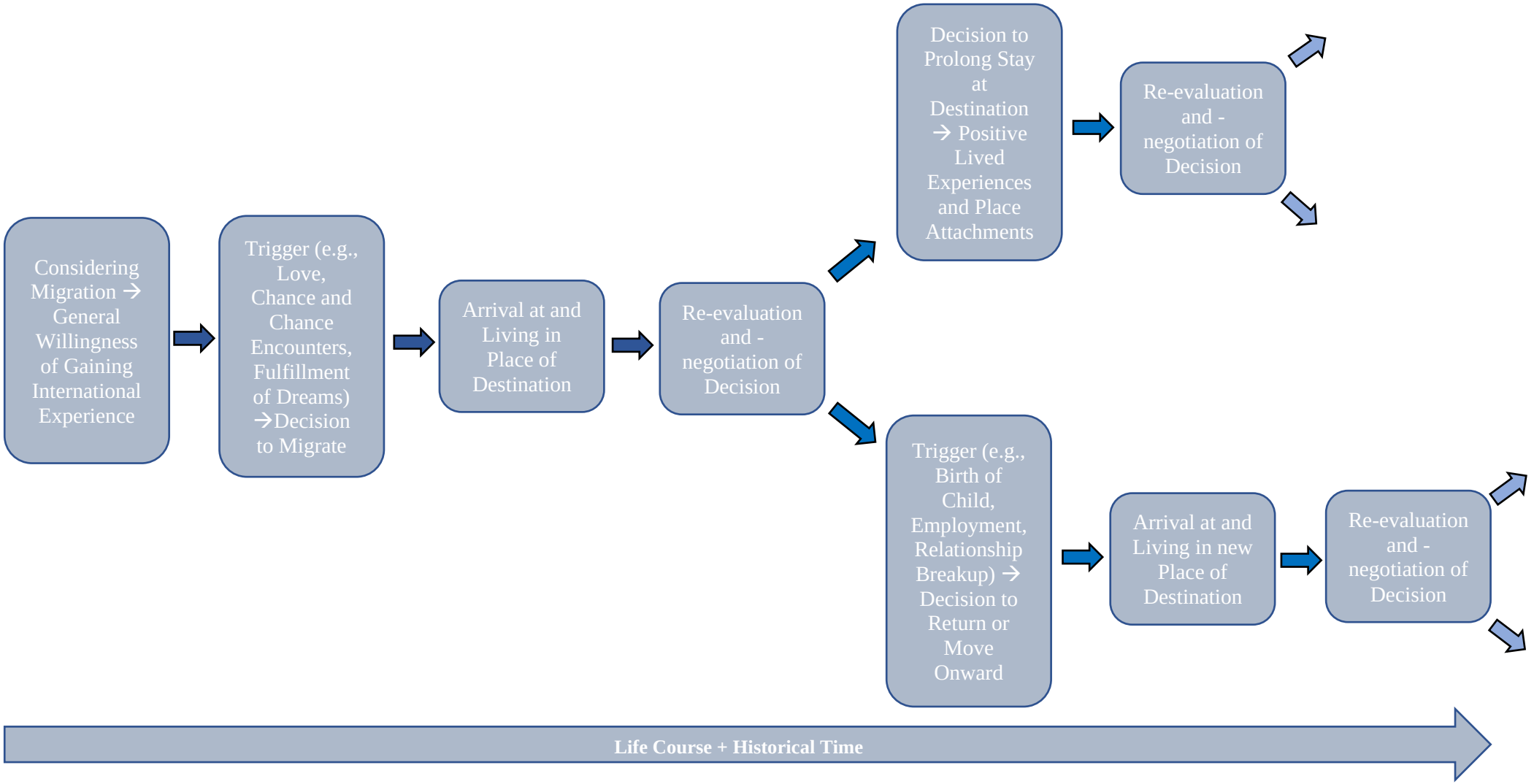
Moreover, it is important to highlight that the decisions to leave, stay, return, or move onward were often made in **ongoing processes**. As such, German migrants by choice predominantly applied a "**we shall see" attitude** and employed strategies of **year-by-year**

planning during which their migration decisions were re-evaluated and -negotiated over time and could result in changes to their initial migration intentions. These practices were frequently also kept alive even during return or onward movements. The idea of **mobility thus formed an important and ongoing part of the lives** of German migrants by choice even during phases of stasis. This was also reflected by the fact that their moves to and from Canada often did neither present the starting nor the end point of their migration trajectories but rather only one step on these trajectories. Moreover, their actual immigration processes and their legal status trajectories closely reflect these ongoing processes of decision-making as German migrants by choice often underwent a **step-by-step immigration** process to Canada during which they only transformed their temporary status to a permanent one over time, thus contributing to the blurring of boundaries between temporary and permanent migration. Finally, it also became obvious that obtaining a more permanent status or citizenship in Canada did not necessarily represent a commitment to the country but also needed to be understood as a possibility or a strategy that gave them the **security and flexibility of having all options** of leaving, staying, returning, or moving onward at their disposal.

11.1.3 Proposed Model for Conceptualizing the Migration Decision-Making Processes of Migrants by Choice

Based on these findings, I propose the following model to conceptualize the migration-decision making processes of migrants by choice:

Figure 2: Conceptualization of the Migration Decision-Making Process of Migrants by Choice



The first step of the model, i.e., considering migrating, corresponds to their general willingness to move or to be internationally mobile which can be caused by a variety of different and overlapping factors as indicated above. The second step indicates that for a migration movement to happen, there needs to be a concrete trigger present. The third step presents the phase of arriving and settling at their new places of destination in other countries during which they have to re-build their lives. The fourth step indicates that migrants by choice often re-evaluate and -negotiate their initial migration decisions during their stays abroad. This process can either take place in an ongoing and yearly practice, or, in some cases this process might only be activated when these migrants go through a significant experience after having lived at their places of destination for a longer period.

This process of re-evaluation and -negotiation can then either result in the decision to prolong one's stay at the places of destination or the decision to return or move onward. As indicated above, the former is often impacted by positive lived experiences at places of destination while the latter is impacted by multiple and overlapping factors but will be put into action only when a specific trigger is present. If migrants by choice decide to prolong their stays, they might then go through another phase of re-evaluating and -negotiating their decisions, whereas those who decide to return or move onward go through another phase of arriving and living at their new places of destination during which they have to (re-)establish their lives and which might then be followed by another phase of re-evaluation and -negotiation and so forth.

The arrow underneath indicates that these processes take place over the course of their lives and are interlinked with other trajectories of these migrants' life courses, e.g., their family, education, employment, or housing trajectories. Moreover, it signifies the interlinkage of these processes with the historical time in which they take place, i.e., the outer circumstances that might impact them, such as immigration policies.

Overall, this model allows to explore the migration movements of migrants by choice as ongoing processes which change and evolve over their life courses and can result in multiple different outcomes including the decisions to prolong stays, return to their country of origin or to move elsewhere. Moreover, it allows to consider that these migrants often go through several stages of the processes indicated as they are often highly mobile and move more than once in their lives.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the reasons and triggers that my research identifies might not be the only ones that impact the decisions of migrants by choice to leave, stay, return, or move onward. Specifically, the triggers resulting in movements may change over time and might not only be related to significant life course events (as was the case among the German migrants by choice that I interviewed) but also to outer circumstances. One may only think about the impact that a global pandemic, such as we are currently living through with Covid-19, might have on these migration experiences and decision-making processes. However, they do indicate that these reasons and triggers are predominantly related to emotional, affective, relational, and ideational factors and, thus, underline the importance of moving away from a purely economic and political understanding of migration movements toward one that includes the human perspectives of these moves as well.

11.2 Implementations of the Findings for Research in Migration and Policy Makers

The above model and my overall research findings make important contributions to the study of migration in five regards: First, by allowing to analyse and interpret migration as an ongoing process, it challenges the sedentary bias which is still present in many studies and which assumes that migration is a one-time event and automatically results in the long-term settlement of immigrants. Second, it questions the use of purely national or transnational frameworks in migration studies by highlighting the importance of lived experiences at migrants' places of

destination which may involve multiple different places and spaces across different scales. Third, and closely linked to this aspect, it underlines the importance of paying attention to the challenges and hidden frictions both at places of destination and upon return. Fourth, it advocates for a conceptualization of migration processes that does not only pay attention to the structural and often economic or political factors impacting migration movements but also considers the human aspects of these movements and acknowledges that they might be impacted by emotional, ideational, relational and affective factors as well as chance. Fifth and finally, it underlines the dissonance that exists between policy intentions and the actual behaviour of migrants. These five points are discussed in more detail below.

11.2.1 Challenging the Sedentary Bias in Migration Studies

In today's public debates and discourses migration is still often associated with the idea of individuals immigrating to a country with the intention of settling there permanently which requires them to be integrated and incorporated in the host society. This reflects what Ley and Kobayashi (2005, 112) refer to as "the historic immigration narrative of departure, arrival and assimilation". This sedentary bias is not only present in public debates and discourses but can also still be found in much of the research around migration studies. Faist (2000, 19), for example, highlights that this bias is present in most migration theories, as they assume "that human beings are inherently sedentary". This is also underlined by other authors who emphasize the "sedentarist metaphysics" that researchers draw on regarding both the theoretical as well as the analytical perspectives they apply in their studies resulting in a static conceptualization of migration (Malkki 1992; Cresswell 2012). Although, as Hugo (2014, 93) highlights, "there has been a significant paradigm shift" towards the use of a transnational perspective over the past two decades, as a result of this sedentary bias "[t]he bulk of research into migration is still concerned with destinations and issues related to the more or less permanent settlement and adjustment of immigrants in the destination." Others likewise

highlight this focus on “fixed locations” in migration research which results in studies focusing on the experiences of migrants at places of origin and destination but rarely, for example, taking into consideration the experiences they make during their journeys to another place (Schapendonk and Steel 2014, 262; Schwarz 2020; Vertovec 2009). This sedentary bias is not only found in studies on immigration but is also at the forefront of many studies exploring return migration which often conceptualize the “return ‘home’ as a one-way movement” that results in permanent settlement in countries of origin upon return (Parutis 2014, 159).

In line with the literature on transnationalism (Basch, Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994; Schiller, Basch, and Blanc 1995; Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999; Faist 2000; Vertovec 2007; 2009; Bauböck and Faist 2010) and the mobility turn (Urry 2000; 2002; 2007; Cresswell 2012), my dissertation challenged this sedentary bias and contributed to a more holistic understanding of migration which analyses it as an ongoing process that changes and evolves over one’s life course and can include both moments of mobility and stasis. However, while both studies applying a transnational and a mobility perspective contribute to an understanding of migration as a more fluid and dynamic process that does not necessarily end in the permanent settlement of migrants in their places of destination, my dissertation went beyond these insights as it focused on conceptualizing migration decision-making processes as ongoing processes, something that to the best of my knowledge has not been done so far.

Let me explain this in more detail: Studies applying a transnational perspective highlight that migration creates social spaces and networks that transcend national boundaries and connect places of origins and destinations. However, these studies often focus on how migrants participate in transnational activities such as sending remittances (Eckstein and Najam 2013; Eckstein 2010; Kushnirovich 2021), how they participate in homeland politics (R. Waldinger 2014; R. D. Waldinger and Green 2016; Itzigsohn and Villacrés 2008), how they stay connected with their kin in their countries of origin or elsewhere who form part of the same diasporic group (B. L. Grace 2019; Cressey 2006), how they participate in return visits to their homelands

(Koppenfels, Mulholland, and Ryan 2015; King and Christou 2011; Tsuda and Song 2019; Chang, Sam, and Jackson 2017) or how they negotiate their belongings both to their homelands and the receiving societies to which they move to (Mirza 2013; Ehrkamp and Leitner 2006; Solano et al. 2020). Thus, while applying a transnational perspective acknowledges that moving to another country does not necessarily mean that the movement of people, goods, ideas etc. ends in a process of permanent settlement and cutting ties with one's country of origin, it is mainly occupied with the connections that are created through these movements and how these are maintained, negotiated, or participated in. Research on transnationalism does however not specifically focus on or explain how these transnational social spaces, ties, and activities impact (future) migration decision-making processes.

Likewise, research embedded in the mobility paradigm has contributed in important ways to an understanding of migration as an ongoing process that can involve multiple moves of varying length between and across different countries, regions, cities, neighbourhoods etc. As such, temporary movements that blur the traditional understanding of travel, work and migration, such as those associated with youth travel (e.g., backpackers, working holiday makers) (Allon, Anderson, and Bushell 2008; Thorpe 2012; Richards 2015), lifestyle migrants (Oliver 2011; Benson and Osbaldiston 2014b; Kordel and Weidinger 2019; Benson and O'Reilly 2016a) or academics and young professionals (Vorheyer 2016; Bauder 2015; Favell 2008), are often at the forefront of studies applying a mobility perspective. Thus, the main focus of these studies is on the mobile character of the lives of individuals but not so much on how this translates to the need to also conceptualize the mobility decision-making process as a mobile and ongoing process that changes and evolves over time.

The model that I proposed above fills this gap and allows to understand in a better way how migration decisions are formed over time and in ongoing processes, how they change and evolve and how they can result in multiple movements across and between countries. Specifically, it demonstrates that migrants might go through several phases of forming

migration decisions over their life courses which might result in both decisions to leave or to stay. This presents an important contribution because, as demonstrated throughout this dissertation, migrants by choice often do not necessarily have any fixed ideas regarding the destination and the duration of their stays abroad nor do they necessarily have the intentions to settle elsewhere permanently. Rather they apply a "we shall see" attitude and leave with an open mind of wanting to try out something new and the security of knowing that they can always and at any point return to their country of origin or potentially move elsewhere. Consequently, they do not necessarily form their migration decisions beforehand, but these only evolve over time and are impacted by the different circumstances and conditions (both material and more importantly personal and emotional ones as well as chance), they encounter along the way. Even for those who do migrate with the intentions of settling permanently at their places of destination, these intentions might change over time because of the circumstances or conditions encountered. As a result of this, they often apply year-by-year planning a process during which their migration decision-making processes are being re-evaluated and -negotiated in an ongoing matter which requires a dynamic and mobile conceptualization of these decision-making processes. These findings are similar to those of ongoing research by Bélanger, Lefévre and Fleury who explore the migration projects of French people who migrated to Québec and likewise underline the ongoing character of migration movements. Specifically, they identify four different migration projects, i.e., exploration, circulation, settlement, and return. However, they stress that these projects are not exclusionary but rather fluid as they evolve over time and thus, one project can transform into another.

In these ongoing migration decision-making processes, migrants by choice are confronted not only with the decisions of leaving and moving elsewhere but also with the decision of staying which is captured in my proposed model. This last point, i.e., the fact that the proposed model also allows for the understanding of decisions to stay, is important to underline because while the focus of migration theories is often on explaining why people move

elsewhere, it is equally as important to understand why people decide to stay at a place (Hammer and Tamas 1997) or to put it in the words of Borozan and Bojanic (2015, 66): “There is a lack of knowledge as to why migration units, in spite of open opportunities and tendencies (as well as encouraging activities and measures taken by particular areas to draw people into their area), remain in their places of living and do not emigrate.” This is not only important in regard to emigration versus stay decisions in countries of origin as highlighted by Borozan and Bojanic (2015) but I would argue, this is equally as important for return or onward movement versus stay decisions at places of destination.

My research and the proposed model allow to consider this by highlighting the importance of places, specifically the lived experiences of migrants by choice at their places of destination, and how these impact decisions of staying or leaving. The importance of place and the lived experiences of migrants by choice is closely connected to the next important contribution of this dissertation and the proposed model namely, questioning the use of purely national or transnational frameworks in migration studies.

11.2.2 Questioning Methodological (Trans)Nationalism and Highlighting the Importance of Other Places and Spaces

In the early 2000s scholars such as Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller started to criticize the use of methodological nationalism in the social sciences in general and the field of migration studies specifically (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller 2003). It was argued that by embedding research within the framework of nation states, nation states become the naturalized “container of social processes” which “pre-determine[] and define[] certain objects of sociological enquiry” (Anderson 2019, 3). This meant that other important forces, e.g., the global economy or supra-national actors, as well as other units for analysis, such as e.g., “kinship groups, local communities or organizations” (Faist 2004, 52), impacting migration movements were ignored. As an alternative to nation states as the point of

reference and to counteract methodological nationalism, migration scholars increasingly started to draw on transnationalism as a theoretical and analytical framework (Anderson 2019). Transnationalism, as highlighted above, allows scholars to explore social spaces and networks that go beyond nation-states and, thus, to capture the multiple links that exist across and between migrants' countries of origin and settlement. In the years that followed, transnationalism became one of the central ideas guiding migration research (Vertovec 2009) and some authors even talk about a methodological transnationalism that has emerged (Amelina and Faist 2012; Anderson 2019).

My dissertation took a critical position both toward methodological nationalism and methodological transnationalism. This is not to say that research on migration should not consider aspects related to the national or transnational spheres of migrants' lives as aspects related to these two spheres do most certainly impact the experiences that migrants make as well as the decisions they form; rather it should be interpreted as a cautionary reminder that other scales of places and spaces that go beyond the (trans)national also need to be considered to obtain a more holistic understanding of migration decisions and experiences. After all, migrants' lives do also consist of many processes that are not inherently (trans)national or linked to their home country and their country of destination but to other geographical scales and levels (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006). These scales and levels can, for example, refer to regions, cities, neighbourhoods, specific places in neighbourhoods, houses, apartments, or even specific items that form important parts of migration processes and the lived experiences of migrants. To capture these different spaces and places, in this dissertation I drew on the conceptualization of translocal geographies as developed by Brickell and Datta (2016).

Applying this perspective allowed me to explore the more mundane experiences of migrants' everyday lives which are located in these places and spaces but are often overlooked in research on mobile individuals because it is assumed that they form part of a "placeless elite" that is freed from place attachments (Meier 2015a, 1; van Riemsdijk and Wang 2017a;

Beaverstock 2005). Thus, in line with other scholars, my dissertation contributed to the still very limited but slowly growing literature which highlights the importance that places continue to hold in the everyday life and practices of migrants (Meier 2015a; K. Walsh 2006; Fast and Lindell 2016; Plöger 2017) and highly mobile individuals such as students, backpackers or global nomads (Allon, Anderson, and Bushell 2008; Kannisto 2017; Germann Molz 2008). Specifically, on the one hand, this focus allowed me to identify the social processes they underwent during their migration trajectories as well as several challenges and hidden frictions that even migrants by choice encountered and which were often related to their local places of living, an aspect that I discuss further below. On the other hand, it allowed me to obtain a better understanding of how places and spaces other than the (trans)national impact migrants' experiences of integration and belonging.

In fact, the findings of my dissertation demonstrate that processes of forming place attachments to their local places of destination were essential for migrants by choice to feel integrated and at home. Specifically, two different spheres in which place attachments were formed were identified: The first was connected to socio-cultural processes and included the adoption of social rules and norms that were not only typical for Canada but often specific to the cities/regions in which they lived, establishing daily routines as well as forming close friendships and building up a good social network. These processes contributed to creating familiarity and stability by providing them with structure, regularity, and a sense of purpose in their day-to-day lives which ultimately resulted in the feelings of being more settled, having fully arrived and being at home. They also contributed to a sense of belonging and feeling as an integrated part of society. The second was related to geographical and place-based factors and included factors related to their housing arrangements and trajectories (e.g., the arrival of belongings, moving to a specific neighbourhood, buying property) as well as their satisfaction with the cities or regions in which they were living. These factors also contributed to their

feelings of having fully arrived, identifying with these places, and developing feelings of home and belonging.

Analysing these processes of forming place attachments shifts the focus of debates around integration away from material and measurable factors such as involvement in the labour market, income levels or legal statuses categories (Bauböck 1994a) to ones that relate more to the symbolic and emotional components of integration. These more symbolic and emotional factors of integration including feelings of home and belonging have only recently been taken up in debates on migrant integration (Bertossi and Duyvendak 2012; Bertossi, Duyvendak, and Van Reekum 2012; Duyvendak 2011; Duyvendak and Scholten 2012) and are also closely related to questions around (ethnic) boundary making and shifting which discuss who is seen as part of the majority society and thus is considered as fully belonging there and who is not (Lamont and Molnár 2002; Lamont 2014; Wimmer 2013; Alba and Nee 2005). However, I argue that these questions around boundary making are less relevant for the German migrants by choice as compared to other racialized and less affluent or educated migrants because migrants by choice hold a relatively privileged position in that they are highly skilled, Caucasian and from a Western European country and are thus not (or at least to a lesser degree) identified as outsiders in Canada by others, or to put it in the words of Anderson (2019) they are not being "migrantized". This relative privilege might also explain why most of the German migrants by choice who were living in Canada emphasized that they identified themselves rather with the cities or regions in which they were living than with Canada as a country as such as they are not under the same pressure of having to demonstrate their loyalty to their host country as other groups of migrants who are seen as "less desirable".

For migrants by choice, exploring and understanding these more emotional and symbolic components of integration instead becomes important from another perspective, namely because they impact migration decisions or rather decisions to stay/prolong stays in places of destination in Canada as demonstrated throughout this dissertation. This raises critical

questions as one could argue that because of their relative privilege German migrants by choice (or migrants by choice in general) do have the possibility of taking these symbolic and emotional factors into consideration in their migration decision-making processes as they always have the possibility of returning to Germany or (depending on visa regulations) moving to another country whereas this is not necessarily the case for other less privileged groups of migrants. Thus, to state it in a slightly more exaggerated way, as long as they are happy and make positive experiences in their day-to-day lives, migrants by choice will likely stay whereas the likelihood of staying decreases if they make negative experiences.

However, it is important to highlight that this relative privilege which German migrants by choice seemingly hold did not prevent them entirely from facing challenges and hidden frictions. As highlighted above, applying the perspective of translocal geographies allowed me to identify not only the social processes involved in the different stages of their migration trajectories but also several challenges as well as hidden frictions that these migrants faced during these different stages. The findings in this regard are discussed in more detail in the next section.

11.2.3 Paying Attention to the Lived Experiences of Migrants by Choice as well as the Challenges and Hidden Frictions that They Face

Highly skilled migrants are often seen as desirable migrants who present an asset to countries because as a result of their high skill/education level and knowledge it is assumed that they can contribute in important ways to the technological and economic advancement of a country and in this way help countries to stay competitive in the global world market (Boucher and Gest 2018; Dauvergne 2016; Shachar and Hirschl 2013; Boucher 2016; Banaś 2018). Moreover, because they possess high human, social, economic, and cultural capital it is not only often assumed that they can easily integrate into their new host societies (Calhoun 2003; Ossman 2004; Metthews and Satzewich 2006; Favell 2008; Vorheyer 2016; van Riemsdijk and Wang

2017a; Plöger 2017) but also that they do not present a "burden" to a country, for example, because they do not strain the social welfare system as much as other groups of migrants (Boucher and Gest 2018; Boeri et al. 2012; Chiswick 2011; Nathan 2014). In addition to that, specifically for migrants participating in North-North movements, it is assumed that their integration is further facilitated because there are not any major cultural differences between their countries of origin and their host societies (Brooks and Waters 2011).

The findings presented in this dissertation challenge this common perception at least to some extent. While it cannot be denied that the German migrants by choice who I interviewed were privileged because, predominantly being "white Europeans", they were not migrantized to the same extent as other groups of migrants who originate from places outside of Western Europe or even Canadians who are non-Caucasian, this privilege did not protect them entirely from facing challenges and hidden frictions and they too had to go through processes of acculturation and adjusting to their new lives. Thus, while maybe the challenges they faced were not entirely the same or as severe as those that other groups of migrants face, their migration and mobility trajectories are non the less not "frictionless", but one could rather say that they represent "a differently tracked mobility [that comes] with its own costs and constrains" (M. P. Smith and Favell 2006, 15; Winter 2020). These costs and constraints should be taken seriously and warrant further research to obtain a better understanding of the migration experiences and migration decisions of highly skilled migrants and specifically migrants by choice. Here, I want to raise awareness to three different aspects linked to these observations which I think require further debate.

First, just as Smith and Favell (2006, 18) highlighted for highly skilled migrants in general, the German migrants by choice I talked to were not completely freed from "local social structures" as they too had to deal with the "'everyday' issues of housing, health, child-care, schooling and retirement". As such, they went through an initial phase of arrival at their places of destination during which they had to build up their new lives. This process was related to

four different spheres that I identified in my data, namely a) a first orientation at their places of destination, b) housing, c) social networks and d) the labour market. Thus, from this perspective, the initial experiences as well as the social processes that migrants by choice underwent upon their arrival at places of destination were similar to those that any other migrants have to go through; i.e., just like other immigrants, they too had to deal with finding employment and integrating into the labour market, establishing social networks, as well as adjusting to a new lifestyle, different cultural and language traditions, and a different administrative system (Eich-Krohm 2012; M. P. Smith and Favell 2006; Plöger 2017; Bélanger, Ouellet, and Fleury 2019; Ley 2004; M. P. Smith 2005; Conradson and Latham 2005).

To give but one example to emphasize this: The findings of my dissertation identified that several interviewees faced challenges that were related to the (non-)recognition of their foreign credentials (e.g., their foreign university degrees and/or work experiences were not recognized or valued) and/or a process of deskilling which either meant that they were not able to work in their learned profession or had to start in lower-level positions than those they had held before. While these processes have been studied extensively for migrant groups in Canada who originate from outside the "global North" (Guo 2009; 2005; 2007; Somerville and Walsworth 2010; Khan 2007; Rivas-Garrido and Koning 2019; Guo 2015; Maitra 2015; Bauder 2003) these challenges are not typically associated with migrants who move between countries of the "global North" and therefore, with few exceptions (e.g., Harvey and Beaverstock 2017), have barely been discussed in research literature. My findings however demonstrate that these processes of the non-recognition of foreign credentials and work experience as well as subsequent deskilling – which Wanner (2001, 417) refers to as the "central immigration issue of the new century not only in Canada but in all postindustrial societies receiving immigrants" – also impact immigrant groups which are not typically associated with these challenges, namely highly skilled Caucasian immigrants originating from Western European countries.

This raises questions about the usefulness of Canada's immigration policies and strategies around highly skilled immigrants or rather their subsequent integration into society especially regarding employment. While the intentions of these policies are to attract the best and brightest to secure Canada's competitiveness in the global world market and Canada's immigration system is organised in a way that favours these immigrants and makes it possible for them not only to enter the country but also to obtain a permanent resident status and even citizenship relatively easily, it seems that these efforts are then counteracted and even diminished by processes of the non-recognition of these immigrants' foreign credentials and their work experiences. Ultimately this means that these migrants cannot implement the knowledge and skills that they are equipped with and for which they were brought to the country and Canada thus suffers from a "brain loss". If this is even the case for those immigrants who are deemed the least vulnerable, then something must be wrong with the way in which Canada deals with the recognition of foreign skills and the country would do good in re-evaluating these processes to make it easier for highly skilled migrants irrespective of where they come from to get their skills recognized.

Second, the above-described factors confirm previous studies on the hidden frictions and social and emotional costs of highly skilled migrants (Richardson and Mckenna 2002; 2003; Richardson and Zikic 2007; Rashid et al. 2013; Hardwick and Tremblay 2013; Plöger 2017; Harvey and Beaverstock 2017; Mulholland and Ryan 2017). However, in addition to these findings, my dissertation also contributed to this still relatively limited literature by identifying that many of the challenges and hidden frictions that German migrants by choice experienced during their migration trajectories were related to their local places of living and the extent to which they experienced these depended, for example, on whether they lived in more rural or urban areas, in francophone or anglophone cities or neighbourhoods, or whether they returned to cities/regions in Germany where they had lived before and those who moved to cities/regions that were completely new for them. The example of establishing social

networks illustrates this nicely: Interviewees who lived in more rural places highlighted that it was harder to form close friendships because the communities they lived in were more close-knit; interviewees who lived in francophone cities or neighbourhoods and who had limited French skills underlined that their lack of/limited language skills prevented them from participating in certain free time activities; and interviewees who returned to Germany but moved to cities where they had neither previously lived in nor were close to the regions in which they had lived before emphasized that they had to start over and build up a completely new social network.

Likewise, the strategies which they applied to overcome these challenges were closely linked to place-specific factors. For example, several interviewees highlighted the importance of specific places in neighbourhoods such as playgrounds or dog parks for meeting people and forming friendships. Others pointed to the importance of housing and neighbourhoods as facilitators for meeting people, which though seemed more likely in some neighbourhoods than in others. Overall, these findings underline that many of these experiences were not only shaped by the contexts of the countries in which they resided (e.g., Canada, Germany, or other countries) but rather by factors related to their local places of living (e.g., regions, cities, or neighbourhoods). In that way, they further emphasize the point made in section 11.2.2, i.e., the importance for research on migration to explore other places and spaces than just the (trans)national when analysing migration experiences and decision-making processes to obtain a better understanding of these.

Third, my dissertation also contributed to this existing literature on the experiences and challenges of highly skilled migrants by providing more insights on the return experiences of these migrants which so far is very limited. This is especially true for the return experiences of those migrants participating in “North-North” movements for which barely any studies exist (Morano-Foadi 2005; Scheibelhofer 2005; Konzett-Smoliner 2016). This relative lack of literature might be explained by the assumption that returning to their home countries should

be relatively uncomplicated as these migrants return to an environment with which they are supposedly familiar. The findings of this dissertation however indicated that migrants by choice did not only face challenges when moving to another country but also when returning to their places of destination. In fact, just like when they moved to Canada, they had to re-build their lives upon return to Germany a process that took a lot of energy and effort and involved many of the same social processes as their initial moves to Canada.

Thus, in line with others (Richardson and Mckenna 2002, 73; Selmer 2002; Richardson and Zikic 2007), I would argue that even though it is true to some extent that individuals acquire a certain mobility capital the more they move, this does not necessarily mean that their arrival and adjustment at places of destination is unproblematic because they still have to start over and reconstruct their entire lives. To that, I would also add that this even applies for the arrival and re-adjustment upon return. This is especially true regarding the socio-emotional components of return movements related to the experiences of a reverse cultural chock and having to (re-)establish social networks as the findings of my dissertation demonstrated. This emphasizes the need to further engage with this "still under-researched field of the emotional dimension of globalization", and, specifically, "with the idea that global mobility and subsequent attempts of cosmopolitan reembedding are also maelstroms of unfulfilled utopias, false expectations and slippery belongings" (Dürrschmidt 2016, 506). For countries interested not only in encouraging the return of their own talent from abroad but also in retaining them, obtaining a better understanding of these processes and the challenges that returnees face is important. Such an understanding would allow them to develop programs which do not only aim to facilitate their return from a structural perspective but also programs that help them with the subsequent social re-embedding in their countries of origin. These programs should not only pay attention to the structural aspects of these processes of re-embedding but also the emotional aspects involved in them. This links to the next point to be discussed and to which my

dissertation contributed, namely the importance of moving away from purely economic and structural understandings of migration.

11.2.4 Moving Away from a Purely Structural and Economic Understanding of Migration

Most of the classical migration theories explain migration movements as a result of structural forces, such as the global economy or the global world order, where migration movements are driven respectively by countries' labour demands or existing or remaining power structures between countries (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014; D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998; Sassen-Koob 1981; Wallerstein 2011). Even those theories that focus on the micro or meso level often assume that individuals move for economic reasons, for example, to improve their "discounted net returns" (D. S. Massey et al. 1998, 19; Hicks 1932; Sjaastad 1962; Todaro 1969) or to diversify their household income (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014; D. S. Massey et al. 1993; 1998). Migrants are thus portrayed as either being the "victims" of structural powers or as rational actors who can make informed and calculated decisions on whether they should move from point A to point B. While both structures and individual agency do impact migration movements to a certain extent, these models/theories are simplistic in that they do not acknowledge that to understand migration both structure and agency need to be considered. Moreover, they are also simplistic because they overlook the impact of emotional, ideational, affective and relational factors on migration movements as well as that these movements can simply be the result of chance or chance encounters as has been demonstrated in my research findings.

More recent approaches to migration have picked up on this more human perspective on migration and underline the importance of paying attention to the socio-cultural dimensions of these moves, including, for example, the social relationships of migrants and their everyday experiences while being on the move (Halfacree 2004, 240; Mulholland and Ryan 2017; M. P.

Smith and Favell 2006; Benson and Osbaldiston 2014b; Eich-Krohm 2012; Vorheyer 2016; Konzett-Smoliner 2016). Others highlight factors such as self-realization or self-transformation (Scheibelhofer 2009; Andresen et al. 2014; Biemann and Andresen 2010; Peltokorpi 2009; Eich-Krohm 2012; Richardson and Mckenna 2002; 2003) as well as lifestyle considerations (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014b; Benson and O'Reilly 2016a; Oliver 2011; Bruillon 2007; Osbaldiston 2011; Gaspar 2015; Sardinha 2015) as determining drivers behind migration movements. Moreover, some studies also emphasize education and career/professional reasons which are related to prospects of career advancement rather than an increase in salary impact migration decisions (Bauder 2015, 85; Raghuram 2013; H. Alberts 2017; Van Mol and Timmerman 2014). Most importantly though, these studies and approaches emphasize that migration decisions are impacted by multiple and overlapping factors related to the above aspects.

The model for conceptualizing migration decision-making processes that I proposed above as well as the overall research findings of this dissertation are in line with these approaches and in fact captured many of these ideas. As such it was for example identified that migration decisions (including decisions to return or move onward) were impacted by a variety of different and overlapping factors which confirms the studies that have been undertaken so far. However, in addition to this my dissertation also brought to the forefront the importance of specific triggers for these moves to actually happen. This is important because while many individuals might have intentions of migrating or participating in different kinds of international mobilities which might be motivated by a variety of these above-named factors, this does not mean that everyone who has such intentions ends up moving. This is also true for return intentions, i.e., while many migrants might initially think that they will return, they often do not end up doing so, a phenomenon commonly referred to as the "myth of return". As such "intentions (…) are poor predictors of actual behaviour" (Carling and Pettersen 2014, 14). Rather, as my dissertation has demonstrated, intentions for movements are not enough but these

movements only happen once specific triggers are present. These triggers thus make the difference between wanting to move and actually moving. While it is important to acknowledge that my study might not have identified all important triggers – in fact, these triggers might change over time and depending on the life stages in which migrants find themselves as well as outer circumstances – it is interesting to notice that these triggers were predominantly unrelated to economic or political reasons but rather related to emotional, relational, ideational and affective factors (e.g., love, dreams, the birth of children, relationship break-up) as well as chance.

Particularly this last trigger, i.e., chance seems worthwhile to explore a bit more here because it is a factor that so far has barely gotten any attention in the literature around migrants by choice (Nowicka 2007; Richardson and Mckenna 2003). In fact, with few exceptions (Papadopoulou 2004; Yukseker and Brewer 2011; Collyer 2007; Schapendonk 2011; 2012; Suter 2012; Gladkova and Mazzucato 2017) chance has been left out of the debates around migration more generally. This relative "ignorance" of theorizing or at least acknowledging chance is surprising especially considering that some studies have highlighted the fact that leading a mobile lifestyle can become an important part of migrants' biographies and identities and that therefore, the destination of their moves become less important than actually being on the move (Vorheyer 2016, 59; Ossman 2004; S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark 2015; Nowicka 2007; Gomes 2019).

This is similar to my findings which indicated that migrants by choice often did not have a specific destination in mind or even the aim to emigrate elsewhere permanently but rather were driven by a desire to gain new experiences, expand their horizons and explore something new or unknown, or, in some cases to continue their migration trajectories. Considering chance then became particularly important for examining their migration trajectories because their moves as well as the destinations of their moves were often the result of random opportunities that came along their ways or chance encounters. In line with Reckwitz (2019) one could thus

argue that in a “society of singularities” where it is important to stand out and do something that others have not done yet, gaining abroad experience is seen as a way to do exactly that, i.e. to differentiate oneself from others. In this scenario the destination of these moves becomes more or less trivial because the emphasis is more on gaining this experience rather than where this is necessarily done. Chance then becomes an important determinant for understanding not only why these movements happen but also why certain destinations are chosen.

The findings of my dissertation also demonstrated that chance played an important role in the movements of other German migrants by choice. For example, even those whose moves were triggered by love often had met their Canadian partners by chance during previous experiences abroad and did not have any intentions of moving to Canada prior meeting their partners. Likewise, unexpected opportunities that came across in some cases impacted decisions to return. Thus, considering chance as a factor impacting/triggering migration movements presents an interesting and fruitful addition to the literature which future research on migration in general (not just that on highly skilled migrants and migrants by choice) should pay more attention to.

11.2.5 Dissonance between Policy Intentions and the Actual Behaviour of Migrants

The above presented findings and contributions, namely the impact of emotional, relational, affective, and ideational factors as well as chance on migration movements seem to contradict the understanding of highly skilled migrants as rational actors which is a premise that guides much of the policymaking around the attraction of these migrants. This results in a dissonance between policy intentions and the actual behaviour of migrants which I explore in this last section of this chapter.

Specifically, as has been demonstrated earlier in this dissertation, many of the policies aimed at attracting highly skilled migrants assume that as long as these migrants are offered the right incentives countries will be able to attract and retain them or to encourage their return

(Banaś 2018; Shachar and Hirschl 2013; N. Cohen and Kranz 2015; Zweig 2006; Florida 2002; 2005; 2006; Beaverstock and Hall 2012; Mosneaga and Winther 2013). However, the findings of this dissertation showed that such considerations did not seem to play a major role in the migration processes of German migrants by choice as they did not move to improve their economic standing and often did not even have a specific destination in mind but rather moved, for example, because of a desire of wanting to experience something different or because of love. Many of them also only had the intentions of moving to Canada on a temporary basis or without a specific timeframe in mind, however, knowing that they could always return to Germany. For most, their migration processes were thus more an accidental result of their life courses which evolved and changed over time rather than something that had been planned in all its entirety for a long time.

Consequently, with few exceptions their migration trajectories to and from Canada were not straightforward but rather reflected a pattern of step-by-step immigration, i.e., they moved to Canada with a temporary visa or work permit and only over time and if they were happy with the experience they made, they either prolonged their stays by extending their visa or work permits or transferred them to more permanent statuses and, in some cases, even obtained citizenship. While these migrants obviously did not act outside of migration regimes, as they were still dependent on the visa and permit options that Canada offers, it seems as if they were able to leverage from the options available. Specifically, as highlighted above, most initially either had the intentions of staying only on a temporary basis or were not sure how long they wanted to stay in Canada for. Thus, drawing on temporary modes of entry and only transferring them to more permanent statuses over time seemed to be perceived as an advantage for most rather than a disadvantage. This is because it gave them the possibility to simply try out life in Canada and see how things were going rather than having to go through the lengthy process of applying for permanent residency when they did not necessarily have intentions of staying there long-term when they first moved.

Seeing these positive aspects of step-by-step immigration is in contrast to much of the literature on two-step migration which examines this process critically because it can result in worker exploitation as migrants might be restricted to work for one employer only on whom they are then dependent to obtain the work experience needed to apply for PR status or being sponsored by them. This might result in these migrants accepting low salaries, long working hours or other precarious working conditions even if they are (highly) skilled (Lowell and Avato 2014; Bélanger, Ouellet, and Fleury 2019; González 2020; Crossman, Hou, and Picot 2020). In Canada, their situation is made further precarious by the fact that they are "ineligible for federally funded settlement services" (Gates-Gasse 2010) and that they do not have access to public health care (Bélanger, Ouellet, and Fleury 2019). This is particularly critical as countries, including Canada, increasingly draw on this process of two-step migration as a pathway for highly skilled migrants to obtain PR and a perspective to stay in the country permanently (Gates-Gasse 2010; Nakache and Dixon-Perera 2015). While, I am not arguing against these findings, it is noteworthy to highlight that in contrast of using two-step migration as a conscious strategy from the beginning to obtain PR status in Canada, for most of the German migrants by choice who I interviewed drawing on this process rather reflected/matched the change to their migration intentions which often only evolved over time. This might explain the rather positive outlook that most interviewees had regarding their legal status trajectories.

Based on these observations, it thus seems as if migrants by choice go "with the flow" so to speak. They take the opportunities that come their way or try to find opportunities for themselves to get what they want. This is also reflected in the behaviour of those who received their PR status or even took up Canadian citizenship which did not necessarily mean that these individuals planned on staying in Canada indefinitely and wanted to put down their roots there (though some did). In fact, several of the German migrants by choice that I interviewed and who returned to Germany or moved elsewhere were holding either a PR status in Canada or even citizenship when they returned to Germany or moved onwards to another country. Some

highlighted that having obtained Canadian citizenship meant that they would have the option of returning to Canada in case they were not satisfied upon returning to Germany, a phenomenon that White (2014b; 2014a) refers to as "double return" and that others have also identified among East European migrants moving to and from the UK (Parutis 2014).

This raises questions about the loyalty of these migrants to the countries to which they move. Taking up PR status and/or Canadian citizenship can thus not necessarily – or at least not only – be seen as a commitment to their host country but also needs to be interpreted as a strategy to have all options at their disposal. This seems to be in line both with the findings of the aforementioned ongoing research by Bélanger, Lefèvre and Fleury as well as with the idea of strategic citizenship which Winter, Madularea and Sauvageau (2016) explored. In fact, they found that while the term citizens of convenience – a term that refers to "[p]eople who get Canadian citizenship but lack [a] 'genuine connection' with [the] country" – is usually associated with "naturalized citizen[s], mostly non-white, non-Western and Muslim/Arab", it was in fact, those typically "the least associated with this kind of behaviour", i.e., "immigrants from Western Europe and the US" that made use of Canadian citizenship in this way (Winter, Madularea, and Sauvageau 2016). For these migrants, obtaining Canadian citizenship was mainly seen as something that was convenient to them as it made their life easier, e.g., in terms of traveling and entering/exiting the country as well as it provided them with more opportunities to flexibly decide if they wanted to stay in Canada or potentially return to Europe/the US temporarily or on a longer basis (Winter, Madularea, and Sauvageau 2016).

To conclude, migrants by choice while obviously being dependent on the migration regimes in which they move, also seem to be players of the same. As such, they seem to have the resources to successfully navigate through these systems and find the options that best work for them and their migration processes which typically blur the lines between temporary and permanent migration.

12 Conclusion

Public and political debates on migration often center around the questions of who is "deserving" of entrance and who is not and, in addition to that, who should be allowed to stay in a country on a permanent basis and thus be granted the rights to permanent residency and potentially citizenship and who should not. For example, while lower skilled migrants are needed for jobs in agriculture or other blue-collar jobs and, thus, are granted the right to enter, these immigrants are not seen as "desirable" for long-term settlement and are therefore often only allowed to stay in countries on a temporary basis without the options of transforming their status to a permanent one.

In contrast to that, highly skilled migrants have increasingly been identified as those who are deemed most "desirable and deserving" of entrance to and residence in countries because it is assumed that as a result of their high education and skill level, they will be able to make important contributions to the economic and technological development of a country and, moreover, that they will be able to easily integrate into their new host societies. In this way highly skilled migrants are not only deemed to be essential to help countries stay competitive in the global economy, but they also do not seem to present a "burden" to countries as they supposedly do not strain the social welfare system of these countries which makes them further attractive. As a result of this, many countries have increasingly participated in the so-called race for the best and brightest, implementing migration policies not only to attract but also to retain these individuals as well as to encourage their return.

This dissertation explored the mobility trajectories of one group belonging to this category of highly desired immigrants which so far has gotten little attention in research literature, namely young and highly skilled and/or creative individuals moving between countries of the "global North". I referred to these individuals as *migrants by choice* because their migration decisions are self-initiated, voluntarily undertaken and often determined on a more personal level rather than being forced by outer circumstances or by an unfavorable

situation in their country of origin. Moreover, these migrants often leave with the realistic goal to potentially and eventually return to their country of origin or move elsewhere.

Thus, on the one hand, their migration processes question the usability of classical migration theories which predominantly put economic and political factors at the forefront of explaining migration processes. On the other hand, they also challenge the traditional understanding of migration as a one-time event that automatically results in the permanent settlement in the countries they move to as well as the binary construction of mobility and stasis that dominates much of the migration literature.

Therefore, in this dissertation, I argued that to obtain a better understanding of the experiences of migrants by choice as well as their migration trajectories, a more holistic approach that conceptualizes migration as an ongoing process that changes and evolves over time was needed. Moreover, I argued that such an approach needed to pay attention to both the reasons that caused these movements initially as well as the lived experiences of these migrants in their day-to-day live and the place attachments they form during the different stages of their migration trajectories, because these individuals hold the privilege to decide – relatively unrestricted – whether to stay at a place or to move elsewhere. Therefore, I assumed that their experiences of integrating into their (local) places of destinations and feeling at home there might impact their decisions of whether to leave, stay, return, or move onward to a significant degree.

These working hypotheses were mainly found to be true throughout this dissertation. In fact, by using the example of German migrants by choice moving to and from Canada as a case study and examining their experiences during different stages of their migration trajectories (e.g., the pre-movement phase, the phase of settling down and living in the receiving society and the phase of return or onward movements) several important conclusions could be drawn both regarding their lived experiences as well as their migration decision-making processes:

First, the reasons and motivations lying behind the decisions of migrants by choice to leave, stay, return, or move onward are predominantly impacted by emotional, affective, relational, and ideational factors as well as chance. While economic factors do play a role, these are often related to prospects of career advancement rather than wanting to improve one's financial situation. Moreover, while the migration decisions of migrants by choice are impacted by a variety of different and overlapping factors, these movements are only put to action if specific triggers are present.

Second, mobility forms an important part of the lives of migrants by choice and their migration trajectories thus often involve several shorter and longer movements between different countries. As such, these migration trajectories need to be seen as ongoing processes that change and evolve over time. However, their migration trajectories do not only need to be understood as ongoing processes because they involve multiple moves but also because their migration intentions and decisions often evolve over time and/or are re-evaluated and -negotiated in ongoing processes which can result in decisions to prolong stays at places of destination, return to one's country of origin or move to another country altogether.

Third, irrespective of the stage of migration (e.g., whether they move to a different country or return to their home country) migrants by choice have to go through a phase of (re-)establishing and (re-)building their lives at the places they move to. During these phases they often face different challenges and hidden frictions which are impacted by place-specific factors related to their local places of living. Thus, migrants by choice are not completely detached from places, rather places and spaces across different scales (e.g., regions, cities, neighbourhood, specific places in neighbourhoods, houses/apartments etc.) remain important for their lived experiences in their day-to-day lives and specifically their experiences of belonging and integration.

Fourth, and closely linked to the last point, while positive lived experiences of migrants by choice at their places of destination and specifically the place attachments as well as feelings

of home and belonging that they form to these places impact decisions to prolong their stays, they do not seem to have an impact on return or onward movement decisions which are instead triggered by major live course events.

These findings informed the development of a model which conceptualizes the migration decision-making processes of migrants by choice as ongoing processes which a) change and evolve over time, b) are impacted by emotional, affective, relational, ideational, and place-based factors as well as chance which are related to the lived experiences of these migrants but also by the historical time in which they live, c) involve both movement and statis and d) can thus result in multiple different moves over an individual's life course but also in decisions to stay. Moreover, this model highlights the importance of specific triggers that need to be present for movements to actually happen. In this way, the proposed model goes beyond simply listing the reasons behind migration decisions, instead also providing a better understanding of how these decisions are formed and when movements actually take place and, thus, contributes to a better understanding of why some people move while others decide to stay. Here it is important to highlight one more time that the group of migrants I explored, i.e., migrants by choice, belong to a privileged group of migrants and their experiences as well as the way they form their migration decisions need to be understood as such. Therefore, it is important to keep their relative advantage in mind and contrast their experiences to those of other groups of migrants, such as refugees, asylum seekers, temporary foreign workers and even highly skilled migrants who are racialized or religiously perceived as "non-Western".

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As discussed in the methodology chapter of this dissertation, my research came with certain shortcomings and limitations. To reiterate briefly: First, although the trajectory approach and the conceptualization of translocal geographies which I utilized for the theoretical conceptualization of this research project suggest the use of several different methods, I only

drew on narrative interviews that were inspired by the life story approach. For future research projects it would thus be interesting to also employ some of these other methods, e.g., participant observations, collecting diaries or making use of visual documentations such as videotaping or photography as well as to conduct longitudinal studies that follow migrants by choice over a longer period to obtain an even better understanding of how their migration trajectories unfold and specifically about the twists and turns that impact them. Second, when analysing the lived experiences of my interviewees, I mainly focused on their experiences in their local places of living while excluding the (trans)national perspective. While this was a conscious choice based on the lack of literature on these local perspectives, excluding the (trans)national components of my interviewees' lives might have resulted in some oversights, which future research could investigate. Third, being the sole researcher on this project, I had only limited possibilities to simultaneously engage in the data collection and analysis process which is encouraged by the life story approach. Future research projects using a similar approach would therefore ideally be conducted by a research team consisting of several members so that these two processes can go hand in hand.

Moreover, to explore whether this model is accurate and applies to the wider group of migrants by choice and not just those originating in Germany, future research should be extended beyond the focus of my case study. This is also true for my findings on the lived experiences of German migrants by choice. Therefore, it would, for example, be interesting to design a study that explores the mobility trajectories and lived experiences of migrants by choice who originate from several different Western European or North American countries and who move between these countries to analyse whether their experiences and the way in which they form migration decisions matches those that I identified.

In this regard, it would also be interesting to examine whether the experiences of migrants by choice who originate from countries of the "global North" but either have an immigration background or are non-Caucasian differ from those of my interviewees who were

predominantly Caucasian and did not have an immigration background. Continuing along this line of thought, future research could also explore if individuals who are likewise highly skilled but originate in countries from outside the "global North" also re-evaluate and -negotiate their migration decisions in ongoing processes and what impact place attachments and positive versus negative experiences at their places of destination have on the migration decisions of these individuals.

A second line of research could focus on exploring the structural dimensions of highly skilled migration movements between countries of the "global North" in more depth. While my dissertation was predominantly interested in understanding the subjective dimensions of these moves and how migration decision-making processes are impacted by the lived experiences as well as feelings of home and belonging, and, thus, focused on the migrants' agency, it is important to remember that these movements are still bracketed by (institutional) structures. As such, they are impacted by factors such as class and privilege, immigration and emigration policies, as well as structures that are specific to certain institutions, e.g., universities. Therefore, future research could explore the impact of these structures on the migration trajectories of migrants by choice in more detail. To do so, studies could apply the life course perspective which allows to consider both structure and agency by highlighting the importance of the interplay between the historical time and context in which people live as well as their individual agency. Specifically, such studies could, for example, explore how migrants by choice (intentionally) navigate the Canadian immigration system throughout their migration trajectories: This system sets out the requirements and rules for what kind of social, cultural, economic, and educational capital individuals must demonstrate to be allowed to enter and stay, and to eventually to obtain permanent residency or citizenship. Immigration and citizenship rules can therefore impact upon immigration trajectories, including those of migrants by choice. However, migrants often make strategic choices within this system or rules and regulations in order to attain their goals. While this aspect was briefly explored in this dissertation, a more

thorough analysis of this phenomenon would be important to conduct to understand the extent to which migration policies impact the migration trajectories of migrants by choice and the strategies they apply to navigate them. In this regard, it would also be interesting to examine whether this strategic navigation of the immigration system is perceived differently if utilized by migrants by choice or less privileged groups of migrants. My strong suspicion is that while this behaviour would be viewed as acceptable and non-concerning for migrants by choice it would be seen as an exploitation of the migration system for less privileged and "non-Western" migrants.

A third line of research could explore the development of strategies to attract and retain international talent (and specifically those who originate in countries of the "global North" and often have all options of leaving, staying, returning, or moving onward at their disposal) and/or encourage the return of own talent from abroad that go beyond the purely legal dimension of implementing immigration policies. My research demonstrated that even though German migrants by choice were highly skilled and often had experience of living abroad, they still faced several challenges and hidden frictions during their moves to and from Canada. Therefore, it would, for example, be interesting to explore which resources already exist to help these migrants in overcoming these challenges, if they know about and make use of these resources, and what other types of information, help or services they would find useful to help them navigate through these challenges.

Finally, it would also be interesting to examine how my findings apply to other categories of migrants, e.g., those who are less privileged, lower skilled and/or whose migration processes are caused out of an economic necessity or because they are trying to escape political unrest, war, or persecution. Many of these migrants are also often highly mobile and participate in multiple moves. For example, temporary foreign farm workers often participate in circular migration processes for years during which they move to a specific destination country for the harvest season, then return back to their countries of origin only to move again in the year after.

Likewise, refugees are often highly mobile individuals as they move through several countries, sometimes residing (in)voluntarily at a specific place for some time (sometimes even several years) before taking the next step to reach a safe haven.

Therefore, just as for migrants by choice, it seems useful to conceptualize their migration experiences and decision-making processes as ongoing processes that change and evolve over time. However, it is likely that the triggers that I identified for causing the migration movements of migrants by choice to happen would be different for these groups of migrants. Moreover, I do suspect that even for these groups of migrants, emotional, relational, affective, and ideational factors as well as chance impact their movements (albeit maybe to a lesser degree) and, therefore, also need to be considered to obtain a better and more holistic understanding of their migration trajectories and their lived experiences.

More generally speaking and to conclude this dissertation, researchers in migration studies should more often look beyond the boundaries of the theoretical and analytical frameworks used in their own disciplines. As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, putting different sets of literature of the field of migration and mobility studies in dialogue with each other rather than exploring them in their own right allows to identify communalities between these literatures (e.g., regarding different groups of migrants which at first sight might not have that much in common with each other), as well as to learn about insights and make use of concepts and theoretical approaches which help to explain different aspects of migration processes but are less commonly used in one's own field. This might inspire important cross-fertilization between these fields and literatures which ultimately further advances the knowledge available on all different facets related to the study of migration.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Call for Participants/Information Letter (English and German Version) – Target Group I

Participants Needed for Research on Germans Who Want to Emigrate to Canada

Are you a German citizen and considering emigrating to Canada, or have already taken steps toward moving to Canada? Are you between 25 and 45 years old? Are you initiating your emigration on your own? Are you working in one of the following occupations: Science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music or entertainment, business and finance, law, health care and related fields?

If so, would you be interested in discussing the reasons why you want to move to Canada, and your experiences of organizing the emigration?

I am Anke Patzelt and I am a PhD student in Sociology at the University of Ottawa. Originally, I am from Wesel, a small town in Germany, about 60 km north of Cologne. At the moment, I am working on my dissertation research which deals with the migration experiences of Germans moving to and from Canada. More specifically, I am interested in their mobility, integration, and settlement patterns, and how these are impacted by feelings of home and belonging.

If you decide to participate in my research, you would be asked to take part in a personal interview that would last between 60-90 minutes. With your consent, the interview would be audio recorded. Additionally, you would be asked to fill out a short (5-10 minute) questionnaire about your personal information. Participation is on a voluntary basis and you can withdraw your participation at any given point. Your personal data would, of course, be kept anonymous, and all information obtained during these conversations will be kept confidential, and will only be used in the context of my research.

Interviews will be conducted in Germany and thus, I would be happy to come and meet you at your home or at any location that is convenient for you. Participation in this study will give you the opportunity to reflect on, as well as convey your knowledge and share your experiences of planning to move to Canada and your perception of life in both Germany and Canada.

I would be very happy to talk to you in person and to learn more about your personal experiences. If you have any questions, comments, or remarks, or if you would like to volunteer for this study, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach me via email [redacted] or cell phone ([redacted]). I am thankful for any help, and I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,
Anke

Anke Patzelt
PhD Candidate
School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies
University of Ottawa

uOttawa

Teilnehmer_innen für Studie über Deutsche, die nach Kanada auswandern wollen, gesucht

Sind Sie deutsche/r Staatsbürger_in und denken über eine Auswanderung nach Kanada nach bzw. haben Sie schon aktive Schritte für Ihre Auswanderung nach Kanada eingeleitet? Sind Sie zwischen 25 und 45 Jahre alt? Initiieren Sie Ihre Auswanderung auf eigene Faust? Arbeiten Sie in einem der folgenden Berufsfelder: (Natur)Wissenschaften und Ingenieurwesen, Architektur und Design, Bildungswesen, Kunst, Musik und Unterhaltung, Wirtschafts- und Finanzwesen, Rechtswesen, Gesundheitswesen und verwandte Bereiche?

Wenn ja, wären Sie daran interessiert, mit mir über Ihre Auswanderungsmotive und -erfahrungen zu diskutieren?

Ich heiße Anke Patzelt und bin eine Promotionsstudentin in Soziologie an der Universität Ottawa in Kanada. Ursprünglich komme ich aus Wesel, einer kleinen Stadt am Rhein, ca. 60 km nördlich von Köln. Zurzeit arbeite ich an meiner Promotionsforschung, die sich mit den Migrationserfahrungen sowohl von Deutschen, die nach Kanada ziehen und dort für einige Zeit leben, als auch von Deutschen, die in Kanada gelebt haben und nach Deutschland zurückgekehrt sind, beschäftigt. Genauer gesagt interessiere ich mich für die Migrations-/Mobilitäts-, Integrations- und Nierderlassungsmuster und wie diese durch Gefühle von Heimat und Zugehörigkeit beeinflusst werden.

Wenn Sie sich dafür entscheiden, an meiner Forschung teilzunehmen, würde ich Sie zu einem ca. 60-90minütigen persönlichen Interview einladen. Das Interview würde mit Ihrer Zustimmung auf einem Tonbandgerät aufgezeichnet werden. Im Rahmen des Interviews würden Sie außerdem darum gebeten werden, einen kurzen Fragebogen mit persönlichen Angaben auszufüllen (Dauer ca. 5-10 Minuten). Die Teilnahme an diesem Interview ist selbstverständlich freiwillig und Sie können sich jederzeit dazu entscheiden, nicht weiter teilzunehmen. Ihre persönlichen Daten werden natürlich anonymisiert und alle Informationen, die während dieser Gespräche erworben werden, werden vertraulich behandelt und nur im Zusammenhang meiner Forschung verwendet.

Interviews können in Deutschland durchgeführt werden. Deshalb würde ich mich freuen, Sie entweder bei Ihnen Zuhause, oder an einem anderen Ort, der günstig für Sie ist, zu treffen. Die Teilnahme an meiner Studie gibt Ihnen die Möglichkeit, über Ihre Erfahrungen zu reflektieren und Ihr Wissen über die Planung Ihrer Auswanderung nach Kanada, sowie Ihre Wahrnehmung vom Leben in Deutschland und Kanada mit anderen zu teilen.

Ich würde mich sehr darüber freuen, mit Ihnen zu sprechen und mehr über Ihre ganz persönliche Geschichte und Ihre Erfahrungen zu lernen. Wenn Sie weitere Fragen, Kommentare oder Anregungen haben, oder an meiner Studie teilnehmen wollen, dann melden Sie sich gerne bei mir. Sie können mich jederzeit per email [redacted] oder Handy [redacted] erreichen. Ich bin für jegliche Unterstützung dankbar und freue mich über eine positive Rückmeldung von Ihnen.

Beste Grüße,
Ihre Anke Patzelt

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Appendix 2: Call for Participants/Information Letter (English and German Version) – Target Group II

Participants Needed for Research on the Migration Experiences of Germans Living in Canada

Are you a German citizen living in Canada? Are you between 25 and 45 years old? Have you been living in Canada for at least 3 to 4 years? Are you working in one of the following occupations: Science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music or entertainment, business and finance, law, health care and related fields?

If so, would you be interested in discussing your experiences of moving to and living in Canada with me?

I am Anke Patzelt and I am a PhD student in Sociology at the University of Ottawa. Originally, I am from Wesel, a small town in Germany, about 60 km north of Cologne. At the moment, I am working on my PhD dissertation research which deals with the migration experiences of Germans moving to and from Canada. More specifically, I am interested in their mobility, integration, and settlement patterns, and how these are impacted by feelings of home and belonging.

If you decide to participate in my research, you would be asked to take part in a personal interview that would last between 60-90 minutes. With your consent, the interview would be audio recorded. Additionally, you would be asked to fill out a short (5-10 minute) questionnaire about your personal information. Participation is on a voluntary basis and you can withdraw your participation at any given point. Your personal data would, of course, be kept anonymous, and all information obtained during these conversations will be kept confidential, and will only be used in the context of my research.

Participation in this study will give you the opportunity to reflect on, as well as convey your knowledge and share your experiences of moving to and living in Canada and your perception of life in both Germany and Canada.

I would be very happy to talk to you in person and to learn more about your personal experiences. If you have any questions, comments, or remarks, or if you would like to volunteer for this study, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach me via email [redacted] or cell phone [redacted]. I am thankful for any help, and I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,
Anke

Anke Patzelt
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University of Ottawa

uOttawa

Teilnehmer_innen für Studie über die Erfahrungen von deutschen Migranten in Kanada gesucht

Sind Sie deutsche/r Staatsbürger_in und wohnen zurzeit in Kanada? Sind Sie zwischen 25 und 45 Jahre alt? Leben Sie seit mindestens 3 bis 4 Jahren in Kanada? Arbeiten Sie in einem der folgenden Berufsfelder: (Natur)Wissenschaften und Ingenieurwesen, Architektur und Design, Bildungswesen, Kunst, Musik und Unterhaltung, Wirtschafts- und Finanzwesen, Rechtswesen, Gesundheitswesen und verwandte Bereiche?

Wenn ja, wären Sie daran interessiert, mit mir über Ihre Erfahrungen von Ihrer Auswanderung nach und Ihrem Leben in Kanada zu diskutieren?

Ich heiße Anke Patzelt und bin eine Promotionsstudentin in Soziologie an der Universität Ottawa in Kanada. Ursprünglich komme ich aus Wesel, einer kleinen Stadt am Rhein, ca. 60 km nördlich von Köln. Zurzeit arbeite an meiner Promotionsforschung, die sich mit den Migrationserfahrungen sowohl von Deutschen, die nach Kanada ziehen und dort für einige Zeit leben, als auch von Deutschen, die in Kanada gelebt haben und nach Deutschland zurückgekehrt sind, beschäftigt. Genauer gesagt interessiere ich mich für die Migrations-/Mobilitäts-, Integrations- und Nierderlassungsstrukturen und wie diese durch Gefühle von Heimat und Zugehörigkeit beeinflusst werden.

Wenn Sie sich dafür entscheiden, an meiner Forschung teilzunehmen, würde ich Sie zu einem ca. 60-90minütigen persönlichen Interview einladen. Das Interview würde mit Ihrer Zustimmung auf einem Tonbandgerät aufgezeichnet werden. Im Rahmen des Interviews würden Sie außerdem darum gebeten werden, einen kurzen Fragebogen mit persönlichen Angaben auszufüllen (Dauer ca. 5-10 Minuten). Die Teilnahme an diesem Interview ist selbstverständlich freiwillig und Sie können sich jederzeit dazu entscheiden, nicht weiter teilzunehmen. Ihre persönlichen Daten werden natürlich anonymisiert und alle Informationen, die während dieser Gespräche erworben werden, werden vertraulich behandelt und nur im Zusammenhang meiner Forschung verwendet.

Die Teilnahme an meiner Studie gibt Ihnen die Möglichkeit, über Ihre Erfahrung zu reflektieren und Ihr Wissen über Ihre Auswanderung nach Kanada, sowie Ihrer Wahrnehmung vom Leben in Deutschland und Kanada mit anderen zu teilen.

Ich würde mich sehr darüber freuen, mit Ihnen zu sprechen und mehr über Ihre ganz persönliche Geschichte und Ihre Erfahrungen zu lernen. Wenn Sie weitere Fragen, Kommentare oder Anregungen haben, oder an meiner Studie teilnehmen wollen, dann melden Sie sich gerne bei mir. Sie können mich jederzeit per email ([redacted] oder Handy ([redacted]) erreichen. Ich bin für jegliche Unterstützung dankbar und freue mich über eine positive Rückmeldung von Ihnen.

Beste Grüße,
Ihre Anke Patzelt

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Appendix 3: Call for Participants/Information Letter (English and German Version) – Target Group III

Participants Needed for Research on German Returnees from Canada

Are you a German citizen and have you previously lived in Canada, or are you currently living in Canada and considering returning to Germany? Are you between 25 and 45 years old? Are you working in one of the following occupations: Science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music or entertainment, business and finance, law, health care and related fields?

If so, would you be interested in discussing your experiences of returning to Germany, specifically, the reasons lying behind your considerations of returning to Germany?

I am Anke Patzelt and I am a PhD student in Sociology at the University of Ottawa. Originally, I am from Wesel, a small town in Germany, about 60 km north of Cologne. At the moment, I am working on my dissertation research which deals with the migration experiences of Germans moving to and from Canada. More specifically, I am interested in their mobility, integration, and settlement patterns, and how these are impacted by feelings of home and belonging.

If you decide to participate in my research, you would be asked to take part in a personal interview that would last between 60-90 minutes. With your consent, the interview would be audio recorded. Additionally, you would be asked to fill out a short (5-10 minute) questionnaire about your personal information. Participation is on a voluntary basis and you can withdraw your participation at any given point. Your personal data would, of course, be kept anonymous and all information obtained during these conversations will be kept confidential, and will only be used in the context of my research.

Interviews will be conducted both on Germany and Canada and thus, I would be happy to come and meet you at your home or any location that is convenient for you. Participation in this study will give you the opportunity to reflect on, as well as convey your knowledge and share your experiences of moving to and from Canada and your perception of life in both Germany and Canada.

I would be very happy to talk to you in person and to learn more about your personal experiences. If you have any questions, comments, or remarks, or if you would like to volunteer for this study, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach me via email ([redacted] or cell phone ([redacted]. I am thankful for any help, and I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,
Anke

Anke Patzelt
PhD Candidate
School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies
University of Ottawa

uOttawa

Teilnehmer_innen für Studie über die Erfahrungen von deutschen Rückkehrern aus Kanada gesucht

Sind Sie deutsche/r Staatsbürger_in und haben in Kanada gelebt bzw. leben Sie zurzeit in Kanada und denken über eine Rückkehr nach Deutschland nach? Sind Sie zwischen 25 und 45 Jahre alt? Arbeiten Sie in einem der folgenden Berufsfelder: (Natur)Wissenschaften und Ingenieurwesen, Architektur und Design, Bildungswesen, Kunst, Musik und Unterhaltung, Wirtschafts- und Finanzwesen, Rechtswesen, Gesundheitswesen und verwandte Bereiche?

Wenn ja, wären Sie daran interessiert, mit mir über Ihre Erfahrungen der Rückkehr nach Deutschland bzw. die Gründe für Ihre Rückkehrüberlegungen zu diskutieren?

Ich heiße Anke Patzelt und bin eine Promotionsstudentin in Soziologie an der Universität Ottawa in Kanada. Ursprünglich komme ich aus Wesel, einer kleinen Stadt am Rhein, ca. 60 km nördlich von Köln. Zurzeit arbeite an meiner Promotionsforschung, die sich mit den Migrationserfahrungen sowohl von Deutschen, die nach Kanada ziehen und dort für einige Zeit leben, als auch von Deutschen, die in Kanada gelebt haben und nach Deutschland zurückgekehrt sind, beschäftigt. Genauer gesagt interessiere ich mich für die Migrations-/Mobilitäts-, Integrations- und Nierderlassungsstrukturen und wie diese durch Gefühle von Heimat und Zugehörigkeit beeinflusst werden.

Wenn Sie sich dafür entscheiden, an meiner Forschung teilzunehmen, würde ich Sie zu einem ca. 60-90minütigen persönlichen Interview einladen. Das Interview würde mit Ihrer Zustimmung auf einem Tonbandgerät aufgezeichnet werden. Im Rahmen des Interviews würden Sie außerdem darum gebeten werden, einen kurzen Fragebogen mit persönlichen Angaben auszufüllen (Dauer ca. 5-10 Minuten). Die Teilnahme an diesem Interview ist selbstverständlich freiwillig und Sie können sich jederzeit dazu entscheiden, nicht weiter teilzunehmen. Ihre persönlichen Daten werden natürlich anonymisiert und alle Informationen, die während dieser Gespräche erworben werden, werden vertraulich behandelt und nur im Zusammenhang meiner Forschung verwendet.

Interviews können in Deutschland und Kanada durchgeführt werden. Deshalb würde ich mich freuen, Sie entweder bei Ihnen Zuhause, oder an einem anderen Ort, der günstig für Sie ist, zu treffen. Die Teilnahme an meiner Studie gibt Ihnen die Möglichkeit über Ihre Erfahrungen zu reflektieren und Ihr Wissen über Ihre Auswanderung nach Kanada und Rückkehr nach Deutschland, sowie Ihrer Wahrnehmung vom Leben in beiden Ländern mit anderen zu teilen.

Ich würde mich sehr darüber freuen, mit Ihnen zu sprechen und mehr über Ihre ganz persönliche Geschichte und Ihre Erfahrungen zu lernen. Wenn Sie weitere Fragen, Kommentare oder Anregungen haben, oder an meiner Studie teilnehmen wollen, dann melden Sie sich gerne bei mir. Sie können mich jederzeit per email ([redacted] oder Handy ([redacted] erreichen. Ich bin für jegliche Unterstützung dankbar und freue mich über eine positive Rückmeldung von Ihnen.

Beste Grüße,
Ihre Anke Patzelt

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Appendix 4: Interview Guide

The goal of this interview guide was to repaint the contours of the different stages that my interviewees went through during their migration trajectories and what these entailed. Therefore, the questions asked differed slightly depending on at which stages of their migration trajectories they found themselves (i.e., pre-movement, living in Canada, or post return or onward movement). While the main questions were asked in each interview, the structure of the interview was otherwise relatively loose. I aimed to cover the different themes listed under each main question but the order in which these themes were addressed did not matter. I prepared follow-up and probing questions to each of these themes should interviewees need encouragement to expand on their experiences. However, not all of these follow-up and probing questions need to be asked. Depending on the accounts of my interviewees, new questions might also be added spontaneously during the interview process to obtain more information about certain aspects or experiences mentioned by the interviewees.

1. Emigration/Moving to Canada

Main question:

Could you start by telling me how you decided to move to Canada?

Themes and Probing questions:

- Timing: When did you decide to move to Canada? How old were you?
- Reasons: Why did you decide to move to Canada? Did you think about moving to other countries too? What were/are your intentions with moving to Canada? Did/do you want to achieve anything specific? Did/do you have concrete plans?
- Expectations: Which were/are your expectations before you moved to Canada (e.g., personal, social, economic expectations or expectations toward Canada or the city where you moved/will move to)?
- Previous Experience in Canada: Had/have you ever been to Canada before (e.g., travelling, studying, living)? If so, what were your impressions of Canada/the Canadian society/Canadians prior to your move?
- Organizational Aspects: How did/do you experience your move to Canada? Which steps did/have/are you planning to take? Did you experience any difficulties? With which legal status did/are you planning to enter Canada?

2. Situation in Canada since Arrival (family, social, work etc.) and Perception of Integration in and Belonging to the Canadian Society

Main question 1:

How did you experience the first few months in Canada?

Probing questions:

- What were your first impressions of Canada/the city you moved to?
- Settlement and Housing: How did you experience the process of settling? How did you decide in which city/neighbourhood you want to live? Were there specific reasons why

you decided on this place? Did you experience any difficulties to settle in at your new place of living? If so, which?

- Family: What was your family situation like when arriving in Canada (e.g., did you move together with a partner/spouse and children, did you join a partner/spouse in Canada, did you move on your own)? How did your family (partner, spouse, children) experience the settlement process?
- Employment: How did you experience entering the labour market? What type of employment did you find (e.g., did it correspond to your level of education and your previous work experience)? How did you integrate at your new workplace?
- Social networks and social life: What experiences did you make with the people you met at your place of destination? How did you get in contact with people? How did you form new friendships?

Main question 2:

After having lived in Canada for a while now, how has your life here developed?

Probing questions:

- Housing: How do you like it here? How did your housing trajectory unfold since your arrival? If you moved, why did you decide to move? How did you decide where to move to (both regarding the area/neighbourhood and form of housing)? Do you feel that you are a part of the city/neighbourhood where you are living and that you belong there? How and why? Are there specific events/places/relationships/acquaintances that make you feel this way?
- Family: Did your family/relationship situation change since your arrival? If so, how? How did this impact your life? How did your family (partner, spouse, children) adjust to their new life? Did that impact you in any way? If so, how?
- Employment: How satisfied are you with your employment situation? How do you feel that you have integrated at your place of work? What does your work mean to you?
- Social networks and social life: How did your social network change? How did you build close friendships? Are you engaging in free time activities/volunteering etc.? If so, how did you become involved in them? What meaning do they have for you?
- Integration and Belonging: How satisfied are you with your life in Canada/at your place of destination? Are there things that you like/dislike here? If so, which and why? How do you experience your belonging to Canada/the place where you are living? How do you experience your own integration in Canada? What does it mean to you to be integrated in the Canadian society?
- Future mobility intentions: Could you imagine returning to Germany or moving elsewhere at some point? If so, why or under which circumstances?

3. Return and Onward Migration Experiences

Main question 1:

How did you decide to return to Germany/move onward?

Probing questions:

- Timing: When did you decide return to Germany/move elsewhere? How old were you?
- Reasons: Why did you decide to return to Germany/move elsewhere? Did you think about moving to other countries too? What were your intentions with returning to Germany/moving elsewhere? Did you want to achieve anything specific? Did you have concrete plans?
- Expectations: Which were your expectations before you returned to Germany/moved elsewhere (e.g., personal, social, economic expectations or expectations toward Germany/another country or the city where you moved/will move to)?
- Organizational Aspects: How did/do you experience your return to Germany/move elsewhere? Which steps did you to take? Did you experience any difficulties?

Main question 2:

How did you experience the first few months upon your return to Germany/your onward movement to another country?

Probing questions:

- What were your first impressions of the country/the city you moved to?
- Settlement and Housing: How did you experience the process of settling? How did you decide in which city/neighbourhood you want to live? Were there specific reasons why you decided on this place? Did you have any difficulties to settle in at your new place of living? If so, which?
- Family: What was your family situation like when returning to Germany/moving elsewhere (e.g., did you move together with a partner/spouse and children, did you move on your own)? How did your family (partner, spouse, children) experience the return or onward movement?
- Employment: How did you experience entering the labour market? What type of employment did you find (e.g., did it correspond to your level of education and your previous work experience)? How did you integrate at your new workplace?
- Social networks and social life: What experiences did you make with the people you met at your place of destination? How did you get in contact with people? How did you form new friendships?

Main question 3:

After having lived in Germany/another country for a while now, how has your life developed?

Probing questions:

- Housing: How do you like it here? How did your housing trajectory unfold since your return/onward movement? If you moved, why did you decide to move? How did you decide where to move to (both regarding the area/neighbourhood and form of housing)? Do you feel that you are a part of the city/neighbourhood where you are living and that you belong there? How and why? Are there specific events/places/relationships/ acquaintances that make you feel this way?
- Family situation: Did your family/relationship situation change since your arrival? If so, how? How did this impact your life? How did your family (partner, spouse, children) adjust to their new life? Did that impact you in any way? If so, how?

- Employment: How satisfied are you with your employment situation? How do you feel that you have integrated at your place of work? What does your work mean to you?
- Social networks and social life: How did your social network change? How did you build close friendships? Are you engaging in free time activities/volunteering etc.? If so, how did you become involved in them? What meaning do they have for you?
- Future mobility intentions: Could you imagine moving elsewhere at some point in the future? If so, why or under which circumstances?

4. Final questions for all interviews:

Is there anything else that you would like to add? Is there anything else that you think is important and that we have not talked about yet?

Appendix 5: Example of an Email Recruitment Script

Anke Patzelt [redacted]

Support for University of Ottawa Study about the Migration Experiences of Germans Moving to and from Canada

1 message

Anke Patzelt [redacted] Fri, Feb 3, 2017 at 2:46 PM
To [redacted]

Dear [redacted]

Professor [redacted] from the Waterloo Centre for German Studies recommended to get in touch with you. Please see my email below.

Dear [redacted]

This email is a request for the assistance of the [redacted] with my PhD dissertation project at the School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies at the University of Ottawa, under the supervision of professor Elke Winter. The title of my research project is *"Leave – Stay – Return: Mobility, Integration and Settlement Patterns of Self-Initiated German Expatriates Moving to and from Canada"* and it explores the migration experiences of Germans moving to and from Canada.

The purpose of this study is to examine the mobility, integration and settlement patterns of self-initiated German expatriates in Canada who are between the ages of 25 to 45 years and are working within one of the following occupations: Science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment, business and finance, law, health care and related fields, and how these patterns are impacted by feelings of home and belonging.

It is my hope to connect with members and networks of the [redacted], to invite them to participate in my research project. During the course of this study, I will be conducting interviews with individuals to gather their stories of their migration and integration experiences, as well as of their perceptions of life in Germany and Canada.

To respect the privacy and rights of the [redacted] and its members, I will not be contacting individuals directly. What I intend to do is to provide you with an email recruitment script, as well as with information flyers in English and German (see email attachment) to be distributed by the [redacted] at your discretion.

Contact information for me will be contained in the emails and flyers. Should someone be interested in participating in my study, they will be invited to contact me, Anke Patzelt, to discuss participation in further detail.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and every individual will make their own independent decision as to whether or not they would like to be involved. All participants will be informed and reminded of their rights to participate or withdraw before any interview, or at any time in the study. In addition to the information flyers, participants will receive informed consent forms which I will read through with participants prior to the interview and which will be signed by both parties. The personal data of participants will, of course, be kept anonymous and all information obtained during these conversations will be kept confidential and will only be used in the context of my research.

To support the findings of this study, quotations and excerpts from the stories will be used, which will be labelled with pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. Names of participants will not appear in the thesis or publications resulting from this study. Participants will not be identifiable.

If the [redacted] wishes their identity to remain confidential, a pseudonym will be used. All paper field notes collected will be retained in locked cabinets either in my office at the University of Ottawa or at my home. All paper notes will be confidentially destroyed after a minimum of a 5-year conservation period after completion of the project. Furthermore, all electronic data will be securely stored on personal password-protected laptop and/or personal password-protected computer hard drives and will be deleted securely after the conservation period. Finally, only myself and my supervisor, Professor Elke Winter, at the School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies at the University of Ottawa will have access to these materials.

I assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Ottawa Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation belongs to the [redacted] and its members.

If you have any questions regarding my study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at [redacted] or by email [redacted]. You may also contact my supervisor, professor Elke Winter at [redacted] or by email [redacted]. If you have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, Tel.: (613) 562-5387., Email: ethics@uottawa.ca.

I am thankful for any assistance with this project and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Anke Patzelt

–

Anke Patzelt

Ph.D. Candidate / Doctorante

School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies / École d'études sociologiques et anthropologiques

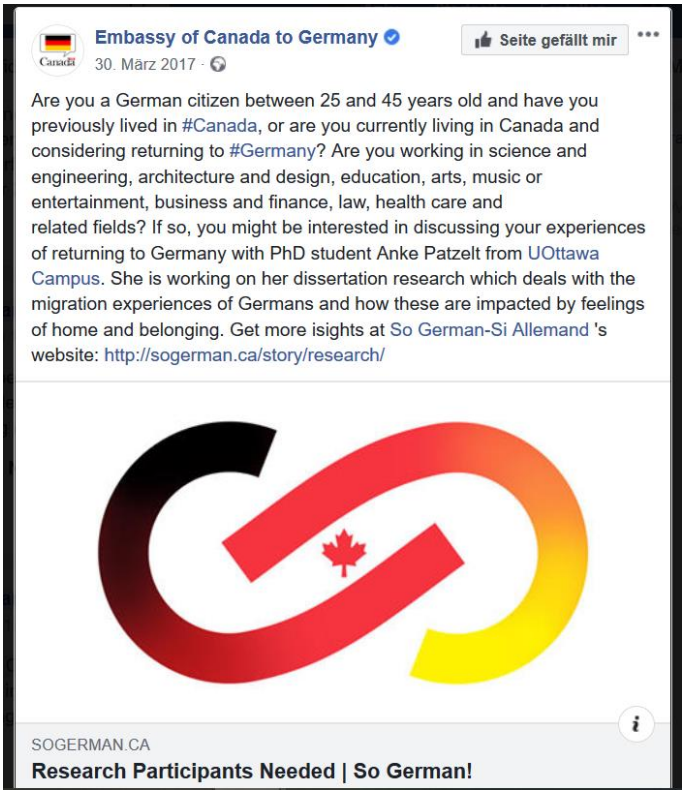
University of Ottawa / Université d'Ottawa

2 attachments

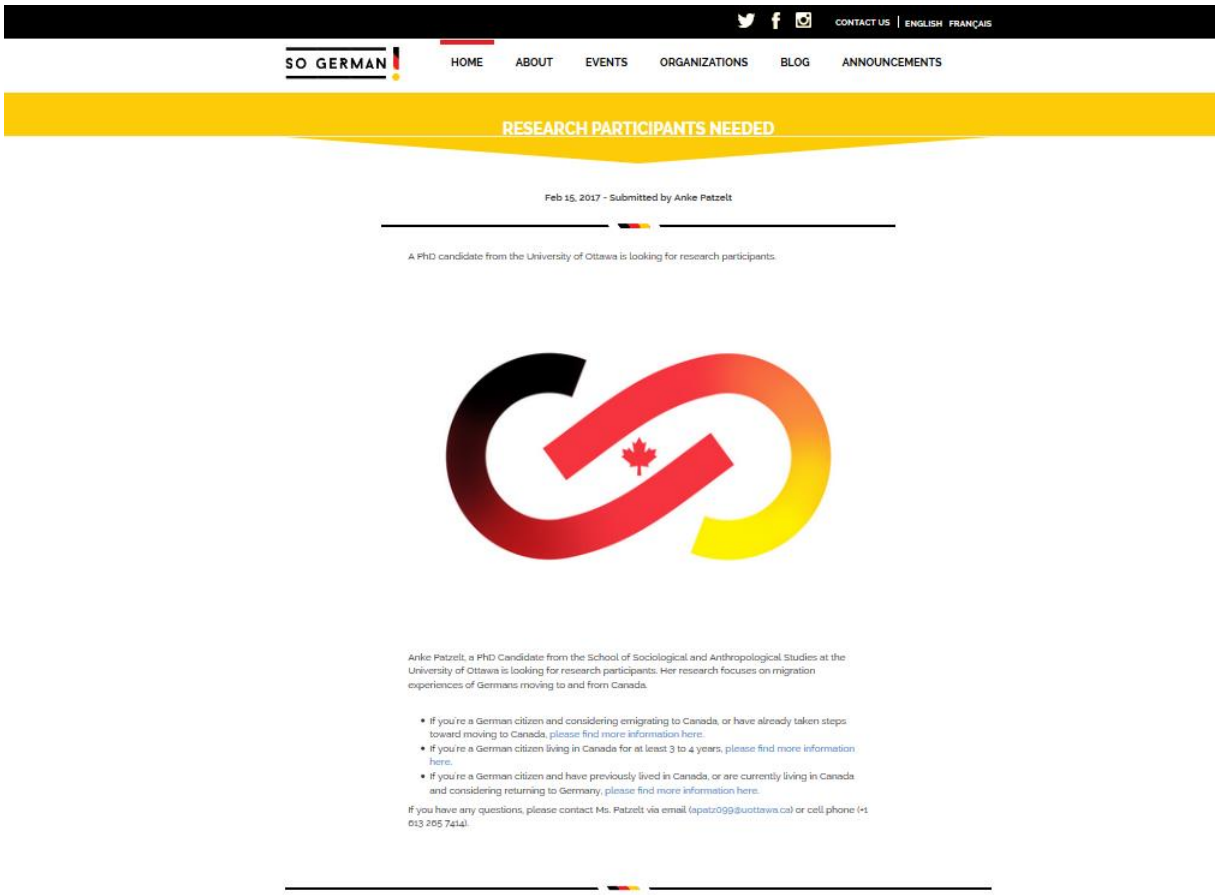
3.2.2017 - Email Recruitment Script Sent on Behalf of the Researcher by the [redacted] docx
134K

31.1.2017 - Information Letters Target Group 2 (English and German Versions) PhD Project.pdf
379K

Appendix 6: Facebook Posts by the German Embassy to Canada and the Embassy of Canada to Germany in Support of My Call for Participation



Appendix 7: Post of My Call for Participation by the German Embassy to Canada on Their Homepage "So German – Si Allemand"



CONTACT US | ENGLISH FRANÇAIS

SO GERMAN

HOME ABOUT EVENTS ORGANIZATIONS BLOG ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Feb 15, 2017 - Submitted by Anke Patzelt

A PhD candidate from the University of Ottawa is looking for research participants.

Anke Patzelt, a PhD Candidate from the School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies at the University of Ottawa is looking for research participants. Her research focuses on migration experiences of Germans moving to and from Canada.

- If you're a German citizen and considering emigrating to Canada, or have already taken steps toward moving to Canada, please find more information here.
- If you're a German citizen living in Canada for at least 3 to 4 years, please find more information here.
- If you're a German citizen and have previously lived in Canada, or are currently living in Canada and considering returning to Germany, please find more information here.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Patzelt via email (apatz099@uottawa.ca) or cell phone (+1 613 265 7414).

Appendix 8: Example of an Email Recruitment Script Distributed in My Private Networks

Anke Patzelt[redacted]

Support for University of Ottawa Study about the Migration Experiences of Germans Moving to and from Canada

1 message

Anke Patzelt[redacted] Mon, Feb 13, 2017 at 1:34 PM
To:[redacted]

Dear[redacted]

I hope you're doing well. This email is a request for your assistance with my PhD dissertation project at the School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies at the University of Ottawa, under the supervision of professor Elke Winter. The title of my research project is *"Leave – Stay – Return: Mobility, Integration and Settlement Patterns of Self-Initiated German Expatriates Moving to and from Canada"* and it explores the migration experiences of Germans moving to and from Canada.

The purpose of this study is to examine the mobility, integration and settlement patterns of self-initiated German expatriates who are between the ages of 25 to 45 years and are working within one of the following occupations: Science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment, business and finance, law, health care and related fields, and how these are impacted by feelings of home and belonging.

It is my hope to connect with individuals who you might know, to invite them to participate in my research project. During the course of this study, I will be conducting interviews with individuals to gather their stories of their migration and integration experiences, as well as of their perceptions of life in Germany and Canada.

What I intend to do is to provide you with an email recruitment script, as well as with information flyers (see email attachment) to be distributed at your discretion. My contact information will be contained in the emails and flyers. Should someone be interested in participating in my study, they will be invited to contact me to discuss participation in further detail.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and every individual will make their own independent decision as to whether or not they would like to be involved. All participants will be informed and reminded of their rights to participate or withdraw before any interview, or at any time in the study. In addition to the information flyers, participants will receive informed consent forms which I will read through with participants prior to the interview and which will be signed by both parties. The personal data of participants will, of course, be kept

anonymous and all information obtained during these conversations will be kept confidential and will only be used in the context of my research.

To support the findings of this study, quotations and excerpts from the stories will be used, which will be labelled with pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. Names of participants will not appear in the thesis or publications resulting from this study. Participants will not be identifiable.

All paper field notes collected will be retained in locked cabinets either in my office at the University of Ottawa or at my home. All paper notes will be confidentially destroyed after a minimum of a 5-year conservation period after completion of the project. Furthermore, all electronic data will be securely stored on personal password-protected laptop and/or personal password-protected computer hard drives and will be deleted securely after the conservation period. Finally, only myself and my supervisor, Professor Elke Winter, at the School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies at the University of Ottawa will have access to these materials.

If you have any questions regarding my study, please don't hesitate to contact me. I am thankful for any assistance with this project and I look forward to hearing from you.

Cheers,

Anke

–

Anke Patzelt

Ph.D. Candidate / Doctorante

School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies / École d'études sociologiques et anthropologiques

University of Ottawa / Université d'Ottawa

4 attachments

13.2.2017 - Email Recruitment Script Sent on Behalf of the Researcher by [redacted].docx
139K

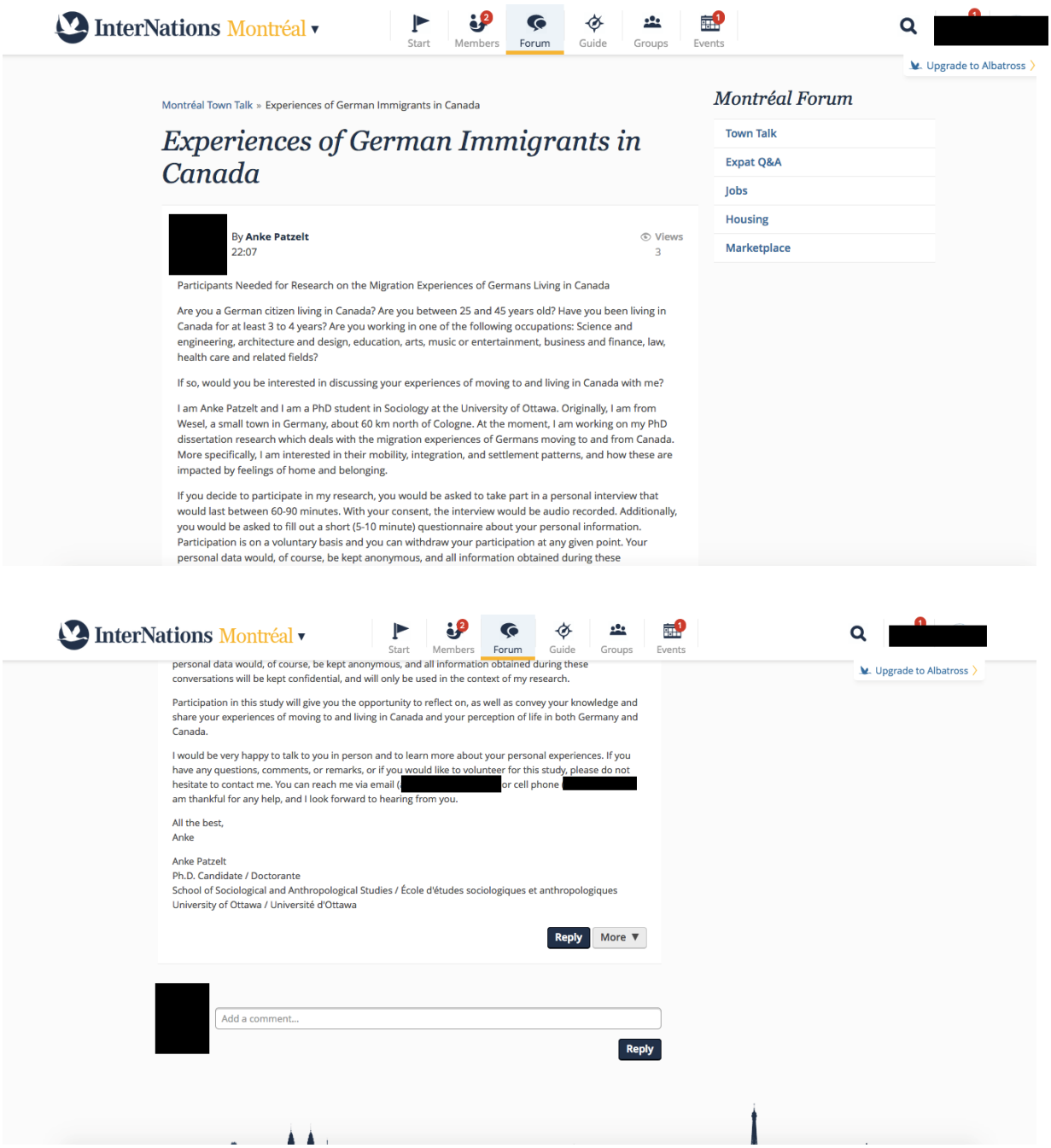
31.1.2017 - Information Letters Target Group 3 (English and German Version) PhD POroject.pdf
379K

31.1.2017 - Information Letters Target Group 2 (English and German Versions) PhD Project.pdf
379K

31.1.2017 - Information Letters Target Group 1 (English and German Versions) PhD Project.pdf
76K

Appendix 9: Example of a Facebook Post in a Group Targeted toward German Migrants

Appendix 10: Example of a Recruitment Post in an Online Forum



Appendix 11: Example of a Life Calendar

Year	Event	Ongoing events
1970	Birth in (name of city in Germany)*	
1986	High school exchange in the US	
1987	Start volunteer work for exchange organization for the following 15 years	Volunteer high school exchange organization
1988	Start studies Biology (diploma) move to (name of city in Germany)	Volunteer high school exchange organization
1996	Ex-husband moves to (name of city in Germany) for his PhD – long distance relationship for 3 years	Volunteer high school exchange organization
1998	End PhD Microbiology Start mini post-doctoral position	Volunteer high school exchange organization
1999	Wedding Start post-doctoral position and move to (name of city in the US) together with husband	Volunteer high school exchange organization
2001	Change from post-doctoral to a position in scientific management	Volunteer high school exchange organization
2003	Birth of first daughter September: Move to (name of city in Canada) for work of husband who strives to obtain tenure → perspective is to settle in (name of city in Canada) long term Has an open work permit upon arrival in Canada No work for herself and language difficulties with French Gets to know a Quebec friend who speaks English well, important to get used to living in (name of city in Canada)	Regular visits in Germany (once per year for 2-3 weeks)
2004	End of 2004 starts to work again “mini post-doc in a lab” –> important for making contacts and meeting new people	
2005	June: Buying an apartment in (name of neighbourhood) in (name of city in Montreal) Birth second daughter	Regular visits in Germany (once per year for 2-3 weeks)
2006	Start work in scientific management at a university Separation from husband	Regular visits in Germany (once per year for 2-3 weeks)
2007	Divorce	Regular visits in Germany (once per year for 2-3 weeks)
2010	Starts joining a German „Stammtisch” in (name of city in Canada)	German Stammtisch in Montreal
2011	Joins a different German Stammtisch in (name of city in Canada)	Regular visits in Germany (once per year for 2-3 weeks) German Stammtisch in Montreal
2015	Father gets sick in Germany which results in a spontaneous longer stay in Germany to help out and to be closer Starts being the “host”/organizing the German Stammtisch in (name of city in Canada)	Regular visits in Germany (once per year for 2-3 weeks) German Stammtisch in Montreal

2016	End work at (name of workplace) as position is cut – unemployment Starts to sing in a choir November: Start of French course	Regular visits in Germany (once per year for 2-3 weeks) German Stammtisch in Montreal Choir

* Names of cities as well as other identifying information has been left out to ensure the anonymity of the interviewee.

Appendix 12: Research Ethics Board Approval – File Number 11-16-12

File Number: 11-16-12 **Date (mm/dd/yyyy):** 01/05/2017

Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice

Social Sciences and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Role
Elke	Winter	Social Sciences / Sociology	Supervisor
Anke	Patzelt	Social Sciences / Sociology	Student Researcher

File Number: 11-16-12

Type of Project: PhD Thesis

Title: Leave - Stay – Return: Mobility, Integration, and Settlement Patterns of Self-Initiated German Expatriates Moving to and from Canada

Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type
01/04/2017	01/03/2018	Approval

Special Conditions / Comments:
N/A

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, room 154
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada
(613) 562-5387 • Téléc./Fax (613) 562-5338
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie/ www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/

File Number: 11-16-12 **Date (mm/dd/yyyy):** 01/05/2017

Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

Signature:

[redacted]

Gabriel Petitti
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
For Barbara Graves, Chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities REB

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, room 154
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada
(613) 562-5387 • Téléc./Fax (613) 562-5338
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie/ www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/

Appendix 13: Consent Form (English and German Version)

Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

Participant Consent Form

Title of the study: Leave – Stay – Return: Mobility, Integration, and Settlement Patterns of Self-Initiated German Expatriates Moving to and from Canada

Name of researcher and supervisor:

Anke Patzelt
PhD Candidate
School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies
120 University, office 10011
Ottawa (ON) K1N 6N5
[redacted]

Elke Winter
Associate Professor
School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies
120 University, office 10059
Ottawa (ON) K1N 6N5
[redacted]

I am invited to participate in the above-mentioned research study conducted by Anke Patzelt. The purpose of this consent form is to make sure that I understand the objectives of this research and the nature of my involvement.

I understand that the purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding about the decision-making processes of German citizens moving to and from Canada and their perception of life in Germany and Canada. I understand that the specific target group for this research is German citizens who are between the ages of 25 and 45 and work in one of the following occupations: science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music, or entertainment, business and finance, law, health care and related fields. The information I provide will be used as part of research necessary to obtain the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) in Sociology at the University of Ottawa. I was informed about the objectives of this study, and any questions I may have had about this research have been answered to my satisfaction.

My participation will consist of participating in an interview of approximately 60-90 minutes, during which I will be asked about my experiences of moving to and/or living in Canada and/or returning to Germany after having lived in Canada for a while. The interview will be recorded with the help of a tape recorder, for which I have given my full consent. The interview will be conducted at a place that will be decided by mutual agreement between the principal investigator and myself. The interview has been scheduled for _____. I will also be asked to fill out a short (5-10 minutes) personal information questionnaire (including, e.g., age, gender, family status, education, language knowledge, etc.) at the beginning or end of the interview.

By participating in this study, I will have the opportunity to reflect on, as well as convey my knowledge and share my experiences of, moving to Canada, and/or living in Canada, and/or returning to Germany after having lived in Canada for a while, and my perceptions of life in Germany and Canada.

I have been assured that all information I will share (including notes, interview transcripts, and audio recordings of the interview, if applicable) will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only within the framework of the above-described research project. Anonymity will be guaranteed, as my name will be replaced by a pseudonym and no other identifying information will be revealed at any point.

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120 Université / University (10005) 10e étage / 10th floor
Ottawa ON K1N 6N5
Canada

uOttawa

Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

All documents and records will be kept in a secure location. Any hard copies of data will remain in a locked office at the University of Ottawa or in locked filling cabinets. Electronic data will be saved on a personal password-protected laptop and/or personal password protected computer hard drives. The only people who will have access to the data are the principal investigator of this study, Anke Patzelt, and her thesis supervisor, Elke Winter. Data will be stored for a minimum of five years after the end of the research project, after with they will be securely destroyed.

I have been informed that my participation in this research project is completely voluntary, that I am free to refuse to answer to any questions or any part of any question without suffering any negative consequences, and that I can withdraw from the research project at any time. If I decide to withdraw from the research project, all data collected about me will be immediately destroyed. I am aware that I do not receive any compensation for my participation in the project. Finally, Anke Patzelt, has assured me that there is no risk involved with participation in this study.

I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Anke Patzelt of the School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies at the University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Professor Elke Winter.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the principal investigator of this study, Anke Patzelt [redacted] or her supervisor, Elke Winter (Phone [redacted]) at any time.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387
Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature:_____

Date: _____

Researcher's signature:_____

Date: _____

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École d'études sociologiques et anthropologiques
Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies
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socialsciences.uOttawa.ca
120 Université / University (10005) 10e étage / 10th floor
Ottawa ON K1N 6N5
Canada

Einverständniserklärung zur Teilnahme an einer Studie

Titel der Studie: Leave – Stay – Return: Mobility, Integration, and Settlement Patterns of Self-Initiated German Expatriates Moving to and from Canada

Kontaktdaten der Forscherin und der Dissertationsleiterin:

Anke Patzelt
PhD Candidate
School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies
120 University, office 10011
Ottawa (ON) K1N 6N5
[redacted]

Elke Winter
Associate Professor
School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies
120 University, office 10059
Ottawa (ON) K1N 6N5
[redacted]

Ich wurde eingeladen, an der oben genannten Studie, die von Anke Patzelt durchgeführt wird, teilzunehmen. Mit dieser Einverständniserklärung soll sichergestellt werden, dass ich die Ziele dieser Studie sowie den Umfang meiner Beteiligung verstehe.

Ich verstehe, dass diese Studie darauf abzielt, ein besseres Verständnis der Entscheidungsprozesse von Deutschen, die nach Kanada auswandern und gegebenenfalls wieder zurück nach Deutschland kehren, sowie über deren Wahrnehmung vom Leben in Deutschland und Kanada, zu erlangen. Ich verstehe, dass die Zielgruppe dieser Forschung deutsche Staatsbürger im Alter von 25 bis 45 Jahren sind, die in einem der folgenden Berufe arbeiten: (Natur)Wissenschaften und Ingenieurwesen, Architektur und Design, Bildungswesen, Kunst, Musik und Unterhaltung, Wirtschafts- und Finanzwesen, Rechtswesen, Gesundheitswesen und verwandte Bereiche. Die Informationen, die ich zur Verfügung stelle, werden als Teil der Forschung, zum Erlangen des akademischen Grades eines Doktors der Philosophie (PhD) im Fach Soziologie an der Universität Ottawa, benutzt werden. Ich wurde über die Ziele dieser Forschung informiert und alle Fragen, die ich hierzu hatte, wurden zu meiner Zufriedenheit beantwortet.

Meine Teilnahme an dieser Studie beinhaltet ein ca. 60 bis 90-minütiges Interview, über meine Auswanderungsmotive und –erfahrungen und/oder meine Erfahrungen vom Leben in Kanada und/oder meine Erfahrungen der Rückkehr nach Deutschland bzw. die Gründe für meine Rückkehrüberlegungen. Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass das Interview mit einem Tonbandgerät aufgezeichnet wird. Das Interview wird an einem Ort stattfinden, der im gegenseitigen Einverständnis zwischen der Studienleiterin und mir festgelegt wird. Der Interviewtermin wird für den folgenden Tag festgelegt _____. Im Rahmen des Interviews werde ich außerdem darum gebeten, einen kurzen Fragebogen mit persönlichen Angaben (z.B. Alter, Geschlecht, Familienstatus, Bildung, Sprachkenntnisse etc.) auszufüllen (Dauer ca. 5-10 Minuten).

Die Teilnahme an dieser Studie gibt mir die Möglichkeit, über meine Erfahrungen zu reflektieren und mein Wissen über meine Auswanderung nach Kanada und/oder mein Leben in Kanada und/oder meine Rückkehr nach Deutschland, sowie meine Wahrnehmung vom Leben in Deutschland und Kanada mit anderen zu teilen.

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Mir wurde versichert, dass alle meine Informationen (Notizen, Interview Transkripte und Tonaufnahmen des Interviews) streng vertraulich behandelt werden. Ich verstehe, dass diese Informationen nur im Zusammenhang der oben beschriebenen Studie verwendet werden. Meine Anonymität wird durch die Verwendung eines Pseudonyms anstelle meines Namens zugesichert. Zusätzlich werden zu keinem Zeitpunkt andere identifizierende Informationen preisgegeben.

Alle Dokumente und Aufzeichnungen werden sicher verwahrt. Jegliche Ausdrucke, die Daten beinhalten, werden entweder in einem verschlossenen Büro an der Universität Ottawa oder in verschlossenen Aktenschränken verwahrt. Elektronische Daten werden auf einem passwortgeschützten Laptop oder auf passwortgeschützten Festplatten gespeichert. Die einzigen Personen, die Zugriff auf die Daten haben werden, sind die Studienleiterin, Anke Patzelt, und ihre Dissertationsleiterin, Professorin Dr. Elke Winter. Die Daten werden für mindestens fünf Jahre nach Abschluss des Forschungsprojektes gespeichert und danach vollständig gelöscht.

Ich wurde darüber informiert, dass die Teilnahme an dieser Studie freiwillig ist. Ich kann die Beantwortung bestimmter Fragen oder zu einem bestimmten Aspekt einer Frage jederzeit verweigern, ohne dass dieses negative Konsequenzen für mich hat. Ich kann die Teilnahme an dieser Studie zu jeder Zeit zurückziehen. Wenn ich mich dazu entschließe, meine Teilnahme zurückzuziehen, werden alle meine Informationen, die bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt gesammelt wurden, sofort vollständig gelöscht. Ich bin mir darüber bewusst, dass ich für die Teilnahme an dieser Studie keine Entschädigung erhalte. Zudem hat Anke Patzelt mir zugesichert, dass es keine vorhersehbaren Risiken bezüglich der Teilnahme an dieser Studie gibt.

Ich, _____, gebe hiermit mein Einverständnis, an der oben genannten Studie, die von Anke Patzelt an der School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies an der Universität Ottawa durchgeführt wird, und die von der Professorin Frau Dr. Elke Winter betreut wird, teilzunehmen.

Wenn ich Fragen zu dieser Studie habe, kann ich mich jederzeit entweder an Anke Patzelt (Tele[redacted] oder ihre Dissertationsleiterin Professorin Frau Dr. Elke Winter ([redacted] wenden.

Wenn ich Fragen in Bezug auf die ethische Durchführung der Studie habe, kann ich den Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, Tel.: (613) 562-5387, Email: ethics@uottawa.ca kontaktieren.

Es gibt zwei Kopien der Einverständniserklärung, von der ich ein Exemplar erhalte.

Unterschrift des/r Teilnehmers_in: _____

Datum: _____

Unterschrift der Studienleiterin: _____

Datum: _____