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Living the Dream:
Experiences and Interpretations of German Migrants to New Zealand throughout the Migration Process

2003

Unpublished manuscript based on Petra T. Bürgelt's MA Thesis:

Is New Zealand the right choice? The psychological and social factors influencing the decision for German immigrants to New Zealand to stay in New Zealand or to return to Germany
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(Note: The complete ‘Research Methodology & Design’ and ‘Method’ Chapters of the original MA thesis have not been included into this short version of the thesis. If you are interested in these chapters, please contact Petra petrabue@ipirmus.com.au)
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ABSTRACT

This thesis has developed a local theory of German immigration to New Zealand by exploring the experiences of migrants throughout the whole migration process, the particular meaning they assigned to their experiences, and how these experiences were influenced by cultural and historical context. This local theory identifies the psychological and social factors, and the interrelations between them, that contribute to resilience and adaptation or to vulnerability and poor adaptation, and that influence the decision whether to stay in New Zealand or to return to Germany.

To gain these insights, this research drew on the theoretical perspectives of the salutogenic paradigm, social interactionism, and social constructionism in narrative theory; and adapted a grounded theory methodology. The study sampled social artifacts, with particular emphasis on actions/interactions, narratives, and answers to concrete questions. Eight German immigrant couples, four who live in New Zealand and decided to stay in New Zealand (stayers) and four who had immigrated to New Zealand, but decided to return to Germany and live now in Germany (returners), were interviewed in-depth via episodic interviews. The interview data was complemented with data from participant observation, the latest census, and the history of German settlement in New Zealand in order to capture the context of the immigration experiences. The data gathered was analysed by using grounded theory analysis strategies.

The processes that underpin decisions to migrate, decisions to remain, and decisions to return are discussed. The most important psychosocial process influencing the experiences of German immigrants to New Zealand was ‘Living the Dream’. The migration process presented many different and substantial challenges simultaneously. Thus, stress was an inevitable aspect of the migration process. Each sub-phase of the migration process influenced, and was influenced by, individual characteristics and values, beliefs/attitudes, strategies, and the social conditions in Germany, New Zealand, and Britain. These psychosocial factors, in turn, interacted with one another also. Taken together, these psychosocial factors either increased the likelihood for staying or for returning. Regardless of whether German immigrants stayed or returned, dealing with the challenges and the associated stress acted as a force for exhilarated evolvement, which was linked to the characteristics that prompted their initial migration decision. The experiences, interpretations, and outcomes of female and male German immigrants were remarkably similar. However, some gender differences were identified.

The study provides detailed recommendations that aim at providing resource structures that assist German immigrants to unfold their potential, to learn as much as possible, and to evolve and adapt.
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People, who don’t leave behind big achievements, but a series of little kind deeds, haven’t lived their life for nothing.

Charlotte Gray
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**My love and warm thanks go out to each and every one of you for supporting, strengthening, and uplifting us up along this part of my journey in your unique ways!**

**I very much trust that I will be able to assist you sometime too!**
If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, let’s work together.

(Lilla Watson, Methods and Methodologies)
HOW THIS STUDY CAME ABOUT: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The processes underlying migration and the decision whether to stay in New Zealand or to return home have influenced my life in substantial ways. In 1997, I migrated with my partner at the time from Germany to New Zealand and the migration process presented me with many challenges. Coping with these challenges was a tremendous struggle: my self-confidence took a deep dive, I questioned my self, I was often frustrated and depressed, and I was very homesick. If my partner had not loved living in New Zealand and if I had not wanted to finish my studies, I would have returned home. It took me more than four years to work my way out of this emotional valley and to start to feel happy about living in New Zealand. In addition, the issue whether to stay or return to Germany put much strain on my long-term relationship, because our experiences were the opposite. I struggled to adapt, and was very unhappy and dissatisfied. As a result, I wanted desperately to return home. My partner, in contrast, adapted better, and was happy and satisfied with his life in New Zealand. Accordingly, he wanted to stay. Unfortunately, we were unable to find a satisfactory solution for both of us. This discrepancy was one factor which led finally to our separation.

Because of my adverse experiences and the experience of other German immigrants living happily in New Zealand, I started wondering; Had they done something differently? And if so, what did they do differently? These questions made me curious – I wanted to find out more about these issues. Moreover, I hoped that exploring the experiences of other German migrants would challenge me. I hoped that the resulting experiences, knowledge, and insights would contribute to my liberation – they would assist me to make better sense of my own migration experiences and to contribute to my evolvement into a person who is better able to adapt to potentially adverse events.

Although I was sure that I would find deep and satisfying meaning in investigating the described topic and although I started to care very deeply about it, studying German migrants only to satisfy my own thirst for knowledge did not seem sufficient justification for the study. To see real purpose in the study and to make it worthwhile for the participants to become deeply involved, the research needed also to be of immediate practical value for participants and to generate outcomes that would contribute to the betterment of German migrants to New Zealand - a migrant group about whose experiences not much is known. Reflecting on conversations with and the experiences of many other German immigrants to New Zealand over the last four years made me realise that my experiences are not unique; many of the German migrants have had similar experiences, and the issue of staying or returning is very much part of the life of many German migrants. Interestingly, it seems as if often men are happy and want to stay, whereas women want to go back home after a while, suggesting that men and women deal differently with immigration and that they have different salient issues. As with my relationship, these gender differences put much strain onto the relationships of many German migrant couples and they struggle to find solutions to this dilemma.

In addition, many German immigrants encouraged me to investigate this topic and strengthened me in my belief that knowledge of the specific issues which might come up for German immigrants during their migration process to New Zealand and of specific strategies that German migrants use to deal with potential difficulties would greatly help other German migrants to cope more successfully and would make the occurrence of the question whether to stay or return less likely. Even if this question came up, some knowledge about how other couples dealt with the decision whether to stay or to return might assist German migrants to find a better solution than breaking up. The realisation that my experiences were representative of the experiences of other German migrants to New Zealand and that other German migrants were greatly interested in the experiences of other German immigrants convinced me that the research holds some potential for the liberation of present and future German migrants to New Zealand.

As a result of my training in critical psychology, sociology, and anthropology, and as a result of key personal experiences, I began to identify with the interpretive assumptions regarding the nature of the world and about how to generate knowledge about the world. Accordingly, I was convinced that only a qualitative research methodology based on interpretive ontological and epistemological assumptions could achieve the above stated objectives. Hence, I decided to draw upon interpretive ontological and epistemological assumptions
for the study and to adopt a qualitative research methodology which goes along with the interpretive assumptions.

As I entertained the idea of studying German migrants, I became aware that being a German migrant and a psychology student is a rare combination, which puts me into a very privileged position. Not many psychologists would be interested in studying German migrants and, even if they were, they would not be in such a unique position as I am for studying German immigrants. Coming from the same cultural background, speaking German, and having migrated to New Zealand myself gives me an insider status. This status is of crucial importance for the research of a minority group which is culturally different from the dominant culture. Being an insider allows me to use experiential data: the experiences I have had myself during my five years living as a German migrant in New Zealand and the knowledge of experiences of other German immigrants. This experiential data can not only add important data to the study, it can also make the data collection and analysis easier, more accurate, and deeper. Speaking German and coming from the same cultural background should facilitate the attraction of and access to potential participants, the willingness of potential participants to participate, and the establishment of trusting relationships with the participants. Further, my background should enable me to understand the nuances in what the participants say; to relate well to the participants’ feelings, thoughts, and opinions; and to establish trusting relationships with participants. In short, having been a “long-term participant” should facilitate the research process and give me “a peculiar kind of ethnohistorical depth” (Ortner, 1997, p. 63).

Studying German immigrants is important and satisfying for me for another reason also: it gives me the opportunity to give some useful knowledge back to New Zealand, the country which has given me the opportunity to advance my education and has generously supported me in my studies. As will become obvious, knowledge about the psychological and social factors that influence the well-being and adaptation of immigrants, and thus their decision whether to stay or to return is of paramount importance for New Zealand’s society.

For these reasons together, I chose to investigate systematically the experiences of German migrants to New Zealand. Because the research topic was of high personal interest to me, I cared deeply about this research, and found deep and satisfying meaning in it. Thus, I was ‘in the work’ emotionally and intellectually. I was also very privileged in that I found two excellent supervisors for this project: Dr Mandy Morgan and Dr Regina Pernice. They migrated to New Zealand from Australia and Germany respectively and thus, share the migration experience. Their sharing of their immense wisdom, their wise guidance, their faith and trust in me, their letting me find my own way and make my own experiences, their rescuing me several times, and their tremendous academic and personal assistance significantly contributed to this project. It has been a tremendous honour and pleasure to work together with both of them. Thus, I invited them to write the book together with me.

INTENDED READERSHIP

The book presents the findings of an innovative and interdisciplinary empirical research project. It is to our knowledge the first book that represents an empirically validated account of contemporary migration experiences in lay language from the perspectives of the migrants themselves. These features make the book accessible to and valuable for a wide audience: general readers, academics, and service providers. With respect to general readers, the specific and detailed information provided regarding characteristics of German migrants, migration experiences, reasons for migrating factors that influence the migration process, strategies for overcoming migration obstacles, migration outcomes, and reasons for staying and returning can assist future and current German migrants to better prepare for their migration, understand their migration experiences, and deal with migration obstacles. The content is thus intended as a proactive guide assisting the development of strategies that facilitate better adaptation, health/well-being and happier lives; and that increase the likelihood of the migration being a growth experience. The book also provides a very useful resource for family and friends of migrants. It assists them to understand their reactions to someone’s
migration decision. Additionally, the book discusses why family and friends are crucial for the well-being of migrants. It provides insights into what migrants might experience which may enable family and friends to better understand their migration experiences. Strategies family members and friends can use to support migrants are suggested. While some experiences might be specific to Germans, many also apply to other migrant groups, especially to those from other German-speaking countries (e.g. Austrians, Swiss) and middle European countries (e.g. Dutch). Likewise, the experiences of German migrants to other countries (e.g. USA, Canada, Spain) might be similar in many respects.

The findings are also of interest to academics, researchers and students from various disciplines researching migration (e.g. sociologists, psychologists, demographers, geographers) because of the unique research design used for investigating migration and because of the comprehensive in-depth perspective it provides of the whole migration process. For individuals and organisations providing services to migrants (e.g. emigration and immigration services, migration centres, migration agents, German embassies, and Goethe Institutes and Societies, counsellors and psychologists) the insights this book provides are hoped to further increase their sensitivity to, and awareness and understanding of, factors affecting migrants and to assist them to tailor their service to the specific needs of German migrants (female, male, couples, and families). The book provides specific and detailed social recommendations that could be implemented by institutions in the country of origin and the host country providing services to migrants. While this book specifically deals with migration from Germany to New Zealand, the contents are of more general value to other immigration countries, who increasingly compete with first world countries over highly educated and skilful migrants and therefore, are interested in ways to retain their migrants.

The migration experiences described here represent those specific migration experiences of German immigrants to New Zealand and returners between 1985 and 2002. However, our world is going through an era of rapid and considerable change and transformations (Shockley-Zalabak, 1998), which affects the conditions for migrating in Germany and New Zealand, and therefore, the migration experience. For example, communication technologies (e.g. internet and internet forums) have transformed the way in which migrants can acquire information about the host country, search for and acquire jobs, stay in contact with their family and friends, and communicate with other German migrants. While new communication technologies increase the opportunities of migrants to acquire knowledge, they can only go so far towards illuminating the migration experience itself. Thus, this book brings together the first hand experiences of people who went through this process. The findings presented in this book were gained by an innovative in-depth empirical study and provide rare insights into the migration process of German migrants to New Zealand from the inside; how German migrants themselves experience their migration and how these experiences are influenced by the social context.

OVERVIEW OF BOOK CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1 of this book we will introduce you to the scientific background of the study by discussing the importance of the study, the theoretical assumptions on which the study is based, the research methodology it uses, how it was conducted and what kind of people participated. Accordingly, the content of this chapter is fairly technical and complex. However, if you are not interested in these matters, you can just skim or skip this chapter for it is not necessary for the understanding of the findings. In Chapter 2 we will provide some context of German migration by briefly outlining the history of German migration, presenting statistical data regarding the make up of German migrants living in New Zealand, and discussing the physical environment. In Chapters 3 to 8 we tell the meta story regarding the experiences of German migrants to New Zealand in a chronological order. We start with looking at how the participants developed their dream and their readiness to migrate in Chapter 3 - Developing the Dream & Readiness. Chapter 4 - Enlivening the Dream - investigates why the participants migrated and how they enlivened their dream to migrate. Chapter 5 - Realising the Dream - contains the experiences and events that the participants encountered when they started to live in New Zealand and discusses the factors that facilitated their establishment. Chapter 6 - Reaping the Fruits of Living the Dream – is about the ways in which the participants evolved during their
migration and their personal migration outcomes. Chapter 7 - *Weighing up: Choosing the Path which is most Conducive for Fulfilling Future Dreams* – concludes the meta story by exploring the factors that contributed to staying as well as the factors that contributed to returning. The final chapter integrates the findings told in the meta story by presenting the local theory of the experiences of German migrants to New Zealand. We will discuss the emerged thread running through the story that weaves the migration experiences and migration process together, and answer the research questions by drawing together the relevant findings of the present study and comparing our findings with the existing literature regarding German migrants to New Zealand. We conclude by providing an overview of the recommendations.

**OUR HOPE: MUTUAL LIBERATION AND TO INSPIRE YOU TO LIVE YOU DREAMS**

Although the starting point for selecting this research topic was my own personal experience, it is Mandy’s, Regina’s and my great hope that the research findings will serve the minority group of German migrants to New Zealand: that our research meets their needs - that our liberation is bound up with one another. Only through this joint liberation, as Watson (Methods and Methodologies) points out in the quote in the beginning of the prologue, will this project be able to reach its overall objective: to pool the knowledge of German migrants to New Zealand further down the migration path in order to assist one another and future German migrants who are still at the beginning of their migration journey.

Conducting this project has inspired us, and has made us more confident to dream and to follow our dreams. It is our great hope that this book encourages and assists you to live your dream to migrate to New Zealand.

*Now is the time to embrace your uniqueness and to honour the uniqueness of others. Sameness is the kiss of death; uniqueness is the kiss of life. You are at the threshold of life. Take it and step forth. Discard any ideas of limitation and endeavour to wrap your minds around ideas of infinite nature, of love, of endlessness, and to choose what you would wish to be endless in your life, to favour that at all moments, and to take the higher teachings to other so that your world of newness indeed shall flourish, shall transcend what was, shall manifest as the new reality, the next, reality, the incoming reality. Go forth and dream. Your dreams are more real than your perceptions. ... Honour your uniqueness.*

(Kuthumi, communication from ‘The Masters in Light’ through Paul Walsh-Roberts, 24 October 2002, Singapore)

May you dare to honour your uniqueness! May you have the courage to go forth and make your migration dream come true! May you enjoy the migration journey and your personal growth!

Dear reader, we thank you very much for being interested in the experiences of German migrants to New Zealand. For whatever reason you have chosen to read this book – we hope that you get out of it what you have hoped for.

May this book inspire and encourage all of you to live your dreams!

Warmest wishes,

Petra
CHAPTER 1

STUDY BACKGROUND

Immigration is one of the central social and political issues of our times, with implications and repercussions across a broad geographic and intellectual range. It should be, accordingly, an area in which social psychologists engage themselves and to which they contribute their knowledge and perspectives.

(Deaux, 2000, p. 421)
Migration has always been an integral part of human life. However, during the last decade several features of migration have tremendously changed due to globalisation compressing time and space (Harvey, 1989). The scale and speed of migration has greatly increased (Yeoh, Willis, & Fakhri, 2003; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004). The personal backgrounds of migrants are more and more diverse (Trueba, 2002). Technological advances allow migrants to frequently visit and/or to communicate with their country of origin (Sanders, 2002) and open up new ways of gaining up-to-date and insider information, and social support. Societies of origin and host societies are increasingly multicultural, complex, and unstable due to their social make-up changing at a breathtaking pace. Lastly, due to increasing population aging and decline in Western countries even traditional immigration countries like New Zealand increasingly have to compete with other first world countries over highly educated and skilful migrants to facilitate their economic growth, and to counteract the adverse effects of their ageing populations and growing emigration. Although globalisation facilitates a desirable interconnectedness between people from different cultures and has a great potential for personal fulfilment and setting people free (Inda & Rosaldo, 2002), the new migration features might increase adaptation issues, like identity confusion and conflict, leading to a proliferation of distress and mental health problems (Marsella & Pedersen, 2004; Eytan, 2004).

An increase in adaptation issues are of significant concern for both individual migrants and host countries relying on immigration. Immigration is a major life transition (Heller, 1984). When immigrants arrive in the new country, they are faced with different conditions. They not only have to deal with different cultural values, beliefs, and practices, but they are also suddenly members of a minority group. While the majority group may welcome some migrants, they may also respond in a hostile and discriminating manner to other groups (Giddens, 1997; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald, & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). These two factors combined can lead to adaptation difficulties, resulting in psychological distress adversely affecting the mental well-being of immigrants (Cohen, 1996; Pernice & Brook, 1996).

From the perspective of the host countries adaptation issues are a significant concern for two reasons. Firstly, to be successful in the competition for valuable immigrants, first world countries try to attract young and highly qualified migrants (Pernice, Trlin, Henderson, & North, 2000) by investing considerable time and money in this endeavour. However, each year many immigrants leave their host countries. While many reasons contribute to leaving, poor adaptation is a main factor. A high leaving rate impacts negatively upon economic growth, because it deprives host country of valuable employees and businesses essential for economic growth (Kasper, 1990). It also diminishes the return from the investment of considerable public funds used to attract immigrants. Consequently, attracting and selecting new immigrants is only half the story. Successfully retaining them in the country and utilizing their skills in ways that contribute to the development of social capital is the other half and is crucial for the host country. However, unlike other countries such as Canada or Australia, New Zealand does not have a programme in place which assists immigrants to adapt to New Zealand once they are in the country (Spoonley, 2003). Further, New Zealand lacks timely and relevant information regarding the migration process and settlement experiences to inform their immigration and settlement policies, programs, and services. Secondly, as Bhugra and Mastrogiannis (2004) warn, increasing adaptation issues will lead to many more people experiencing major disease and that this will translate into a substantial social and economic burden for the host countries. This warning is substantiated by Marsella and Pedersen (2004) who alert to the fact that adaptation issues increasingly emerge as major counselling tasks.

However, distress can be prevented, and health and well-being facilitated by assisting immigrants to better adapt to their new environment (Cohen, 1996). Better adaptation will increase the likelihood of staying in New Zealand. To provide appropriate and proactive resources that effectively assist current and future migrants to deal with the obstacles of the migration process, to optimise their adaptation to their host country, and to maximise growth outcomes it is necessary to know which factors make immigrants more resilient and contribute to health/well-being, and which factors make immigrants more vulnerable to adaptation issues and contribute to distress and disease; how these factors interact; and which strategies migrants use to resolve the obstacles they encounter. Consequently, research which helps to shed light on the

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1 About 800 000 New Zealanders live abroad (Spoonley, 2003)
factors that influence the well-being and adaptation of migrants, and their decision whether to stay or to return, is crucial. Our research aimed to identify these factors by using an innovative design that covers the complexities of migration process.

OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE RESEARCH

Whenever researchers undertake research, the development of the research design is a very complex undertaking, because they want to ensure that the generated knowledge is of high quality, is viable, and has practical utility (Hayes & Oppenheim, 1997; Sexton, 1997). So that you can better assess the quality of the findings presented in the next chapters, we briefly introduce in this section the theoretical assumptions we made about migration and their implication for the research design, how our research relates to other research on migration, the research questions that we asked, and how we went about collecting and analysing our data.

Salutogenic Paradigm: A Positive Take on the Stresses of Migration

The odd thing about [psychology] is that it’s based upon the study of people who aren’t doing very well ... And the more you think about that, the stranger it seems. I mean, if you want to write a book about how to paint, or play chess, or be a good manager you’d start by studying people who are good at those things. You wouldn’t expect heavy sales of a book called Play Championship Golf by Learning the Secrets of the Worst 20 Players in the World.

(Skynner & Cleese, 1997, p. 2)

Most psychological research and the majority of migration research has started from the assumption that the experience of profound change, which migration presents, leads inevitably to dysfunctional outcomes – to distress (Antonovsky, 1990). These outcomes are often understood as symptoms of individual illness (Dohrenwend, 1978). Hence, migration researchers commonly focus on the negative pathological outcomes of stress resulting from migration by examining individuals and the relationship between migration and illness (Strümpfer, 1999). However, distress and illness represent only one side of migration (e.g., Antonovsky, 1990; Antonovsky, 1998; Strümpfer, 1999). On the other side, and maybe more important, are growth outcomes and well-being. Additionally, focusing on individuals fails to investigate how the social context of the home country, as well as of the host country, interacts with the individual characteristics, and how they together influence whether migration leads to positive or negative outcomes.

We did not assume that the outcomes of migration were necessarily negative, even when migrants returned home from their host country. Instead, we presumed that the personal experience of migration both could be both a challenge to a persons’ current equilibrium and a catalyst for adaptation (Antonovsky, 1991; Bloom, 1997; Higgins, 1994). We also assumed that since stress is intrinsic to human life, the demands presented by migration are not only stressful in the negative sense. Whether negative stress occurs depends on the meaning migrants give to their migration experiences (Antonovsky, 1990; Kahn & Byosiere, 1991; Lazarus, 1976; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In other words, it is the subjective interpretation of the migrant which gives meaning to the impact of migration. Migrants view migration only as stressful when they perceive that the demands presented by migration exceed their capabilities (Paton, 2000), and that the assistance the home and host society provide is not sufficient for dealing with migration demands (Levine & Perkins, 1997).

We also assumed that migrants make their experience meaningful in the context of their social environment. We believed that the migration process is influenced by dynamic, complex interactions between biological, psychological, and social personal characteristics of a migrant (capabilities); as well as between these personal characteristics and the physical (e.g. climate, fauna, flora), psychological (e.g. attitudes of host
country towards immigrants), and social environment (e.g. immigration policies, agencies providing service to migrants, history) (Antonovsky, 1998).

Another assumption that we did hold was that there is considerable diversity among migrants. Migrants differ in their personal characteristics and the influences from within the environment differ. As a result, migrants vary considerably in their stress responses (Cooper & Payne, 1991; Magill, 1996; Paton & Stephens, 1996). Hence, exposure to the demands of the migration process can lead to a range of outcomes along a health/disease continuum: positive, neutral, and negative consequences (Antonovsky, 1998). Consequently, stress can be both good (eustress), which leads to growth and facilitates adaptation; and bad (distress), which hinders adaptation and leads to illness (Kahn & Byosiere, 1991). In short, stressful situations, such as migration, may be rewarding and lead to health/growth and well-being, if immigrants are capable of successfully overcoming the challenges presented by the migration process (Paton, 2000). Thus, as Eytan (2004) argues, it is not only crucial to identify the factors that contribute to negative outcomes, but also, and maybe more importantly, the factors that contribute to positive outcomes such as growth, personal fulfilment, health and well-being for:

… those individuals who can best function in a diverse society will have a large cultural capital and greater ability to function effectively. The mastery of different languages, the ability to cross racial and ethnic boundaries, and general resilience associated with the ability to endure hardships and overcome obstacles will clearly be recognised as new cultural capital, not a handicap.

(Trueba, 2002, p. 24)

However, so far not much research has aimed at understanding well-adapted migrants despite increasing recognition of the importance of investigating resilience and positive outcomes when faced with challenges (Lam and Chan, 2004). In particular, there is a need to qualitatively investigate the subjective experiences of well-adapted migrants.

Symbolic Interactionism & Narrative Theory: The Importance of Interpretation and Meaning-making Processes

Since meaning of migration experiences seems to be crucial, we looked for theoretical assumptions that account for how people construct meaning. Two theoretical perspectives have helped us to understand processes of meaning-making: symbolic interactionism and narrative theory. We will provide a brief overview of both frameworks in the following pages.

Symbolic Interactionism

According to symbolic interactionists, the central object people negotiate in social interactions is their self or personal identity (Denzin, 1992). The meaning of self/identity is constructed through interaction of self with others within the world in which they live. Situations within the world constantly provide the self with experiences. Most of the time, the situations are fairly regular and can become taken for granted. However, if the routine of situations is disrupted by unusual experiences (epiphany), as it often happens during migration, people are forced to change their interpretations and actions, because they do not work anymore, and to redefine themselves (Denzin, 1992). For this reason, epiphanic experiences often represent turning-point experiences in individual lives, which result in reconstructions of the self/identity. The resulting new interpretations and interactions, in turn, influence the social structure. As a result, the conditions in interactional situations change. Thus, individuals need to construct new meanings and engage in new actions to adapt to the new conditions. In this spiralling process the self and the world are constantly changing and
evolving together. The interaction between the self and the world also indicates that both psychological and social factors influence how people interpret situations and act (Blumer, 1969).

Based on this assumption, symbolic interactionists study the fundamentally dialectic, reciprocal, and transactional relationships among people, the world in they live, and forms of communication processes (Denzin, 1992). In particular, they investigate how people construct their interpretations/meanings and how people link their experiences to cultural representations of these experiences. To gain the desired understanding of the meaning making process, symbolic interactionism maintains that the interpretive process must be viewed from the subjective view of the people who are studied (Flick, 1995). Thus, researchers need to study the personal experiences of their participants by immersing themselves deeply into the participants’ personal world to perceive things the way that participants see them (Prior, 1997).

Symbolic interactionists aim at discovering how people themselves define and experience their world (subjective view) by examining the meanings everyday experiences have for people (Bowers, 1988). They look at immediate everyday, routine behaviour and autobiographies of the people they study (Denzin, 1992). The stories people tell about their experiences are seen as “the window into the inner life of a person” (Denzin, 1992, p. 2), which allows symbolic interactionists to reconstruct interpretive processes within the prevailing context at the time of the experience (Flick, 1995). Symbolic interactionists try to discover the conditions under which people live and how those conditions affect interpretations and actions (Blumer, 1969). Thus, they examine the context in which people live also.

The outcome of studies based on symbolic interactionism is subjective theories in the form of local narratives (Denzin, 1992). These narratives reflect the theories which people use to explain the world (Flick, 1995). They aim at making “the world of lived experiences directly accessible to the reader” (Denzin, 1992, p. xv), and at drawing attention to the interaction between personal problems and supporting structures (Flick, 1995).

**Narrative Theory**

Narrative theory specifies that to create a sense of self/identity and to achieve a sense of meaning in their experiences and to understand their experiences migrants tell stories and converse in interactions (Crossley, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Because the meaning of experiences is constituted through the relationship of experiences to other experiences in their lives (Polkinghorne, 1988), migrants need to find meaningful connections between experiences of temporality and personal action in order to understand the meaning of an experience.

If migrants cannot achieve structure and order in their experiences and, thus, can not make sense of them, their stories will be incoherent (Crossley, 2000). Narratives can break down if migrants have traumatic experiences; if they experience a crisis or change. As a consequence, their identity might become shattered and they might experience mental illness. However, if migrants manage to construct a coherent story when experiencing crisis or change, their identity will incorporate the new experiences and they will experience health and well being. As Brooks (1994) puts it “Mens sana in fabula sana: mental health is a coherent life story, neurosis is a faulty narrative” (p. 49). Consequently, stories have the potential to either contribute to distress and illness and/or to facilitate growth and health/well-being, because how migrants construct their experiences determines how they think, perceive, behave and interact (Crossley, 2000).

According to narrative theory, how migrants construct their personal stories, and thus their identity, is guided and influenced by the context – by cultural stories (King, 1996). These cultural stories are narratives of the particular culture in which migrants live. They contain the stock of meanings and social roles a culture holds, and how these roles are related. These cultural stories provide resources for migrants to interpret their experiences and appropriately act within societies (Polkinghorne, 1988). However, the overarching cultural stories also represent the perspective of the dominant majority culture, and often silence or marginalise the stories of particular migrants or minority group (King, 1996).
Narratives represent the psychological and social worlds of participants. Hence, stories participants tell in narrative interviews “hold the outline of their internalised personal narratives” (McAdams, 1993, p. 20). Consequently, by studying the narratives people tell, researchers can gain insight into the meaning systems people hold about their world and their migration process – into their psychological and social realities. Thus, it is fruitful to investigate the narratives people tell and the different interpretations they use in their narratives. Additionally, given the influence of cultural stories, it is useful to examine the personal, historical and cultural context within which narratives are told and how this context might influence the particular personal stories told to them (Murray, 1997).

The goal of narrative analysis is to develop a theory of typical life courses in a particular area of human experience (Flick, 2001). Narrative analysts collect the different interpretive narratives held by people of a particular group, fully describing them, uncovering themes or plots in the narratives, and providing in the end a meta story that supplies insights into the experiences people have had, and how they integrated them into their meaning systems; their identity; and culture. This knowledge sheds light onto why people acted in particular ways, how they successfully dealt with and adapted to crisis and change, and how cultural belief systems, institutional practices and interpersonal actions influence peoples’ constructions and thus their well-being. Therefore, metastories have the potential for reconstructing social realities in a positive way (Flick, 2001). They can give guidance for successfully adopting and communicating hope and thus contribute to the development of well-being and a healthier society. As Murray (1997) points out:

in creating new stories the task is not to reflect prevailing dominant stories within which disease and death are accommodated but rather to attempt to develop more subversive stories which can contribute to the creation of a healthier society (p. 10).

The knowledge produced by narrative analysis can also be useful for the people/groups studied. They can use it to enhance power and control over their own actions (Polkinghorne, 1988).

**Combined Approach**

Taken together, the salutogenic paradigm, symbolic interactionism, and narrative theory suggest that, for German migrants to New Zealand, the question of whether to stay or to return is influenced by the meanings they give to their migration experiences. These meaning-making process is the result of interaction within the conditions set by the German and New Zealand culture and history (social factors) and are influenced by their interpretive process. In the interpretive process, German migrants reflect on their experiences and try to create coherent stories or narratives regarding their new experiences during the migration process (psychological factors). Because of the interaction between psychological and social factors, the interpretations constantly change and develop. Migrants constantly interpret stimuli from the environment while interacting with their environment. The aim of these interpretations is, on the one hand, to understand themselves and the world, and, on the other hand, to relate to their experiences in a meaningful way. The way in which they construct their stories and conversations influences the way they perceive, think, behave, and interact. The migration experience confronts immigrants with new situations which disrupt their routine and might force them to change their interpretations and actions, and to redefine themselves (epiphanic experiences). The better they manage to create meaningful, coherent stories about their experiences and act accordingly, the more likely they are to achieve a good sense of self/identity and health/well-being. These positive outcomes might make it more likely that they decide to stay in New Zealand. However, the more they experience difficulties to make sense of their experiences in meaningful, coherent ways the more likely the migrants are to experience difficulties in their interactions and consequently a crisis in identity and ill-health. These negative outcomes might make it more likely that they decide to return. Figure 1.1. provides a graphical overview of the combined theoretical assumptions.
Meaning given to migration experiences

Interpretation Process = Interpretation of stimuli from environment while interacting

- Understand themselves & world
- Relate to experience in meaningful way
- How people think, perceive, behave & interact

Meaningful/coherent stories & act accordingly and/or Faulty stories & act accordingly

- Eustress (positive)
- Distress (negative)

- Good sense of self
- Ill-health

ADAPTATION & STAYING and ADAPTATION & RETURNING

Figure 1.1. Overview of Combined Theoretical Assumptions
GAPS IN MIGRATION RESEARCH

As with much academic research, our study included a review of the migration literature. This review brought several gaps to light. Firstly, migration research has focused on migrants moving from third world to first world countries and has concluded that this migration happens mainly for economic or political reasons (Cohen, 1996). However, migration from one first world country to another is, in general, an underresearched area. What factors motivate this type of migration? Are there any different motivators? Studying the experiences of German migrants to New Zealand will help to answer these questions.

Secondly, migration research has focused primarily on investigating the experiences of immigrants in the host country, thereby neglecting the experiences before migration, which might also exert a considerable influence upon the immigration experiences of immigrants. The few studies which looked into pre-migration experiences did not link them to the later migration experience. For example, although there is research regarding the motives for migration (e.g., Bierbrauer & Pedersen, 1996; Gruber & Kraft, 1991), the relationship between the motives and adaptation has not yet been investigated nor have the concrete motives of individuals (Diehl & Ochsmann, 2000). Further, the literature does not adequately represent the experience of migrants who decided to leave the host country again and to return home. Contrasting the experiences of stayers with those of returners might yield useful insights into what differentiates them, thereby extracting the psychological and social factors that lead to health and well-being. In addition, the experiences of returners might give migrants who are undecided whether to stay or return valuable information for their decision making. To fill these two gaps, we decided to examine the whole migration process from the point where the German migrants started thinking about migrating to New Zealand up to their life now in New Zealand (stayers) or their life in Germany (returners).

Thirdly, gendered experiences and gender relations seem to have been ignored to a large extent in the study of migration (Willis & Yeoh, 2000). However, the study of gender relations is, for several reasons, of considerable importance. For one, migrants are increasingly women. Therefore, there is an urgent need to examine how migration affects their health (Rodin & Ickovics, 1990). Further, men’s experiences regarding health have remained largely unarticulated during the last ten years (Bönisch-Brednich, 2002). Since many contextual influences have changed during this time, it is important to revisit their experiences. Furthermore, research increasingly suggests that adaptational strategies may reflect factors that are unique to each gender (Keita & Hurrel, 1994; Schnittger & Bird, 1990). This makes it imperative to study male and female experiences, interpretations, and outcomes simultaneously, but separately. Lastly, the majority of migrants appear to migrate with a partner (e.g., Gruber & Kraft, 1991). Hence, the decision whether to migrate, and to stay in the host country or to return, is likely to be made in interaction with the other partner. To capture the complex relationship in which gender relations before and during the migration process influence the health of both, and to find out about gender differences, similarities, and interactions regarding their experiences of the migration process, this research focuses on both men and women by studying migrant couples.

Lastly, in addition to providing a migrant group which migrates from a first world country to another first world country, German migrants have been given little consideration in research. New Zealand is one of the five most favoured emigration destinations for Germans. Yet, to our knowledge, there exist only four studies of German immigrants to New Zealand. The studies conducted by Bade (1993, 1998) and his team of specialist contributors investigated the history of migration of German-speaking migrants to New Zealand and the contributions of German-speaking settlers to New Zealand’s society before, during, and shortly after World War I and World War II; they provide a socio-historical account of German migration to New Zealand. Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) conducted a psychological study to investigate how internal and external factors affected the emotional and behavioural acculturation process of 165 German immigrants living in New Zealand. This quantitative study used a survey to collect the data. It was designed as a cross-section research and thus did not investigate the relationship with regard to the migration process. In investigating the relationship, Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) could only concentrate on selected central variables, rather than on exploring the variety of factors that might play a role in this relationship. To represent the internal factors, Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) selected demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, education, qualifications, marital status, children, and economic situation), locus of control,
individualism/collectivism, and life goals.

At the time when our study was designed, only one qualitative study had been conducted regarding German immigrants to New Zealand. Gruber and Kraft (1991) studied the motives for migrating to New Zealand by conducting qualitative interviews with 41 German immigrants living in the Auckland region. They focused primarily on the environmental reasons for migrating to New Zealand. In addition, they were interested in how German immigrants perceive the environmental situation in New Zealand, whether they feel well with regards to their environment, how they settled, and whether they want to return. In accordance with their focus, Gruber and Kraft (1991) limited their sample to German immigrants who migrated after 1980 and who indicated that environmental reasons played a role in their migration decision. Further, they sampled only German immigrants who lived in the Auckland region, which is very distinct in many respects from other parts of New Zealand. Accordingly, they might have missed important aspects. Unfortunately, Gruber and Kraft (1991) do not specify their theoretical assumptions and research methodology. Inferring from the focus and outcomes of these studies, the theoretical assumptions and the research methodology of their research differ substantially from those of the present study.

After we had finished the data collection for this research, Bönisch-Brednich (2002) published the findings of her ethnological study regarding the German migrants to New Zealand. The very comprehensive study is based on fieldwork, life history interviews with 102 German migrants, archival sources, statistics, immigration policies, and secondary literature. It provides a comprehensive historical account outlining the major migration experiences of German refugees (1936-1940), of German immigrants who came shortly after World War II (1948-1952), of young work migrants (1956-66), and of German immigrants who migrated in the 1970, 1980, and 1990s. The research also identified and discusses several specific themes common to the migration experiences of all periods (e.g. what it means to be a foreigner; comparing countries: Germany versus New Zealand; missing, organising, discovering: emigration and materiality; and gender and migration). Moreover, it excellently unravels the influence of social conditions on the experiences of German immigrants. Because the aimed at offering a historical account and themes common across various migration periods; only a small part of the research focuses on the recent experiences and does not cover the migration process in chronological order. Further, by concentrating on migrants living in New Zealand and establishing better rapport with female participants Bönisch-Brednich (2002), the findings do not include the perspective of migrants having returned to Germany and the male perspective might be underrepresented. Because of missing out on the experiences of returners, her account presents only a very limited number of obstacles and how they were overcome. Although this study appears very similar to the present research at first glance, it differs in important ways with respect to the theoretical assumptions, the focus of the study, and the research methodology.

Overall, the experiences of German migrants in general and German migrant women in particular are inadequately represented in migration research. This disregard is surprising, since many Germans migrate to other countries each year and the tendency is increasing (Diehl & Ochsmann, 2000). One reason for this gap in the literature might be that German migration researchers concentrate on studying immigrants to Germany due to Germany experiencing many difficulties with integrating immigrants (Schumann, 2001). Another reason might be a lack of researchers who are interested and able to study Germans emigrating and immigrating.

**SUBSEQUENT FOCUS: RESEARCH AIMS, QUESTION, AND INTENDED OUTCOMES**

Combined the theoretical assumptions and gaps in migration research suggest three main research foci. Firstly, we concentrate on German migrants and on migrant couples. Secondly, we qualitatively explore the subjective experiences of the whole migration process (emigration and immigration) so that we can provide a theory of the interpretive processes that happened during the migration process, and how and why these interpretations changed over time. In doing so we need to particularly pay attention to the experiences of well-adapted migrants and the positive the health/growth outcomes of migration, and investigate factors that
facilitate health and well-being among German migrants. Thirdly, we examine the particular meaning German migrants assign to their experiences, and how their meaning-making process is influenced by the cultural and historical context presented by New Zealand and Germany. To gain these insights we investigate both the individual (psychological) and the social (contextual) factors that influence the migration process. Integrating the psychological with the social is capable of providing more powerful explanations of health and disease, because the insights it provide take account of both our social and psychological lives (Spicer & Chamberlain, 1994). To capture the social factors we need to study the broader historical and cultural context in which the German migrants live, because that allows us to elaborate on the conditions which contextualise actions of German migrants and how these conditions influence their interpretations.

We were interested in starting to answer the following questions:

- What factors motivate the migration from one first world country to another first world country?
- Which psychological and social factors make the experiences positive; facilitate health, well-being, resilience; and increase the likelihood of staying? Which psychological and social factors make the experience negative; increase distress and dis-ease; and increase the likelihood of returning?
- Do the pre-migration experiences influence the immigration experiences and, if yes, in which way do they influence the immigration experience?
- What are the positive health/growth outcomes of migration?
- How do German immigrants renegotiate their identities during the immigration process?
- In which ways are the experiences, interpretations, and outcomes of female and male migrants similar and in which ways different? How do the two genders interact?

In addition to contributing to the understanding of the migration process, we hoped to pool the experiences of German migrants to point to ways in which preventative interventions can be designed which may effectively assist German migrants living in New Zealand, and future German migrants, to adapt to their new environment, and thus prevent them from leaving New Zealand. In particular, we wanted to provide the basis for the development of a book German migrants and former German migrants; to give some recommendations for the development of New Zealand migration and race relation policies, and the personal interrelationships between New Zealanders and immigrants; to contribute to the development of sensitivity to, and awareness of, factors affecting migrants within institutions providing service to migrants in order to assist them to tailor their service to the specific needs of male and female German migrants; and to provide the participants of this study with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and to make sense of them.

OUTLINE OF METHODOLOGY AND METHODS USED

... Each methodology brings us a vantage point, a place of seeing what we may otherwise have missed in the overwhelmingness of the whole. ... Each has its place. Together, the whole shall come together as jigsaw ...

(Smythe, 2000, p. 18)

To answer our research questions it was necessary to understand the migration process from the inside; that is, what meaning the migration process has for German migrants themselves and how they construct the meaning of the migration process from their point of view; how interpretations change in the course of their migration; and how the cultural and historical context influences their interpretation process. Qualitative research offers a research strategy, and data collection and analysis methods, which are capable of investigating meaning, capturing change, and incorporating cultural/historical context (Chamberlain, Stephens, & Lyons, 1997). Based on a literature review of the various methodologies (i.e. how research should proceed), and data collection and analysis methods available to qualitative researchers, we designed an innovative research design. We used a synergy of Straussian grounded theory and ethnography as research methodology, and merged episodic interviews, participant observation, and document review to
collect data. To analyse the collected data, we employed the various grounded theory analysis strategies. We turn now to outlining each of these methodologies and methods.

**Grounded Theory**

From the different grounded theory approaches, we adopted grounded theory as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), because it is in agreement with the theoretical assumptions we choose for this project, it provides researchers with several strategies for conducting qualitative research to the highest standards, it is used particularly within practitioner disciplines like health psychology and has been shown to successfully explore issues regarding health and illness (Chamberlain, 1999). Additionally, grounded theory has several characteristics which allow fulfilling the implications of the various theoretical paradigms. Most importantly, the objectives of grounded theory are in tune with the aims of this project. Grounded theory aims at the development of an interpretive local theory that is a conceptually detailed, deep, and integrated (Hayes, 2000), reflects the participants’ stories (Browne & Sullivan, 1999), and explains how individuals construct meaning, how the meaning making process is influenced by particular conditions and contexts, the strategies individuals use to manage their daily lives, and the consequences of these strategies. The focus lies, thereby, on capturing the interpretive process involved in the phenomena and the social structures modifying it (Chamberlain, 1999). Bowers (1988) suggests that grounded theory can be used to develop new theories in under-researched areas.

Grounded theory has several key characteristics. Firstly, theories emerge out of the collected data instead of being proposed at the outset (Mertens, 1998). Secondly, there is no attempt to test any already existing theory, so that that pre-existing ideas do not contaminate data collection, analysis and interpretation (Chamberlain, 1999; Pidgeon, 1997). Thirdly, theory is generated through the constant interplay between proposing hypotheses (induction) and checking them (deduction) in a cyclical manner (Hayes, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this iterative process, which is depicted in Figure 1.2., data collection and analysis are intertwined and proceed continuously throughout the research until saturation of the theory is achieved – until the theory can explain all the gathered data (Chamberlain, 1999). Understandings, categories, and theoretical insights emerge directly from the data, and the researcher constantly proposes new insights. These insights are then tested deductively through further data collection and analysis. The insights resulting from the new data are compared to the tentative hypotheses that have emerged so far to see whether the new data confirm or disconfirm them. The resulting tentative hypotheses are again tested against new data. This process is described as “a flip-flop between the theory which is being developed and the data which are producing the theory” (Hayes, 2000, p. 184).

**Ethnography**

The researcher *must* get close to the people whom he [she] studies; he understands that their actions are best comprehended when observed on the spot – in the natural, ongoing environment where they live and work. ... A dialogue with persons in their natural situation will reveal the nuances of meaning from which their perspective and definitions are continually forged.

Schatzman and Strauss (1973, pp. 5-6)

Ethnography is the primary and well-established methodology of social anthropology and sociology schools (Coffey et al., 1996; Huberman & Miles, 1994). Ethnography is the study and description of everyday life and common sense knowledge with the aim of describing the participants’ points of view – to understand actions/interactions and concepts through the eyes and ears of the people studied (Bowers, 1996). Because ethnographers assume that the meaning people give to their actions/interactions can only be understood in relation to the specific actions within a specific context, participant observers explore how people use common sense knowledge in their everyday activities in order to reveal how people achieve order in their actions/interactions. However, ethnographers also go beyond what people take for granted, and thus are not
Figure 1.2. The Iterative Research Process of Grounded Theory
aware of, to reach their aim of producing “explicit interpretations of the meaning and functions of human actions” (Flick, 1998, p. 149). To gain these insights, ethnographers live with their participants for a while and immerse themselves as much as possible in their daily life and activities in order to “grasp the participants’ points of view, their relation to life, to realise their version of their world” (Malinowski, 1922, p. 25) and to get to know the underlying structures and patterns in the context of the surroundings, and achieve a good understanding of the meanings and function of actions, motives for doing things, and interactions between the participants and other people (Sluka, 1998).

Several reasons made us decide to complement grounded theory with ethnography. Ethnography is in harmony with the epistemological assumptions of the study and fulfils several implications of the theoretical paradigms. Ethnography is suitable for studying the ethnic minority of German immigrants to New Zealand, since it is concerned with the study of ethnic groups to contribute to their liberation (Bowers, 1996). Further, while it shares much common ground with grounded theory (e.g. exploring of social phenomena, combining data collection and analysis, investigating a small number of participants in depth), ethnography expands and complements grounded theory. Prolonged immersion in the participants lives by living with them for a while allows the researcher to experience the routine daily life of participants and, thus, enables them to observe actions/interactions as well as the social context within which these actions/interactions occur. Moreover, ethnography assists in grounding theories in everyday lives by ensuring that all the aspects relevant to the phenomena studied are identified and defined as participants interpret them (Bowers, 1996).

Lastly, the goal of ethnography is in correspondence with and extends the aims of grounded theory thereby ensuring that they meet together the aims of the study. Like grounded theory, ethnography seeks to identify significant conceptual structures and their interrelationships (Geertz, 1973) and to produce “explicit interpretations of the meaning and functions of human actions” (Flick, 1998, p. 149). However, ethnography also aims at producing thick descriptions - interpretations that are grounded and rich in detail; that construct a reading of what is going on for the participants (participants’ view); that explore the meaning and function of social actions; and that examine how the social context, especially taken-for-granted knowledge, conditions the meaning-making process (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Geertz, 1973).

**Episodic Interview**

Collecting data with interviews is highly appropriate for this study, since they are excellent tools for studies which aim at gaining in-depth understanding of experiences, perceptions and decision-making process, and researchers need to learn about biographical details and processes to gain this understanding, which require continuity and completeness of the participant’s story (Morgan, 1997). The episodic interview is a specific type of interview, which offers an alternative to the time-consuming whole-life narrative interviews by utilising the advantages of semi-structured and narrative interviews (Flick, 1995, 1998, 2001). It focuses the life stories of participants on the experiences the participants perceive as most relevant and salient for the topic under investigation, and how they thought and felt about the situations, episodes, and/or events they experienced.

The episodic interview was chosen as one method for data collection in this study for several reasons. Firstly, the episodic interview is recommended for investigating everyday life and change (e.g. life transitions like migration), and has been shown to be particularly useful for investigating different groups (Flick, 1995). Hence, it should yield insights into the commonalities and differences between German immigrants who stayed and German immigrants who returned. Secondly, the episodic interview provides descriptions of the sequence and context of particular situations/experiences as well as abstract arguments for acting in particular ways in the particular situation (Flick, 1995). It collects narratives to access narrative-episodic knowledge and answers to concrete questions to access semantic knowledge. The narratives provide knowledge about the sequence and context of the interpretive process. The answers supply the abstract concepts people formed out of their assumptions and their interrelations. Together, these two forms of knowledge explain how people arrive at particular interpretations.
Thirdly, the assumptions underlying the episodic interview are in harmony with the assumptions of this project. Thus, it provides the information the theoretical paradigms implied as necessary for gaining the desired insights: subjective experiences and meanings of the participants, interpretation processes, how people construct meaning, and factors that influence the interpretation process. Fourthly, the episodic interview fits well with the grounded theory methodology, since it is designed for a combination of a linear and circular research process and the data generated by the episodic interview are suitable for analysis with grounded theory analysis strategies (Flick, 1995).

The episodic interview has several distinguishing characteristics. The first characteristic is that, like semi-structured interviews, it uses an interview guide to “orient the interviewer to the topical domains” of the phenomenon studied (Flick, 1998, p. 108). The second element is that the researcher explains the basic principles of the interview to the participants before the interview, to familiarise them with the interview format. This procedure has the additional benefit of making participants more confident and, thus, putting participants at ease. The most important aspect of episodic interviews is that they elicit narratives by inviting participants again and again to tell their stories of their experiences and to ask questions concerning the fantasies they hold regarding changes in the future (Flick, 1998). To access semantic knowledge, the researchers ask participants explicitly for their subjective definitions of relevant concepts/phenomena and descriptions of abstract relationships between these concepts. The repeated invitation of participants to explain or describe objects and the openness for new subjective definitions presented by participants is perceived by grounded theory as essential for capturing the participants’ view and for the discovery of unknown things (Bowers, 1988).

**Participant Observation**

We also made use of participant observation to collect data for this project. Participant observation is the most common data collection method of ethnographers. It involves researchers observing and participating in their participants’ life to differing degrees (Flick, 1999). Participant observation is suited to the study for it is useful for finding out what is going on (Kuzel, 2000). It allows collecting highly naturalistic data on a wide spectrum of highly personal and habitual behaviours, which are very difficult to capture with other data collection methods, in relation to a wide spectrum of aspects of the natural context (e.g. other people, living circumstances, policies) in-depth over time, and provides the space and time for open discussions regarding the research topic (Morgan, 1997). The gained observations and impressions are systematically recorded in the form of fieldnotes.

Participant observation gives researchers a second way of understanding the participants and complements interviews in useful ways by counteracting their disadvantages. Whereas interviews provide researchers with reports about experiences the people they study have had, actually participating in and observing the daily life of participants allows researchers to understand their participants from the inside - to start to experience reality as the participants themselves do (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The participants’ reality becomes the researcher’s personal experience, which greatly enhances the researcher’s theoretical sensitivity and enables the researcher to gain a holistic perspective of the phenomena. Further, participant observation allows taken-for-granted knowledge, which participants might not tell in interviews to be explored (Bowers, 1988). Explicating the taken for granted knowledge enables researchers to better understand how the social context conditions the meaning-making process. Furthermore, staying with the participants for a while gives the participants also an opportunity to reflect on their experiences. As a result, they will become aware of issues, which might otherwise be lost. The observations and participation in the daily life of participants also assists in the generation of questions for the episodic interviews.

Another important advantage of participant observation is that it facilitates the establishment of good rapport and equal, trusting, and respecting relationships with the participants. This kind of relationship is crucial for gaining deep insights and for generating valid knowledge in both the interview and the participant observation, since participants will only honestly and in detail share their thoughts and emotions if they trust the researcher and, thus, feel safe, comfortable and competent in their interaction (Blumer, 1969; Radley,
An open and safe atmosphere is more likely to occur in equal, trusting, empathetic, warm and genuine relationships where there is a good rapport. Only if the participants are willing to share their experiences and interpretations can researchers gain deeper insights into their experiences. To establish this conducive atmosphere, it is necessary to have extended contact with the participants (von Simson Rodrigues Moraes, 1998).

Participant observation allows conducting the interviews in the participants’ own natural environment. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) this is the best interview strategy, because then participants are more at ease. Interviewing participants in their familiar environment together with the conducive atmosphere created by living with participants for some days may enhance participants’ disclosure, and, hence, the richness of the data gathered. Lastly, whereas interviews allow initial insights into the phenomenon under study, participant observation gives researchers the opportunity to check, deepen, and revise the knowledge they gained in the interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

**Document Review**

Our third method of data collection was a document review. To gain an overview of migration to New Zealand in general, and German migrants to New Zealand in particular, and to provide a general context, this study provides a review of documents regarding the history of German migration and settlement in New Zealand (i.e. New Zealand census data and immigration policies). Social phenomenon such as migration must be understood in its historical context, for one cannot fully understand the present without knowing the past. Thus, one has to look at the before-the-beginning (Levine & Perkins, 1997). German migrants have a distinct past, which might influence their belief systems, attitudes and behaviours and thus influence the construction of their experiences and choice of how they dealt with the immigration process. Moreover, although they chose a country on the other side of the world as their new home, this country was a British colony populated by a majority of British settlers, who were opponents of Germany in World War I and World War II. This constellation might also influence the belief system, attitudes, and coping strategies of Germans immigrants.

Taken together, the outline of the various methodologies and methods shows that the synergy of these different methodologies and methods will provide very useful information for answering the proposed research questions. So how did this research design looked in practice? How did we get our participants? Who were the participants - what were their backgrounds? What did we actually do to get the desired insights? How did we analyse the collected data? How do we present the findings? In the next section we will provide answers to these questions.

**RESEARCH CONDUCT**

**Participants & Recruitment**

To collect the data we needed, we purposefully wanted to investigate an equal number of stayer and returner couples, because we assumed that the migration experience of stayers and returners might differ in some respects, which would allow us to elucidate factors which influenced their decision to stay or to return. We also assumed that by including couples, we would be able to identify factors relevant for both women and men.

To take part in the research, potential participants had to fulfil specific criteria, depending on whether they still lived here (stayers) or returned to Germany (returners). The stayers were eligible to participate if they:

- were German and permanent residents of New Zealand or New Zealand citizens,
- had immigrated together with their current partner/spouse to New Zealand,
had lived longer than five years in New Zealand,  
intended to live in New Zealand permanently, and  
were confident in expressing themselves sufficiently in English.

The specific criteria that the participants lived in New Zealand for longer than five years was included because we assumed that after five years living in New Zealand the participants were reasonably settled and were reasonably certain that they wanted to stay.

The returners were eligible to take part in the research if they:

- were German,  
- had immigrated together with their current partner/spouse to New Zealand and had lived in New Zealand for a while,  
- had returned to Germany, and  
- were confident in expressing themselves sufficiently in English.

To find potential participants, we used snowballing (chain referral). We started the snowballing with Petra’s personal contacts (i.e. German immigrant friends, New Zealand friends whose circle of friends I knew included German immigrants) as well as other contact possibilities in New Zealand and Germany (e.g. members/employees of German organisations and institutions such as the Goethe Societies, German Departments at the Universities, German Embassy). The contacts covered many different places within the North and South Islands of New Zealand, and within both the former East Germany and the former West Germany. Petra explained the research to these contact persons via the phone or email, and asked them whether they knew other German immigrants who would fit the criteria for participation and/or whether they had German friends who might know German immigrants who fitted the above criteria.

Through the support of over 50 contact people in New Zealand and Germany, reaching to up to six contact generations in some contact lines, we identified 18 German immigrant couples who decided to stay in New Zealand and nine German immigrant couples who returned to Germany. Petra sent these couples either a hard copy of the research Information Sheet or an email with a link to the web version of the Information Sheet. The participants who took part in the study were highly diverse in terms of their personal backgrounds. Please refer to Table 1.1 for an overview of their characteristics.

All the participants were fully informed about the study, and what would be asked of them. We assured them that their identities would not be disclosed, and they were free to leave the project at any time up until the completion of analysis. It was a tremendous privilege and honour to work with these volunteers, especially for Petra who was able to participate in their lives for some time and to interview them. Not only were they all very hospitable, but they were also surprisingly open in telling their migration experiences. The participants and their stories, which were fascinating and deeply insightful, provided an extensive and rich body of data.

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1 We would like to acknowledge the assistance of over 50 contact people in New Zealand and Germany who helped us identify couples to invite into the research project. We are deeply indebted for your generous gift of time and energy.  
2 The ethical protocol for our data collection was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee on (insert date) (insert approval number in brackets)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Participants (PC)</th>
<th>Stayer Couples (SC)</th>
<th>Returner Couples (RC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range/ Mean Years Living in NZ</td>
<td>8 months - 17 years / 7.87 years</td>
<td>5 - 17 / 11.5 years</td>
<td>8 months - 8 years / 4.2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range Year of Return Migration</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1994 - 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range Years of Living in Germany</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9 months - 8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range/ Mean Age in 2002</td>
<td>34 - 58 / 45</td>
<td>34 - 58 / 47</td>
<td>38 - 47 / 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range/ Mean Age at Migration</td>
<td>21 - 41 / 36</td>
<td>21 - 41 / 36</td>
<td>29 - 38 / 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Types</td>
<td>7 PC married</td>
<td>3 SC married</td>
<td>4 RC married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 PC de-facto</td>
<td>1 SC de-facto</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>1 PC no children</td>
<td>1 PC no children</td>
<td>1 RC no children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 PC 1 child</td>
<td>2 SC 1 child</td>
<td>1 RC 1 child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 PC 2 children</td>
<td>2 SC 2 children</td>
<td>2 RC 2 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Professional Education of Each Participant</td>
<td>4 trade certificates (apprenticeship)</td>
<td>2 trade certificates (apprenticeship)</td>
<td>2 trade certificates (apprenticeship)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 advanced trade certificates</td>
<td>1 advanced trade certificate (due to migration)</td>
<td>1 advanced trade certificate (due to migration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 unfinished MA’s (due to migration)</td>
<td>1 unfinished MA (due to migration)</td>
<td>1 unfinished MA (due to migration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 MA’s</td>
<td>3 MA’s</td>
<td>1 MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 PhD’s</td>
<td>1 PhD</td>
<td>2 PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Residence in Germany of Each Participant Before Migration</td>
<td>10 = North Germany/Former West</td>
<td>6 = North Germany/Former West</td>
<td>4 = North Germany/Former West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Middle Germany/Former East</td>
<td>2 = South Germany/Former West</td>
<td>2 = South Germany/Former East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = South Germany/Former East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings Living in Germany of Each Participant</td>
<td>1 = no siblings</td>
<td>1 = no siblings</td>
<td>1 = no siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 = 1 sibling</td>
<td>5 = 1 sibling</td>
<td>5 = 1 sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = 2 siblings</td>
<td>1 = 2 siblings</td>
<td>1 = 2 siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = 3 siblings</td>
<td>1 = 3 siblings</td>
<td>1 = 3 siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 = 4 siblings</td>
<td>1 = 4 siblings</td>
<td>1 = 4 siblings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

Table 1.2 provides an overview of the data collection by means of ethnography and episodic interview in chronological order. With the exception of one couple\(^3\), Petra stayed with each participant couple in their home for up to a week. The duration of this phase was very much a balance between being sensible about how much time we could ask of them, the time available for the project and the need to gain insights into the participants’ context, the place where they live, and the life they live.

Table 1.2 Overview of Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnography (Participant Observation)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Episodic Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In New Zealand</strong> 25.05. - 17.07.2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Stayer Couple 25.05. - 02.06.2002</td>
<td>North Island, Eastern Region</td>
<td>1.00 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerlinde</td>
<td>3.00 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudolf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stayer Couple 03.07. - 10.07.2002</td>
<td>South Island, Southern Region</td>
<td>1.40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blümchen</td>
<td>3.40 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MrX</td>
<td>3.00 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Stayer Couple 07.09. - 14.09.2002</td>
<td>North Island, South Region</td>
<td>3.00 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie</td>
<td>1.40 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde</td>
<td>1.30 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In Germany</strong> 18.07. - 31.08.2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Returner Couple 02.08. - 05.08.2002</td>
<td>North Germany, Former East Germany</td>
<td>2.30 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalene</td>
<td>2.00 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Returner Couple 05.08. - 07.08.2002</td>
<td>North Germany, Former West Germany</td>
<td>3.00 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Returner Couple 07.08. - 10.08.2002</td>
<td>Middle Germany, Former West Germany</td>
<td>6.00 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ame</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felix</td>
<td>3.30 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Returner Couple 25.08. - 26.08.2002</td>
<td>Middle Germany, Former West Germany</td>
<td>3.00 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>2.40 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In New Zealand</strong> 31.08. - 14.09.2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Stayer Couple 07.09. - 14.09.2002</td>
<td>North Island, South Region</td>
<td>3.00 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inge</td>
<td>3.00 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uwe</td>
<td>3.00 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography Conducted: 3 with Stayers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 with Returners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Time Spent: 33 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) This couple was not comfortable with Petra staying with them, but offered to do multiple interviews. We were happy to accommodate their needs.
### Fieldwork Time and Interviews Conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Time:</th>
<th>4.71 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range Time:</td>
<td>2 to 7 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews Conducted:</th>
<th>8 with Stayers 7 with Returners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Time:</td>
<td>42.30 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Time:</td>
<td>2.50 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range Time:</td>
<td>1 to 6 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Petra stayed with each participant couple in their home for up to a week to participate in and observe their daily life. Interestingly, doing fieldwork with returner couples proved to be more difficult. For them, to have her stay one week was too much. The two major reasons provided were that they did not have the time to participate a whole week and that relationship problems created an unpleasant atmosphere to which they did not wish to expose on Petra for a longer time. As will become obvious, these two reasons are important in relation to the migration process. Petra used every opportunity to participate in activities with participants, and to observe them during interactions with each other and with other people. In order to become like a member of the household, she tried to adapt as much as possible to their daily routines, to help the participants (e.g. picking children up, doing the dishes, assisting in preparing meals, working in the workshop), and to go wherever the participants would lead her. Petra carefully and systematically recorded the observations and the discussions outside the interview as well as methodological issues and decisions, ethical considerations, and personal experiences, feelings, thoughts, and opinions that arose as fieldnotes.

During the participant observation phase, Petra conducted the episodic interviews. All together she conducted 15 interviews, which produced together over 40 hours. One participant couple agreed to participate, but only the man agreed to be interviewed. The woman did not want to be interviewed, because her migration experiences were really painful and she was worried that talking about them would be too emotional for her. Based on the negotiation with the participants as well as how much they wanted to tell, Petra conducted at least one episodic interview with the participants during her stay. Partners were interviewed separately to allow each partner to tell her/his migration story from her or his unique perspective, avoided the possibility that less active and outspoken partners would be overridden by more active and outspoken partners, and avoided possible repression of information from one partner due to the presence of the other partner. Participants were also able to choose when they wanted to do the interview within the week and where they wanted to do it.

In accordance with the characteristics of the episodic interview, Petra explained the basic principles of the interview to the participants before the interview, in order to familiarise them with the basic interview format. She asked the participants to tell her those stories or episodes which they felt or thought were relevant to their unique migration process and experiences. She informed them that the focus of the interview was their experiences and perceptions related to their migration process, and that there were no right or wrong answers, beliefs, and so on. Petra emphasised that she was interested in their unique experiences: how they experienced the migration and how they thought and felt about the situations and events they experienced. She also explained to the participants that she was interested in the whole migration process, from when they first started thinking about migrating to New Zealand until the present day.

Petra started each interview with the following broad invitation:

**Well, if you would just like to tell me about your migration experience right from the start when you first thought about going to another country ...**

During the interview she let the participants speak as much as possible and went along with the direction into which the participants directed the interview, because she assumed that what they told her was important for them during their migration. As the participants told their story, she wrote down comments and questions to ask after the participants had finished their story. The questions aimed at better understanding the
participants’ stories. She also asked questions which had emerged up during the data collection with other participants and from the migration literature.

The research gained highly personal insights. The participants felt comfortable to disclose their thoughts, feelings, behaviour and sensitive personal issues (e.g. traumatic experiences, obstacles they faced, relationship issues) freely, honestly, and in-depth for two reasons. On the one hand, as anticipated, the combination of participant observation and episodic interviews facilitated a trusting relationship with Petra. This trusting relationship was further enhanced by Petra’s personality and being a German who migrated to New Zealand and lived in New Zealand for several years. Having gone through the migration process herself and being a “long-term participant” has given Petra “a peculiar kind of ethno historical depth” (Ortner, 1997, p. 63), which enabled her to relate well to the participants’ feelings, thoughts, and opinions, and to understand nuances. As a result, the participants felt understood by her, which assisted in establishing equal, empathetic, warm, respecting, and genuine relationships. On the other hand, the participants were highly conscious of what was going on within themselves and around them. Because they were highly aware of many things, they were able to tell Petra many things. Further, the participants were eager to reflect on their migration experiences and very much welcomed the opportunity to do so at length with somebody who gave them her undivided attention and was interested in their experiences. Both aspects made the data collection and analysis was easier, more accurate, and deeper.

Data Management & Analysis

All interviews were fully transcribed and then returned to the participants for editing and further comments. We decided to analyse the data of the stayers and returners together, but coded specific experiences and attitudes/beliefs separately. This decision was made because the pre-analysis of the interviews suggested that the migration process was, overall, similar for both groups up to outcomes (i.e. staying or returning), but that some specific experiences and attitudes/beliefs within the whole process were different for stayers and returners. In analysing the interview data, Petra closely followed closely the procedures for open, axial, and selective coding (Browne & Sullivan, 1999; Chamberlain, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Open Coding: Breaking down of Interviews into Mosaic Stones & Conceptualising them

Petra firstly broke the over 40 interview hours down into discrete instances, events, and happenings by analysing the interviews line by line. Some concepts or codes were only a few words long, whereas other codes contained several paragraphs. When she read the transcripts, she asked herself the following questions, which we modelled on the various questions we found in the literature:

- is that a meaningful chunk?
- what is going on in there that makes it meaningful?
- why did the participant tell me that?
- how come this matters and why does it matter?
- what does it mean?

As Petra analysed the various interviews, she constantly assigned old codes, or created new codes, or renamed codes, and/or merged codes as she saw appropriate. At this stage, she did not worry too much about the code labels because, as she played with them, their meaning shifted and changed. Thus, Petra sometimes gave concept only a more descriptive code until we actually had a better sense of what the concept was about. Likewise, sometimes issues which seemed relevant lost their relevance, or some issues which were irrelevant suddenly became relevant in the light of other things. In many cases, she went back and forth between different interviews when she discovered similarities between text segments in the interview she was coding and previous interviews. Then she would go back to make sure she gave the same code and/or to re-coded certain concepts. Further, many text segments referred to or reflected several codes. If this was the case, Petra coded them with several appropriate codes.
During the open coding, Petra generated 1512 open concepts or codes. To keep an overview of the many codes, she began to group identified codes together into provisional categories or code families, which she gave a more abstract name. To support this analysis of the vast amounts of transcript data, we decided to use the qualitative data software package ATLAS.ti for this stage of the coding to more effectively manage and move the data.

**Axial Coding: Reassembling Interview Mosaic Stones into meaningful Mosaic Parts**

After Petra had all interviews open coded, she condensed the concepts or codes into more generic and abstract categories, by organising or grouping codes into categories on A3 sheets. She concentrated on one particular category at a time and tried to bring all the codes relevant to this category together. Petra started with the most obvious categories (e.g. expectations and goals) and then went along with what emerged – from one code to the other, because working on one code triggered the next code, which also fitted into a particular category. When working on other categories, she sometimes found codes which fitted a previously developed category. In these cases, she went back and integrated the code into the particular category. In organising the codes, she firstly decided on the content of the categories, by grouping codes that went together and by deciding on the dimensions, properties, and variables of the category. Secondly, Petra organised category contents according to subcategories and their relationships. In doing so, she let herself be guided by the paradigm model and drew links among the dimensions and properties of one category. Moreover, she put links to other categories or subcategories into a box in the bottom corner of each of the A3 sheets.

**Selective Coding: Integrating Migration Mosaic Parts into Whole Migration Mosaic**

Finally, Petra systematically related the various categories to one another, and integrated the constructs or codes as well as the categories into the core category to create the local theory. For doing so, she used the same analytical processes as she used during open and axial coding at a more abstract level.

Throughout the coding, in line with the grounded theory methodology, we constantly compared among incidents, text segments, concepts, codes, and interviews and Petra’s personal experiences and knowledge. We also asked questions of the data; wrote memos; formulated hypotheses; and created networks between codes. The analysis process was guided by the paradigm model (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and greatly enhanced by the information gathered through participant observation, reflexivity, and document review. The findings yielded by the analysis guided, in turn, the sampling of questions and observations in the next sampling of participant observation and interviews. Throughout the whole analysis, she tried not to make up her mind prematurely, and/or not to become attached to codes and hypotheses about relationships. Instead, she treated every code and hypothesis about relationships as tentative. The interpretation of the interview data was greatly assisted by the participant observation.

In order to capture the context of the migration experiences, we complemented the interview with data from the latest New Zealand census. We also reviewed literature regarding the history of German settlement in New Zealand, academic studies about German immigrants to New Zealand, New Zealand immigration system, and organisations providing service to German immigrants in New Zealand.

**REPRESENTATING THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

While based on empirical research, the experiences of the German emigrants are presented in lay language in an easy to read passionate meta story so that the findings are easily accessible for everybody. The meta story

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8 Variables were defined as things in between dimensions and properties which influence a category.
is like a mosaic, which represents a colourful merger of the most important experiences of the eight specific participant couples investigated. To make the meta story lively and passionate, we used of many quotes of the migrants themselves to illustrate the analysis. The meta story covers the whole migration process in chronological order from the time the emigrants thought about migrating to the time the study was conducted (2002). Therefore, it covers all aspects of the migration process and the interrelationships among the various parts of the process. In addition, the meta-story provides detailed recommendations for dealing with migration obstacles.

All together, the proposed and used synergy of various theoretical assumptions, methodologies, and methods is very useful from the perspective of the migration literature and an avenue well worth exploring (Boyle, Halfacree, & Robinson, 1998; Kim, 1996; Timotjevic & Breakwell, 2000). Further, the outline of the background to the study shows that the insights that will be presented in this book were gained by a substantial and innovative empirical study. The resulting theory provides an insider perspective. It gives rare insights into the migration process of German migrants to New Zealand from the inside; how German migrants themselves experience their migration and how these experiences are influenced by the social context. The findings are presented in the next seven chapters.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL, STATISTICAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT & CONDITIONS

All phenomena and their related action/interaction are embedded in sets of conditions. ... conditions operating at a given time affect that action/interaction; along with the critical conditional junctures that facilitated or hindered their movement or change over time.

(Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 159-173)
This chapter provides the context for the experiences of German immigrants to New Zealand, by giving a brief outline of the history of German immigration to New Zealand and how this migration was influenced by the happenings of World War I and World War II. Then I will provide some historical and current statistical information about German immigration to New Zealand. I will conclude with an introduction of the most important institutions which influence the access to resources and which might affect the experiences of all German immigrants to New Zealand, as well as the New Zealand current immigration policy.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

... Germans were a major part of the worldwide and centuries-old process of diffusion of skills ... This role preceded both the age of transoceanic migrations and the era of industrial revolution ... As Germans emigrated to other countries ..., many went as bearers of the most advanced science and technology. ... In the long view of history, few peoples have made such cultural and economic contributions to so many lands in so many parts of the planet as the Germans.

(Sowell, 1996, pp. 51-104)

The historical background represents a part of the international level of Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) conditional matrix. To understand the present, it is necessary go back in time, because one cannot understand the present without knowing the past (Levine & Perkins, 1997).

**German Migration Worldwide: A Brief Historical Overview**

During the Middle Ages, Germans began to migrate within Europe (Sowell, 1996). They set up German settlements throughout the less developed Eastern Europe. The German settlements were encouraged by local authorities and rulers, because the Germans had a more developed culture, their agricultural production methods were greatly advanced, and they were well known for their formidable fighting skills. Over time, the German migration assumed enormous proportions. According to Sowell (1996), “major urban centres in medieval Eastern Europe were typically dominated by Germans, not only demographically but also culturally and economically” (p. 51).

During the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, skilled German craftsmen, especially artisans, immigrated throughout Europe. They were usually invited by their host countries, because of their valuable skills, and because they were known for working hard, thoroughly, and unrelentingly, and being honest, reliable, and respectful of laws (Sowell, 1996). After America was discovered, Germans, together with many people from other countries, also crossed the Atlantic to try their luck in the so-called new world.

During these times emigration was, on the one hand, motivated by lucrative offers from other countries. On the other hand, many Germans also escaped from the wars, which raged unremittingly throughout their territories during these times. To stop the great emigration streams, the German rulers issued edicts which impeded or forbade emigration. These edicts had, however, the opposite effect, leading to even greater emigration to various countries. For example, in 1709, about 15 000 Germans migrated to Britain; by 1745, 45 000 Germans had settled in Pennsylvania, which was the major destination in America; in 1760, about 30 000 Germans settled in Russia; and in 1770, 20 000 Germans lived in Hungary (Sowell, 1996).

**The History of German Immigration to New Zealand**

With respect to German immigrants to New Zealand, going back in time is particularly important for the understanding of the experiences of German immigrants to New Zealand. Although German immigrants chose a country at the other end of the world as their new home, New Zealand was a British colony.
populated by a majority of British settlers, and the homelands of British and German settlers and their descendants were merciless opponents in World War I and World War II.

The first organised settlers from Germany arrived in New Zealand on 14 June 1843 in Nelson (Bade, 1993). They predominantly sought to escape poverty in Germany. In 1886, the German population reached a height of 5007, but no more than 1.3% of New Zealand's total population, which consisted of a majority of British settlers (Minson, 1993). However, until 1914, the Germans were, after the British, the second-largest immigrant group (Bade, 1998). These early German settlers were linked by the same language, culture, and their predominantly Lutheran beliefs. They formed close-knit groups, which enthusiastically maintained the German culture and language, in all main urban areas and throughout the country. However, as the “second generation identified more closely with the wider community tight-knit German groups began to disperse” (Minson, 1993, p. 44).

The Germans were “a small part of a major exodus of Germans” (Minson, 1993, p. 40). They left their home country because of unemployment, exigencies of conscription, and political unrest in Germany. New Zealand desperately needed skilled labour for public works (roads and railways). Germans were preferred over other Europeans, because they were willing to assimilate into the dominant, hegemonic British culture and they became a ‘submerged group’ (Bade, 1993). In addition, they had the good reputation of being skilled and hard working. Thus, New Zealand assisted suitable Germans to immigrate.

Because of their predominantly middle-class, urban origin and high education level, the German immigrants “possessed the material and personal resources” to make their own living, making them independent from assistance by New Zealand (Beaglehole, 1998, p. 34). They contributed impressively to the arts (e.g. Balling, von Tempsky, Lindauer, Schmitt), science (e.g. Forster, Dieffenbach, Haast, Hochstetter), business and enterprises (e.g. Breidecker – pioneer of New Zealand’s wine industry, Ehrenfried – father of New Zealand’s beer industry) in their new home country (Bade, 1993). As a consequence of their independence and contributions, the relations between New Zealanders and Germans were friendly.

These friendly attitudes of British settlers in New Zealand toward German settlers changed drastically at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result of the “growing race between Germany and Britain for naval supremacy” miles away (King, 1998, p. 19), the British settlers in New Zealand started to have some misgivings about their German neighbours. In addition, the British perceived the closeness of the German colony in Samoa as a territorial threat. They were worried that Germany could decide to expand its colonial desires to New Zealand (King, 1998). Then World War I and World War II happened. These two wars were the major cause of the development of a hostile relationship between New Zealanders and Germans. When World War I was declared, a huge anti-German propaganda machine, in the form of the British press, began to sow discord by portraying Germany in a very negative way. Because New Zealand belonged to the British Empire, New Zealanders (British settlers) fought as Britain’s allies in World War I, a war that was essentially a European war (McGibbion, 1998). In World War II, New Zealand declared war on Germany in its own right and again became involved in fighting against Germany.

As a result, far away from the actual war theatre and without an apparent grievance at first between the settlers, New Zealanders felt hostile towards all things German, and an ‘anti-German hysteria’ developed against the innocent German settlers and refugees (Bade, 1998). Germans who were not yet ‘naturalised’ were arrested and detained as prisoners of war; skilled professionals were simply dismissed; German street and place names were changed; absurd allegations were made of subversive activities (all of which proved groundless); German tradespeople and shops owned by Germans were attacked; resolutions demanding internment of all enemy aliens of German descent were distributed; riots took place; and even a Women's Anti-German League was formed which called for a boycott of German goods (King, 1998).

To escape this hostility and distrustful atmosphere - to virtually save their lives - German immigrants tried to become invisible. Many of them, as well as their descendants, anglicised their names, decided never to speak German again, did not mention their ancestry to anyone, and avoided associating with other Germans (King, 1998). The tight-knit German communities disintegrated.
In addition to the influence of the two world wars, the attitudes of white New Zealanders towards immigrants from Germany, as well as various other countries, were, and still are, strongly shaped by colonialism and the British assumption that “theirs was a race born to rule” (Ballara, 1986, p. 111). For that reason, New Zealanders of British descent neither believed in the equality of races, nor did they respect other cultures right from the beginning. To them, equality meant conformity: “be ‘like us’ and you can be equal like us” (May-Jacobs, 1999, p. 12). The resulting intolerance and arrogance, in connection with insularity and ignorance, in the minds of the otherwise friendly and helpful New Zealanders led to the disliking of people who looked different or who behaved differently. They expected newcomers to assimilate: “the more rapidly they did so, the more positively they were regarded by New Zealanders” (Beaglehole, 1998, p. 30). The assimilationist immigration policies reflected these inherently racist attitudes of New Zealanders.

The Immigration Restriction Amendment Act, enacted in 1920 with the goal of restricting the entry of ‘race aliens’, “allowed free entry to immigrants of British birth or descent, while persons of any other origin had to obtain entry permits” (Beaglehole, 1998, p. 25). In order to get the permits, the major assessment criterion was, first of all, one’s suitability for absorption into the dominant British culture (Beaglehole, 1998). This racist Act made it extremely difficult for desperate World War I refugees to gain entrance; only around 900 succeeded.

20 years later, in 1940, the Aliens Emergency Regulations were passed. This regulation enabled the government to “deport, intern, and set up authorities and tribunals to investigate and classify aliens” (Beaglehole, 1998, p. 33). Most of the new German refugees, who had fled Germany to save their lives, since they were opposing Hitler and his regime, were paradoxically classified as ‘enemy aliens’ under this Act. This meant that they had escaped internment, but were nevertheless subject to certain regulations: they were restricted on the possession of particular items (e.g. maps, radios, cameras); they were not allowed to take residence at certain places; they had to register with the police and to apply for a permit if they wanted to move more than twenty-four miles for more than twenty-four hours; they were denied access to certain professions; and they were not allowed to serve in the New Zealand army (Beaglehole, 1998). The latter restriction understandably fuelled suspicion and hostility of those New Zealanders whose men and sons had to fight in Europe against Germans. A climate of suspicion and watchfulness developed, in which “innocent gestures and comments were given a sinister interpretation by neighbours” (Beaglehole, 1998, p. 32).

During this time, it was enormously difficult for newcomers to find work, and established German workers were dismissed. Professional bodies, above all the British Medical Association, opposed the move of refugees into the professions at every step (Beaglehole, 1998); as they still do today. Likewise, the setting up of businesses by Germans was viewed with great suspicion, and attempts were made to prevent Germans from establishing businesses, despite the obvious benefits for the New Zealand economy.

In 1942, the Aliens Land Purchase Regulations were set up out of fear that immigrants would buy too much land and too many houses, and returned soldiers would consequently suffer if there was not enough suitable land and houses available (Beaglehole, 1998). This Act meant that ‘aliens’ had to obtain the consent of the Minister of Justice for land or property transfers. In the last two years of World War II, the resentment against German refugees grew worse. It was particularly marked by a resolution passed on by the British Medical Association, which demanded that all immigrant doctors who had arrived in New Zealand since 1939 be returned “to their own countries within two years after hostilities with Germany have ceased and they should be allowed to take out of New Zealand the same amount of money or property or both that they declared to the Customs Department on entering New Zealand” (Goldman, 1958, p. 232).

During these difficult times, most German applicants were refugees who had had to flee Germany to escape Hitler’s cruel Nazism in order to save their lives. They had had to leave behind their homes and families. While for this very reason, many immigrants nevertheless relied on each other for their social life and social support, many others were determined not to associate with other Germans. Out of gratefulness and anxiety about deportation, they were eager to fulfil the expectations and regulations of New Zealanders. Therefore,
they conformed. For them, becoming integrated - assimilated - meant having exclusively New Zealand friends and speaking English exclusively (Beaglehole, 1998).

These social attitudes and regulations forced German immigrants to abandon their culture and language: to become new Britishers. These attitudes still overshadow the relationships between New Zealanders and German immigrants today. Most of the time they are invisible, but they nevertheless strongly direct attitudes and actions towards Germans (Bade, 1998). Some New Zealanders are still racist and still harbour prejudice; some German immigrants, old and new, are still plagued by feelings of guilt. The relations between New Zealanders and Germans seem only to be starting, overall, to move ‘out of the shadow of war’ (Bade, 1998).

STATISTICAL BACKGROUND

Because Statistics New Zealand does not collect official immigration statistics (R. Mair, personal communication, April 9, 2003), the unique data sets regarding the migration flows of German Immigrants to New Zealand, which I present in the first part of this section, were especially put together for this thesis by Professor Richard Bedford from the Migration Population Centre, Waikato University. The data presented in the second part of this section regarding the characteristics of German immigrants living in New Zealand were obtained from the 2001 Census of Population and Dwellings (Statistics New Zealand). Although these data certainly provide a good overall view of German immigrants to New Zealand, they need to be treated with caution, since Germans generally perceive their private life as private. Hence, they tend, in general, to not take surveys which collect data about their private lives too seriously.

Migration Flows of German Immigrants to New Zealand

Figure 2.1. presents a graphical representation of the number of Germans who were officially granted permanent residence in New Zealand by the New Zealand Immigration Service under the New Zealand immigration policy of the day 9. Unfortunately, this data was, for Germans, only available from 1982 onwards. Most of the Germans gained permanent residence under the ‘Occupational Priority List’ and ‘Family Reunion’ (before 1991), and under the ‘General Skills/Business’ and ‘Family/Humanitarian’ categories. As can be seen in Figure 2.1. a steady stream of between 200 and 500 Germans have gained New Zealand permanent residence since 1982, with a slightly increasing tendency over these 20 years. In 2001, 402 Germans gained permanent residence, of whom 295 were approved under the ‘General Skills/Business’ category and 107 were approved under the ‘Family/Humanitarian’ category (R. Bedford, personal communication, July 1, 2002). The relatively high number of German immigrants who were approved under the ‘Family/Humanitarian’ category indicates that many German immigrants seem to either follow family members and/or German immigrants attract more Germans to New Zealand, or immigrate for love reasons.

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9 The New Zealand immigration law was changed in 1991.
Figure 2.1. Number of Germans Approved for Permanent Residence

(Source: Migration Population Centre at Waikato University, New Zealand)

However, the data on permanent residence approvals do not necessarily provide an accurate insight. Firstly, they do not reflect how many Germans actually wanted or tried to immigrate. Secondly, they do not show how many Germans actually immigrated to New Zealand, because not everybody who obtained permanent residency actually takes it up and immigrates to New Zealand, and the data refer only to approvals not to actual arrivals (R. Bedford, personal communication, July 1, 2002). In addition, the data do not give any information about how many of the approved Germans returned. Therefore, aggregated data over several years about Germans who arrive in New Zealand with the intention of staying for 12 months or more (permanent and long-term arrivals), Germans who left after living for 12 months or more in New Zealand, and the resulting net gain/loss, yielded a more accurate picture. Although the data do not specify whether these long-term arrivals came to New Zealand to immigrate to New Zealand, it is reasonable to infer that they had this intention, since, in order to be allowed to stay in New Zealand for more than 12 months, they would have needed either a work permit for which they needed a job, which gave them employment for at least 12 months, or a permanent residence visa. The long-term arrival data might also give a more accurate impression, because German immigrants might not only come when they have a permanent residence visa, but might also enter the country on a visitors’ or a work permit as my partner and I, as well as several of our friends, did.

10 For the years up to around 1998, the years refer to years ending 31 March. From about 1998, the years refer to years ending 30 June.
11 This data set includes both German immigrants from the former East and West Germany.
Figure 2.2. Total Numbers of German Long-term Arrivals and Departures\textsuperscript{12,13}
(Source: Migration Population Centre at Waikato University, New Zealand)

Figure 2.3. Percentage of German Long-term Arrivals Returning to Germany\textsuperscript{14,15}
(Source: Migration Population Centre at Waikato University, New Zealand)

\textsuperscript{12} For the years up to around 1998, the years refer to years ending 31 March. From about 1998, the years refer to years ending 30 June.

\textsuperscript{13} There were not data available for the years 1971 and 1972.

\textsuperscript{14} For the years up to around 1998, the years refer to years ending 31 March. From about 1998, the years refer to years ending 30 June.

\textsuperscript{15} There were not data available for the years 1971 and 1972.
Figure 2.2. provides a consolidated summary of permanent and long-term arrivals and departures of German citizens. The figure shows that, over the last 52 years, there was a steady and substantial increase in Germans coming permanently and/or for longer terms to New Zealand. When comparing the number of permanent residence approvals and the number of long-term arrivals, it is obvious that, on average, more Germans want to live in New Zealand than permanent residencies are granted by New Zealand. It seems that the demand of Germans for living in New Zealand is much higher than the number of permanent residencies approved. This suggests that a substantial proportion of Germans are either not allowed or are unable to immigrate to New Zealand.

Figure 2.2. also demonstrates that a high number of Germans who intended to stay permanently or long-term in New Zealand leave the country again. Figure 2.3. provides a graphical overview of the percentage of long-term German arrivals leaving New Zealand again. On average, 42.4% of German arrivals left New Zealand each year during the last 52 years. Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify from the data whether these Germans returned or step migrated, and whether they left voluntarily or involuntarily (i.e. whether they had to leave because they did not get permanent residence). However, overall, this constantly high stream of departures supports the claim I made in the introduction that a substantial number of German immigrants leave New Zealand again. Since the potential immigrants from Germany are a highly skilled migration group, these data indicate that the constant leaving rate is indeed a deeply entrenched problem, which deprives New Zealand of valuable employees and businesses essential for New Zealand’s economic growth.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GERMAN IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND

Today, German immigrants in New Zealand are still an ethnic minority. In 2001, when the last census was conducted, there were 8379 Germans usually living in New Zealand (tourists are not included in these data), which accounted for 0.22% of New Zealand's total population. In 1996, 7068 Germans and, in 1991, 5394 Germans lived in New Zealand. Whether these changes in total numbers represent actual changes is, however, unclear, since Statistics New Zealand changed the wording of the question regarding ethnicity in the 2001 census, because the 1996 question was found to not provide an adequate measure of measuring ethnicity based on cultural affiliation. The wording of the 2001 census was made similar to the 1991 wording again. Thus, the 2001 and the 1991 data present a more accurate picture and comparisons should be drawn between these two years (Statistics New Zealand, under Change in Ethnicity Question). According to the censuses of these two years, then, the number of Germans increased between 1991 and 2001 by more than 50%. Table 2.1. provides an overview of the total number of Germans usually living in New Zealand, according to gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2574</td>
<td>3351</td>
<td>3912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2820</td>
<td>3720</td>
<td>4467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5394</td>
<td>7068</td>
<td>8379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, there are more female Germans (53.31%) living in New Zealand than male Germans (46.69%). 81.88% of the Germans lived in urban areas, whereas 18.12% lived in rural areas. 50.80% own or partly own the house where they live and 31.69% do not own their house (17.51% either did not answer the question or their responses were unidentifiable). The majority of Germans live in partnerships as can be inferred from Table 2.2.
Table 2.3 provides an overview of the highest qualifications of Germans. However, this table needs to be interpreted cautiously, because it is difficult for Germans to answer this census question appropriately. New Zealand and Germany have different education systems, making it difficult to compare qualifications across New Zealand and Germany. For example, my feeling and experience tell me that the number of vocational qualifications is very low. This may be because Germans would interpret school qualification as the education level and not as a qualification because, after school, Germans generally either do a vocational training/apprenticeship or study at a university. Thus, each German arriving in New Zealand would have at least a vocational qualification. Another example is that Germany has several higher qualification levels in between the vocational training/apprenticeship and university study, which were not given as options and could mean that Germans were unsure as to what to tick. In addition, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, who is assessing overseas qualifications, seems often to devalue German qualifications. As a result of these cultural differences, many Germans probably either did not know what to tick and/or mixed up those two categories. These problems might also be the reason for the high number of Germans who either did not answer the question or whose answers were unidentifiable.

Table 2.2. Marital Status of German Immigrants in New Zealand
(Source: Statistics New Zealand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnered</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal spouse</td>
<td>3705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other partnerships</td>
<td>921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnered, but not further defined</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4731</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-partnered</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>1170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not further defined</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2226</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3. Highest Qualifications of German immigrants in New Zealand
(Source: Statistics New Zealand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No qualification</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School qualification</td>
<td>3207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational qualification</td>
<td>1518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Degree</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated or unidentifiable</td>
<td>1059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7740</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4. gives an overview of the occupations of German immigrants to New Zealand. I believe that here, similar difficulties arose as with the qualifications. Nevertheless, both the overview of qualifications and occupations underline that German immigrants are highly educated and skilled workers.
Table 2.4. Occupations of German immigrants to New Zealand  
(Source: Statistics New Zealand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislators, administrators, &amp; managers</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians &amp; associate professionals</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service &amp; sales workers</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture &amp; fishery</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade workers</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant &amp; Machine operators</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary occupations</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated, unidentifiable, responses outside</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4623</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 2.5., 64.90% of German immigrants worked for an employer at the time of the last census in 2001, of whom 75.92% worked full-time. 7.90% of German immigrants were unemployed. The labour force participation rate was higher than the average participation rate of all immigrants to New Zealand and slightly lower than the participation rate of New Zealanders. The unemployment rate was lower than the average unemployment rate of all immigrants and slightly higher than the unemployment rate of New Zealanders. The 2718 Germans who stated that they were not in the labour force are most likely pensioners, children, and mothers who stay at home to look after their children.

Table 2.5. Work and Labour Force Status of German immigrants to New Zealand  
(Source: Statistics New Zealand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work &amp; Labour Force Status</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>3510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>1116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total employed</td>
<td>4623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in labour force</td>
<td>2718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour force participation rate</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Overseas                                  |        |
| Labour force participation rate                 | 59.7   |
| Unemployment rate                               | 9.0    |

| New Zealand                                     |        |
| Labour force participation rate                 | 69.0   |
| Unemployment rate                               | 7.1    |
In addition to those German immigrants who worked for an employer (Table 2.5: 4623), 1701 German immigrants were self-employed or worked in their own business. Hence, in total, 6324 German immigrants of those 6762 German immigrants who were theoretically able to work (i.e. 15-64 age group) worked. That is, 93.50% of German immigrants earned their own income. This percentage is probably in reality higher, since it is reasonable to assume that many of the German immigrants between 15 and 17 still attend school. Therefore, this high percentage of German immigrants working clearly demonstrates the valuable contribution German immigrants to New Zealand make to the New Zealand economy.

Figure 2.4. provides an overview of the personal income of German immigrants to New Zealand, and Table 2.7. compares the median personal income of German immigrants to all immigrants to New Zealand, to New Zealanders, and to immigrants from other selected countries. As can be seen in Table 2.7., female German immigrants earn significantly less than male German immigrants. The median personal income of German immigrants is NZ$ 2200 higher than the median personal income of all immigrants and NZ$ 1000 less than the median personal income of New Zealanders. In comparison with other west-European countries, the

Table 2.6. Sources of Income of German immigrants to New Zealand
(Source: Statistics New Zealand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Income</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wages, salary, etc. paid by employer</td>
<td>3474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed or business</td>
<td>1701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total working</strong></td>
<td><strong>5175</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ superannuation or veteran pension</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other superannuation, pension, or annuities</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. from Germany)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total living on pensions</strong></td>
<td><strong>1074</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community wage job seeker</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community wage sickness benefit</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC or private work accident insurer</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic purposes benefit</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalids benefit</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other government benefit</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student allowance</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total living on government support</strong></td>
<td><strong>1131</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sources of income, including payments</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from living in other households</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No source of income</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
median personal income of German immigrants is less than that of immigrants from Switzerland, England, and France; the same than the median personal income of immigrants from Scotland and Denmark; and more than the median personal income of immigrants from the Netherlands and Austria.

Table 2.7. Comparison of Personal Income (Median) of German immigrants to New Zealand with Other Countries
(Source: Statistics New Zealand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Income (Median)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germans (female &amp; male)</td>
<td>18 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Born Overseas (all immigrants)</td>
<td>16 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealanders</td>
<td>19 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected other north-west European countries:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>20 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>20 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>20 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>18 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>18 200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The physical environment in New Zealand refers to things such as social rules, laws, and institutions that influence the access to resources which might affect the experiences of all German immigrants to New Zealand. The physical environment in New Zealand presents the physical part of the national level of Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) conditional matrix. In this section I will concentrate on the institutions, which include, most importantly, the German Embassy, the Goethe Institute, the New Zealand Immigration Service, the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils, and the New Zealand immigration policy.

**The German Embassy**

This information about the German Embassy is based on the answers the Embassy provided to questions I asked in a letter, a meeting with two employees of the German Embassy (personal communication, July 17, 2002), and from the Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) web site (Federal Foreign Office).

The German Embassy was established in New Zealand on 1 January 1964 and is financed by the German Government. Before 1994, there was only a Legation of the Federal Republic of Germany. The German Embassy in New Zealand perceives as its most important task the strengthening of the friendly connections between Germany and New Zealand, with regard to culture, politics, and the economy. According to the German Embassy, since the diplomatic relations between both countries are without problems, this aim is achieved. However, according to the Federal Foreign Office, another central task of the German Embassy is to take care of German citizens abroad by assisting them and protecting them.

The German Embassy works together with the Goethe Institute and the German-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce, and financially supports the Goethe Societies. The work of the German Embassy in Auckland is supported by an Honorary German Consul and his colleagues. The Honorary Consul performs his consular duties voluntarily. He is of special importance, since he has excellent contacts with the business world.

The employees of the German Embassy are selected in a rigorous selection procedure from a pool of people who hold a university degree and who are interested in working for the German Embassies around the world. Thus, they come from various backgrounds. The vast majority are lawyers. The other employees are either economists, historians, or teachers. After they have been selected, they have to go through a training process with a practical placement, which prepares them for their work for one of the German Embassies. The German Embassy employees only stay in one country for up to three or four years. Then they get transferred to the next country. When they arrive in the new country, everything is organised for them and they get regular home leave. Hence, they do not go through the same processes that ‘normal’ German immigrants go through when the latter migrate to a particular country. This lack of migration experience might make it difficult for the German Embassy employees to perceive and understand the emotional needs of German immigrants to New Zealand. Further, the employees do not consider it their business to be concerned about the German immigrants. This lack became particularly apparent in the statement one of the employees (personal communication, July 17, 2002), who said, with regards to returners, that he does not believe that psychological support is necessary for them: “they go back again and live their lives”.

**Selected other countries:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>16 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>17 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>24 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>18 700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The apparent neglect of the importance of the emotional needs of German immigrants is reflected in the work and service of the German Embassy. Although the Federal Foreign Office declares that a central task of the German Embassies is to take care of German citizens abroad, by assisting them and protecting them, the German Embassy in New Zealand only perceives its major task in regards to German immigrants to be to support them and their descendants with technical issues involving passports and legal matters. Only in countries where the life of German immigrants might be endangered (e.g. Pakistan), do the German Embassies cultivate contact with German immigrants. With regard to the emotional needs of German immigrants in New Zealand, however, the German Embassy’s guiding principle is to provide help to self-help. That is, they do not offer psychological support. If they believe that somebody needs psychological support, they may refer that person to places where s/he can get support.

The Goethe Institute in New Zealand

This information about the Goethe Institute in New Zealand is based on answers given by the Institute to the questions I asked them in a letter and on various information leaflets they make available to the public.

The Goethe Institute in New Zealand (German Cultural Centre) is also financed by the German Government and was founded in 1980, as result of a visit by Mr Scheel, then President of the Federal Republic of Germany. It has its residence in Wellington, and 4.5 people work for the Institute, two of whom are German Citizens and three are New Zealanders. The clientele of the Institute are New Zealanders and its task is the promotion of German language and culture, by introducing “German language and culture into the cultural life of the host country” (Goethe Institute Info in Brief, p. 1). The language department teaches German language courses, conducts internationally recognised examinations, and offers a high-quality, extensive teacher support service throughout New Zealand to “support the teaching and learning of German at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels” (Goethe Institute German Language Department Leaflet, p. 1). This service includes a media library with about 2000 German books, newspapers, magazines, slides, cassettes, and videos; training for German teachers; a national German advisor; and scholarships. In addition, the Goethe Institute organises an extensive cultural programme annually.

According to the Goethe Institute, it works together with the German Embassy and the Goethe Societies. However, they do not promote their service, which would be potentially interesting and helpful for German immigrants (e.g. media library) via other organisations, for example the New Zealand Immigration Service. Hence, many German immigrants do not know about the Goethe Institute and its services.

The New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (Inc)

The information given in this section was obtained during an interview with U. Walker (personal communication, February 26, 2003), the former president of the Ethnic Council of Manawatu (Inc). I also reviewed the New Zealand Federation of the Ethnic Council’s leaflets and People-people-people (Panny, 1998).

The New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils emerged from the efforts of various local ethnic communities which immigrants formed in the 1980s, in order to advocate the interests of their various small ethnic groups. The New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (Inc) was founded as the national representation of the 13 regional ethnic councils. The objectives of this association are, among others:

- to promote joint action and co-operation among ethnic groups on issues of common concern, to promote and preserve ethnic customs, languages, religions and cultures throughout New Zealand, to support the rights of ethnic individuals and groups to enjoy equal opportunities and have equitable access to, and equitable share of, the resources which the Government manages on behalf of the communities, ... to monitor legislation and other measures including by-laws affecting the interest of the ethnic communities throughout New Zealand and to take appropriate action, to promote the recognition of New Zealand as a
multi-ethnic society in order to remove the monocultural philosophies and structures that exist within New Zealand society


In 1997, the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils held their third national conference at Massey University. The proceedings, comments, and essays presented at this conference are well documented in the book *People-people-people* (Panny, 1998). The enormous effort put into the work of the councils was crowned with success in 2000. Their strong lobbying resulted in New Zealand’s having a Ministry of Ethnic Affairs for the first time ever.

However, unfortunately, the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils and/or their regional councils seem to be not well known among Germans. Likewise, the input of Germans is restricted to individuals; but the input of these individuals is remarkable. For example, Ute Walker is the past president of the Ethnic Council of Manawatu (Inc.) and Rolf Panny (1998) was responsible for editing the book *People-people-people*.

**The New Zealand Immigration Service and Current Immigration Policy**

The information given in this section is based on information given on the New Zealand Immigration Service web site (New Zealand Immigration Service) and on my own experiences.

The New Zealand Immigration Service implements New Zealand’s immigration laws and administers applications for residence permits as well as citizenships. The inflow of immigrants to New Zealand is restricted. The New Zealand government reviews the level of residence approvals under the immigration programme annually. For the year 2002/2003, the level has been set for 45 000 approvals in total. New Zealand is looking for people from other countries as residents who will increase New Zealand’s human capital by contributing either with valuable skills or qualifications and the fostering of international links (‘General Skills Category’); or through the encouraging or setting up of businesses, or the investing of financial capital in New Zealand, and the fostering of international links (‘Business Category’). In the ‘Family Category’, New Zealand also grants residence status to immigrants who:

- are in a genuine and stable marriage or de facto relationship (whether heterosexual or same sex) with a New Zealand citizen or resident who sponsors their application; or
- have immediate family members who are New Zealand citizens or residents and who live permanently in New Zealand, and
- are the dependent children of New Zealand citizens or residents.

(Ne


Immigrants are expected to intend to live for a long time in New Zealand, to adapt to the New Zealand lifestyle, and to obey New Zealand law.

All immigrants have to demonstrate that they are of good character, are healthy, and that they have sufficient English language skills. To ensure that new immigrants are better prepared to establish themselves well in New Zealand and that they match the skill requirements, so that they are able to contribute to the economic and social well-being of New Zealand, the New Zealand Immigration Service increased the language requirements on 20 November 2002. Instead of an overall band score of 5.0 on the IELTS test, potential immigrants now need to demonstrate at least an overall band score of 6.5.

In the ‘General Skill Category’ and the ‘Business Category’, New Zealand selects very carefully those who are granted residence status. The ‘General Skill Category’ is a tough point system, in which the applicants have to reach a certain number of points (pass mark) to achieve residence. Every month the pass mark is reviewed in accordance with the set level of residence approvals. As of the 9 April 2003, at least 29 points
have to be reached (New Zealand Immigration Service). The applicants can gain points for their age (18-55 years), qualifications (at least three years of a tertiary qualification), work experience (at least two years relevant to the qualification), an indefinite offer from a New Zealand employer, settlement funds (e.g. $100 000 = 1 point), New Zealand work experience, their spouse or partner’s qualifications, and family sponsorship.

Usually, the hardest requirement to obtain is the job offer. Firstly, it is very difficult for the potential immigrant to organise the job offer from Germany. However, this might become easier with the advance in communication technology. Secondly, it is, for understandable reasons, often problematic to find an employer who writes an indefinite job offer without really knowing the applicant and how s/he works. Thirdly, the employers have to prove to the New Zealand Immigration Service that they cannot find a New Zealander for this particular job; this causes the employers much work. Fourthly, since it often takes a long time to have the application processed, the employers need to be willing to wait until the immigrant receives the approval. As a consequence of all these obstacles, trying to employ an immigrant is for many employers just too much trouble to have to go through. The recently implemented ‘Work to Residence Policy’, which provides applicants in the ‘General Skill Category’ with several useful opportunities to gain a job offer; and the new ‘newkiwis’ employment programme, a website where future immigrants can register their skills and the Chamber of Commerce promotes these skills to appropriate potential employers, are great new resources which will assist in important ways in remediying these issues, and in supporting potential immigrants to get their feet into the employment market.

The ‘Business Category’ is designed to bring into the country people who would not qualify under ‘General Skills Category’, but who are innovative and/or rich enough to set up a business or to invest a significant amount of financial capital in New Zealand. There are four different categories. In the ‘Investor Category’, potential immigrants are assessed based on a point system, in which they get points allocated according to several factors, including investment funds (i.e. amount of money they invest in the New Zealand economy), age, and business experience. Potential immigrants can apply under the second category, the ‘Entrepreneur Category’, when they have already successfully set up a business in New Zealand for at least two years. The ‘Long-term Business Visa/Permit’ category grants a work visa/permit for up to three years and is intended for foreigners who plan to establish a business in New Zealand, in order to be able to apply under the ‘Entrepreneur Category’ for a residence permit; or who intend to establish a business in New Zealand, but do not intend to live permanently in New Zealand. The last category, ‘Employees of Relocating Businesses’, allows key employees of foreign businesses which relocate their business to New Zealand to apply for a residence permit.

With the application, the applicants in both categories have to hand in the following documents: a certificate that proves that they meet English requirements (e.g. IELTS test – costs: about NZ$ 220); a police certificate from Germany to prove their good character; a New Zealand Immigration Service certificate which proves good health, a medical examination that includes a chest x-ray (costs: about NZ$ 50 x-ray, NZ$ 40 doctor fee); and an evaluation of their overseas qualifications by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (costs: about evaluation NZ$ 230, plus all the necessary translations of certificates, references, curricula, which cost about NZ$ 40-80 per page).

The evaluation by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority is, in general, a major hurdle for German immigrants. Many of my friends and I were dissatisfied with the long time it took, as well as with the outcome. I know of several cases where the qualifications were unjustifiably devalued in substantial ways. Even if the hurdle of evaluation of one’s qualification is taken, many potential immigrants then need to acquire the registration of the professional bodies of their profession. Most professional bodies require the immigrants, who at this time have already worked for many years practically and in an often specialised manner, to sit a theoretical overall exam for which they charge high costs and/or to take specific papers at the university. These evaluation and registration procedures are very frustrating, since the German immigrants believe that Germany has an excellent education and training system, and, therefore, they feel humiliated and unfairly treated.
The fee for applying for residency is NZ$ 500, when applying from within New Zealand); and NZ$ 700 from Germany in the ‘General Skill Category’ and ‘Family Category’. Applicants in the ‘Business Category’ have to pay a fee of NZ$ 2500. If the applicants are successful and the residency is granted, they have to pay an additional Settlement Fee of NZ$ 90 per application and a Migrant Levy, which is NZ$ 235 for each person in the ‘General Skill Category’ and ‘Business Category’, and NZ$ 125 for each person in the ‘Family Category’. When all those costs are added together, the application process is very expensive. It is usually also very time consuming, because so many things have to be organised and prepared.

In addition to the actual application, applicants have to sign a form in which they surrender their right to unemployment benefits for the next two years, in order to ensure that immigrants contribute to, rather than take from, the country.

This chapter provided an overview of the historical, statistical, and environmental context and conditions of German immigration to New Zealand. This context and these conditions represent an important part of the platform upon which the experiences of German immigrants to New Zealand are built. It is of the meta story of the experiences which eight German immigrant couples, whose characteristics I outlined in Chapter Three, that I will tell in the next four chapters.
META STORY: LIVING THE DREAM

I think [migrating] has something to do with dreams ... I think if you don't have dreams you don't go to New Zealand - if you don't have the visions, if you don't have the passion!

(Participant)
INTRODUCTION

Dreams – most of us had them when we were children. As children, our worlds were full of possibilities; there were no limitations to what we could do. We were confident and trusted that we could do and achieve anything we could imagine. We dreamt of becoming astronauts, doctors, actors, or heroes who would save the world or do most wonderful things. In everything we did, we simply followed our hearts; we followed what we felt was right for us, without being fearful, and without thinking of what might go wrong and what the consequences might be. Moreover, just like the children in ‘Never-Never Land’ in the Hollywood adaptation of Sir James M. Barrie’s (1904) Peter Pan & Wendy we imagined and created our dream world – a world full of magic and beauty, in which we saw beautiful and graceful fairies, in which wooden sticks became horses and stones became Indians, in which dolls and teddies became alive, or in which we built elaborate castles out of mud. When we lived in our dreams, we felt great joy and fulfilment, and we felt alive. We were totally immersed in our dream world and lost track of time. Often we experienced mum’s call, “It’s tea time!”, as abrupt and were sad, since it brought us back to the often grey reality.

Unfortunately, as we grew up, many of us lost this precious ability to dream and to see the world from the perspective of an innocent and trusting child. With each passing year and with each knock, we more and more closed our open hearts. We ignored and stopped listening to the loving little voice of our heart – our feelings and spirit – to ‘make it’ in the demanding, competitive, and cold world, which does not seem to value feelings and dreams. To fit in, we increasingly made our decisions according to what our rational mind told us what we should, need, or must do to be good children, pupils, workers, parents, citizens and so forth in our society. Like in the fairytale “The Cold Heart” the price we paid is that we became cold and separated from other people. However, fortunately, some people preserved or rediscovered their ability to dream and to listen to their hearts. And more fortunately, some people even dare to break free from the confines of the social world and to live their dreams – to live their unique truths, by following what their hearts tell them. The following meta story tells the experiences of courageous Germans who dared to live their dream of migrating to another country.

PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS AND EXPLANATIONS

The Meta Story: A Mosaic

The meta story of the experiences of German migrants we are going to tell in the next chapters needs to be understood as a mosaic. The meta story represents a local theory of the experiences of eight German migrant couples to New Zealand and those factors which influenced their decision to stay in New Zealand or to return to Germany. In accordance with the Grounded Theory approach (see chapter two), we collected as wide a variety of experiences as possible. We broke down the 15 interviews we conducted into various small mosaic stones (open coding), organised the mosaic stones of all interviews into meaningful chunks (axial coding) and then put them together in a meaningful way to create a whole new mosaic (selective coding). Some mosaic stones were mentioned by many participants, some only by one. Some of these single mosaic parts we included when Petra’s experience told her that this specific mosaic part was an experience of other German migrants too. For example, only one participant told her about her experience of arriving in time to say goodbye when her father died. Since Petra knew that this scenario is a great concern for many German migrants, we included this mosaic stone into the migration mosaic. Consequently, the
mosaic represents a colourful merger of the most important experiences of the eight specific participant couples investigated in this study, independent of the number mentioning the content of the piece. To ensure a smooth flow of the meta story and so as to not make it too complicated to read the story, we have chosen to use the general term participants when we refer to both stayer and returner couples, and stayers and returners when we refer to stayers and returners specifically.

When reading the story, please keep in mind that although the meta story is presented in a linear fashion, various mosaic parts are intertwined and/or happen simultaneously. The limited scope of the book allows us only to point out and explain the most important interrelationships. The various interrelations are shown in Figure 3.1., which represents the overview of the whole mosaic or the local theory of the migration experiences of German migrants to New Zealand. Likewise, we only had space to give a few examples from interviews and participant observation, in order to bring the story alive. There are certainly gaps and spaces we were unable to fill in due to the high diversity and complexity of the migration process. These gaps and spaces represent the incompleteness of research that attempts to give voice to experience. We need to leave it up to you to fill in the parts in between with your own imagination, in the hope that you can bridge these gaps in a manner most useful for you like Adam in Leonardo de Vinci’s painting, *God and Adam Reaching Out*.

While the meta story represents a local theory of the experiences of eight German migrant couples, the way in which we put these experiences together as well as our explanations represent our interpretation of what the participants told us. We tried to stay as close as possible to the participants’ stories, but our backgrounds and the level of evolvement at the time of the data collection, analysis, and writing up influenced how we understood what the participants told us. This research was a journey for us and, in a sense, the meta story is the result of this journey. Therefore, while we trust that the meta story represents the experience of the participants, it also represents our very own experiences, and the final product is our unique truths for:

> [Our] journey is no more or less important than [those of the participants]. It is just the only one [we] can make authentically. The stories [we] tell are [our] truth only. They represent [our] understanding of what happened like a work of art, not a photograph. If told by anyone else, they would be different. [We] tell them in hope that what is true for [us] can reveal what could be true for you ... in support of your living fully alive, on purpose.

(Markova, 2002, p. 13)

We hope that each participant and indeed each German migrant to New Zealand finds herself or himself often throughout the story; that the story encapsulates the experiences of German migrants to New Zealand. But because we all are unique, we also all have unique experiences, which might depart from the common experiences. Thus, we expect that the participants and other German migrants might not find some of their unique experiences in the meta story. We do not see that as an issue, however. Rather, we see it as natural: as an important expression that everybody writes her/his own unique life story, which is most conducive for living one’s unique purpose of life. The story uncovers many psychological and social issues. By bringing these into the open, we do not judge, blame, and/or criticise individuals or social structures. Rather, we bring these issues that contribute to distress in German migrants into awareness, so that individuals and the German and New Zealand societies are better able to deal with these issues. We hope that in return, dealing with them will enhance the quality of life of German migrants in New Zealand and will harmonise the living together of New Zealanders and Germans for the benefit of both. Consequently, it is our hope that you will not be personally offended by these issues, but will rather perceive the potential the experiences of German migrants offer for enhancing the quality of life.
What is the Meaning of Dreams?

Before the meta story can be told, it is necessary to reach common ground with regard to the meaning of dreams, since the meaning of dreams seems to have dramatically changed over the last 700 years. The word dream is thought to have appeared in *The Story of Genesis and Exodus* and originally to have developed from the Old English *drēam*, which meant joy, mirth, and music (Barnhart & Steinmetz, 1988). This original meaning of dreams suggests that dreams initially referred to something that is joyful, because it is so strikingly pleasant, beautiful, or delightful, like music. Further, dreams were originally associated with involuntary vision which occurred to persons while they were awake or asleep (Barnhart & Steinmetz, 1988; Random House Webster’s college dictionary, 1997). People who perceived these visions were said to have a great sense of insight/intuition and to be able to vividly see supernatural meanings. Moreover, because dreams are associated with something joyful such as music and something powerful such as a vision, they kindle fire in one’s heart and lead to the desire or aspiration to make the dream one dreamt come true. Thus, one’s heart catches fire - one’s courage and passion come alive. Linked to this meaning was the conceptualisation of dreams as something happening easily and effortlessly, suggesting that if one follows one’s heart with courage and passion, living one’s dreams becomes easy and effortless (Tulloch, 1993). This interpretation is also supported by another meaning of dreams, namely that dreams are associated with the strong belief that something is possible (Collins English dictionary and thesaurus, 1993). These originally positive conceptualisations of dreams are reflected in the following quote by Carl Gustav Jung (1989):

Goethe’s secret was that he was in the grip of that process of archetypal transformation which has gone on through the centuries. He regarded his ‘Faust’ as an ‘opus magnum’ or ‘divinum’. He called it his ‘main business’, and his whole life was enacted within the framework of this dream. Thus, what was alive and active within him was a living substance, a suprapersonal process, the great dream of the mundus achetypus (archetypal world). I myself am haunted by the same dream, and from my eleventh year I have been launched upon a single enterprise which is my “main business”. My life has been permeated and held together by one idea and one goal: namely, to penetrate into the secret of personality. Everything can be explained from this central point, and all my works relate to this one theme (p. 206, my emphasis).

Unfortunately, these positive meanings of dreams have become increasingly forgotten during the modern era, with the rise of the scientific approach and an objectivistic worldview, because they were associated with mysticism and spiritualism. As a result, today most people associate dreams only with “imagined series of events occurring during sleep” resulting from thoughts and emotions (Collins English dictionary and thesaurus, 1993, p. 341), or they perceive dreams either as an ideal (e.g. dream holiday), seemingly unrealistic fantasies or imaginations, and/or something unreal (e.g. too good to be true/real). All these meanings imply that dreams, and for this matter joy, are something unattainable. Fortunately, however, people increasingly liberate themselves from the fear of not being able to handle their lives and start, instead, to pursue a life full of joy by dreaming again, and daring to follow their dreams with courage and passion. They follow the advice of Epikouros, a Greek philosopher, who maintained that joy or pleasure should be “the chief purpose of living” (Brown, 1956, p. 447). The participants in this study are among these people; they dared to try to live their dream with passion and courage. It is to the telling of the meta story of the experiences of those participants we turn now.
CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPING THE DREAM & READINESS

You only do migrate when you are ready for it to do it, if you have dreams. ... I think it is all about your ideas and dreams and personal inputs.

(Participant)
In response to our request to tell us their migration experiences from the point when they first thought about migrating, several participants stated that they actually had to go further back in time in order to explain why they migrated to New Zealand. The analysis of these parts of their stories showed that the participants gradually developed the dream of migrating. This chapter provides an overview of how the participants developed their dream and their readiness to migrate. The chapter presents the analysis of the selective code, Developing the Dream & Readiness. Within this selective code, three axial codes or properties emerged:

- UPBRINGING: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS
- TRAVELLING: GRADUAL EXPANSION OF HORIZONS
- PERSONAL OR INSPIRED DREAM

Upbringing: Laying the Foundations and Travelling: Gradual Expansion of Horizons describe the processes involved in developing the dream and the readiness to live in another country. Personal or Inspired Dream discusses the two different kinds of dreams that emerged as a result of the development processes.

**UPBRINGING: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS**

To explain why they migrated, the participants told Petra many stories about their childhoods. The analysis of these stories suggests that the way in which the participants were brought up prepared them for the migration, by providing conditions that were conducive for migrating and that fostered the evolving of special interests/loves, and characteristics and values. These, in consequence, led to the development of the dream to migrate to New Zealand and inspired, encouraged, and enabled them to expand their horizons, leading subsequently to their readiness to migrate to another country. Two interrelated codes emerged that originated in the participants’ up bringing:

- Conditions Conducive for Migrating
- Characteristics and Values

**Conditions Conducive for Migrating**

- **Family History Regarding Migration**
- **Safe Environment with Wild Places**
- **Disharmony**
- **Love of Reading**
- **Love of Travelling and Interest in other People and Cultures**

**Family History regarding Migration**

Because Germans have a long history of migrating to other countries due to their moving history, many Germans have family members who have lived or live in other parts of the world. This was the case for one participant:

I know that there was one guy in my grandfather’s generation that went to the States ... The story goes that he was a bit of a wild one, and I think he ran away from home and joined the merchant marine and travelled back and forth and eventually ended up in the States, where he then - I think, it was just when they had a gold rush in Colorado - he went there and rather than seeking for gold too, he opened a barber shop. And then he started selling appliances in the barber shop. Then he stopped the barber thing and went into
appliances. Then he eventually had this chain of big appliance stores and became fabulously rich. ... Very 
early on - I must have been four years old or whatever - this uncle actually did come and visit. 

In addition, due to the events of World Wars I and II, several participants grew up in families that had to flee 
from their hometowns and settle in new areas within Germany. As a result, their families were scattered and 
lived in different countries, their fathers fought in various countries, and their families had to move to 
different places. These family histories facilitated migration in that some migrants were used to being 
different, had low attachments to places, were used to learning new things, and had had role models who 
 signalled to the participants that it was acceptable to leave:

... because my parents both come from Eastern Germany. actually from Western Russia, I always knew our 
family was different. ... I always knew that the customs that we kept, for instance, you know, were always a 
little bit different: that the food that we ate was always just a tad different, you know. So it wasn’t culture 
shock, but I always knew that we weren’t typical North Germans, that our sort of cultural background was 
Eastern European, Baltic. ... That was, you know, just basically growing. ... I also had quite a number of my 
family living all over the world, among them my cousin who lives in Colorado ...

... you have to learn new things. For me in some way it was not too bad, because I never had a real home. 
My home was once on a boat, then was the army, before I was with my grandparents, just as a young boy I 
had a few years with my mother maybe until I was 15 or 16. And from that time on I nearly never had a real 
home anymore.

Family members having lived abroad and/or the family being used to members living abroad contributed to 
more positive reactions towards the participants’ decision to migrate:

But [migrating] was a massive shock - for my mother very much so and for my father too, but he did not 
show it as much, I would say, I mean, through the fact that he had been in America where he was a prisoner 
of war, and in France and England. He had already been abroad and, under what circumstances whatever. 
But my mother was born in a village and grew up in a village and is still living there and doesn’t speak a 
word of English. (2)

Safe Environment with Wild Places

Several participants grew up in trusting communities with open, natural spaces nearby. The safe environment 
allowed them to disappear into and explore these wild places. Both male and female participants played in 
wild places and played with natural materials, climbed trees, and got dirty. Growing up in this environment 
contributed to the development of curiosity, fantasy, and connection to nature in the participants:

Where I grew up, in [the city] in an inner-city neighbourhood, there were wild places. Just across our 
backyard there was an empty plot with nothing but weeds growing. It was like a jungle - it was wonderful. ... 
And I learned to cross a ditch, basically a little river, and you could wade in there, and you could play at the 
sand bank up the river ... [My partner] had the same upbringing. ... this total trust and being able to just, in 
your neighbourhood, disappear and invent cowboys and Indians and what have you - your own little fantasy 
world.

Playing in and exploring wild places allowed the participants to have many experiences. As a result of which 
they gained independence and confidence.

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4 The interviews were partly conducted in German and partly in English. Quotes which are marked at the end of the 
quote with a * were translated from English into German.
5 Because the spoken word in interviews is not as polished as something written and to increase the legibility of the 
quotes, we edited the quotes. However, in doing so we took great care to not change the content of the quotes.
Disharmony

Although most participants enjoyed a safe and happy upbringing, several participants grew up in disharmonious families (e.g. parents separated, beaten by dad, parents died when they were very young). These participants were forced to take care of themselves very early in their lives, which contributed to their gaining many useful experiences. As a result, they became highly independent very early. This high independences, in turn, encouraged gaining further experiences. As another consequence, the participants who grew up in disharmonious families had looser ties and/or low attachments to family and places, because they alternately lived between one parent, the other parent, and grandparents at different places. The following quote summarises the experience of one participants in this respect:

... perhaps it has also to do with the situation with my parents being divorced. Perhaps a little bit of unrest, feeling unappreciated. I actually shouldn’t say that I didn’t have a home – I had a home. But, yes, you know, I missed my dad, and mum had problems. Yes, I should also tell you: she was drinking and smoking and she was for many a completely unhappy woman. She had no time to think about her children much.... She earned the money needed and she did the washing and cooking, but she was so terribly involved with herself.

One participant, whose parents were divorced, treasured specific childhood memories. However, for him these childhood memories were not attached to places – he carried them within him (inner sense of identity):

But I was never that much attracted to the place Germany as a place or to my hometown or whatever. I would think that my memories are of the 50s. I remember when I first tasted a banana. I remember how Christmas was celebrated at home as a child. I remember when I went to a shop for clothing. I remember standing or being on the motorway - the German Autobahn - to go to a holiday house or whatever, and I remember some places where we have been on holiday. But it has nothing to do with that I would say: Well, this is Dresden, Cologne or Düsseldorf or whatever. That are memories of my childhood.

Interesting was the remark that one participant felt unappreciated. Maybe this feeling led to a need to be special or to do something special in order to gain the appreciation of his parents. This interpretation is, indeed, supported by a later statement made by this participant:

I think is not, it is not about being free, it is about being focused and wanting something special - and taking the step and the decision. ... I want to do something different.

Looser family ties as a result of disharmony in the family made it easier for the participants to leave their families, whereas close family ties made it more difficult as this quote of a participant indicates, who did not migrate for several years because of her close connection to her family:

We have always meant to do something like this. We didn’t really have the courage, because we are here in Germany closely tied to our family. And then somehow you don’t pluck up the courage to break up these links. (3)

Love of Reading

Several participants told me that their parents loved reading and that they thus became avid readers themselves who were absolutely fascinated by the things they read. Together with playing in a wild places, the reading of books facilitated the development of knowledge, curiosity, fantasy, and dreams in the participants:

[My father] couldn’t pass a book, you know. Regardless of whatever was in there, you know, he had to read it. ... So he was sort of like a bookworm, you know. ... I mean I’m remembering seeing myself in front of these bookshelves, sort of, you know, fascinating. Totally fascinating things in like encyclopaedias, these old lexica, he had. I loved it! I loved it! I could sort of sit in front of them for hours and hours and hours, and sort of look on the pictures. And, you know, interesting things in there and all other books. Yeah, I loved that!
It’s the books you read. I read all the books. Despite being in East Germany, I read all the books: Mark Twain and other great authors. And that all forms your brain, your wishes, your visions. ... I think mainly my mother gave them to me, who has -, I don’t know how many - tons of books. And yes, it is a great thing to read.

For some participants, reading books about New Zealand contributed directly to the development of the dream to go to New Zealand:

I always wanted to go to New Zealand since I was probably 16, 17, 18 – something like that. I had read something in books about New Zealand ...

Finding the things they read fascinating also contributed to the evolvement of their thirst for knowledge – a characteristic very characteristic of migrants.

**Love of Travelling and Interest in other People and Cultures**

All participants shared a love for travelling, and an interest in other people and cultures. Some participants inherited this love and interest from their parents, whereas others developed it exactly because their parents did not travel. In addition, this love and interest also stemmed from their love of reading, which generated dreams of seeing cultures and countries described in books. As a result of this love and interest, the participants travelled extensively. As described under Previous Travelling, they started with exploring places within Germany and then gradually extended their travels to other countries. In strong contrast to the majority of Germans, participants loved travelling on their own, independently, and without plans. They chose this way of travelling, because they wanted to get in contact with the people and cultures of the countries they visited; to get a glimpse into others’ lives and find out what they think. This desire is linked to the participants being independent, and their thirst for knowledge and understanding of the world and themselves:

I’ve always, since I was a little kid, been travelling. My parents have always travelled. And I was eight, I think, when I went to Switzerland. It was my first trip abroad. And we always went to the North Sea, you know, and what have you not. My parents were great travellers and so was [my partner’s] family. ... So I think we really have it in our blood, both of us. ... And we’ve always liked travelling independently. ... I like to go to other countries, because I want to see the other countries. I want to try to see how the people live. And if I go on a tour, I’m together with other people, you know, of my culture, and I don’t actually see what’s going on. I cannot actually understand how people make these plans, you know, where they say “Oh right I travel... I’m spending two days here and three days there,” even if they are independent travellers and, because I think if I like a place I want to stay there longer or if I don’t like it I’ll skip it, you know.

Yeah, it all started when I was about 16 or so. I travelled a lot in Germany. When I was younger, I walked. I don’t know – hundreds of kilometres. ... We slept in people’s sort of farm buildings – we asked them of course. I mean it came later when I went out of the country. But when I was young – 15, 16, 17 ... Yeah, we biked. I biked down to Munich and all sorts of things. As a kid! ... Later with the motorbike. ... I liked sort of cruising around with no particular destination or whatever. Just as a matter of just cruising around, you know. ... I’ve been also in Italy or in Greece or in Turkey or in Spain or Portugal. No, I was always, sort of, yeah, with different cultures. You know, people look different, people act different, different food, different smells... I always felt. appealing to go to different places, different people – see what they do. ... So I just liked travelling. I always did. Because, maybe, because we never travelled when I was quite young, you see. My parents had no car and this sort of thing. We never travelled. ...

I was always trying to explore and just go to some interesting place ... Already when I was a student I went to our head of the campus and told him: “Look, I have heard you got a job in China, something very interesting.” ... And then three weeks later, he called me saying: “You want a change? You can go to China.” ... and we went to South America to do studying for a few months, ... Have you ever heard of
Marquez’s ‘Hundred years solitude’ – ‘Hundert Jahre Einsamkeit?’ He is a Colombian Nobel prize Winner - Marquez one of the greatest writer, I think for centuries … It’s strong and beautiful. And I thought about Columbia already while I was 16 … we flew to Columbia and I will not forget this time. It is something: staying for a couple of months and speaking Spanish, doing a field study in the middle of Guerrilla territory.

It was always not only the country but also the interaction between people. … Yeah and sure, I mean, always chance also of getting to know a piece of somebody else's life.

Yeah, [experiencing a different culture] is important for me because the world does not only consist of one single way of thinking and with every human being that thinking can be extended with respect to the political conflicts as well be it Christian and Islamic ones. That is nothing but narrow minded - one as much as the other – you know when we then have conflicts. ... (Petra: That one simply cannot have empathy for others because of that.) Yes, also trying to understand what the other is thinking, and to accept and to simply say ‘Okay, I don’t do things as you do, but if that is okay for you then that is also okay for me.’ This mutual acceptance of how the other one does things. (4)

On the whole, the way in which the participants grew up led to the development of the dream to migrate; to pre-conditions advantageous for migrating; to the formation of characteristics and values which propelled them to gradually gain knowledge about their selves and the world around them, and which, simultaneously, supported them in expanding their horizons. In the following two sections, I will discuss the latter two and their interplay in more detail. I will start with a discussion of their characteristics and values, and then elaborate on the gradual expansion of horizons. Although I present them in linear fashion, they are closely intertwined – they feed into each other in an upward, spiral process (see Figure 3.2.).

Characteristics and Values

Taking the impressions from the fieldwork and the interviews together, the participants struck us as very alive, deeply insightful, and tremendously interesting people. They all offered a wealth of experiences and insights, and are very passionate, courageous, and humorous. Staying with them energised and inspired. Accordingly, the subsequent analysis of the participants’ accounts yielded a striking similarity regarding their characteristics and values. Seven major attributes crystallised:

- **Desire for Self-Development**
- **Thirst for Experiences and Knowledge about Self & the World**
- **High Feminine-Masculine Balance**
- **Acceptance of Responsibility**
- **Independence and Freedom**
- **Intense and Meaningful Personal and Social Relationships**
- **Cultural Life and Nature**

The characteristics and values are located towards the idealistic end of the idealistic-materialistic continuum and are intrinsically interconnected.

**Desire for Self-Development**

The participants actively aimed at developing personally and being their selves in order to feel happy and content with their selves, and to become stronger:

It’s really all about just going on developing yourself, so that one is settled within oneself and, yes, found the place where one belongs. And its not really important what you look like on the outside, what you represent, but rather simply that you feel at home in your own skin, in the true sense of the word. (6)
To be able to put up with yourself, your own presence - to put up with yourself, be content with yourself, be enough for yourself … (7)

... yeah coming out of it as a stronger person as I went into it.

Accordingly, the participants are very reflective, demonstrate higher levels of awareness/consciousness, and are characterised by an already stronger inner sense of self.

**Thirst for Experiences and Knowledge of Self & the World**

To personally develop, the participants desire to gain knowledge about and understanding of their selves and the world around them, and to stay mentally and physically fit (i.e. to age with dignity). In addition, they desire to find a place that facilitates personal development and being themselves. Accordingly, the participants are very curious and have a strong sense of wonder. They ask deep meaningful questions and actively seek to answer their questions by reading and gaining new experiences. They try out different things to test their selves against unknown things. They look deliberately for challenges, change, uncertainty, and conflict, rather than avoiding these things. Thus, they like living in energy fields (‘Spannungsfeldern’), where things are fluid and conflicting rather than frozen and clear cut:

*I think we were not afraid, we were just curious … it is also good to stretch your mind. … But, I couldn’t believe that someone who would go overseas for many years, would not be also driven by the activity - by the wish to change, the wish to learn, to see things.*

*And everyone has this question which is: We are human and why are we like that? And why is it sad if you die now? Why is everyone hanging so much on it? Why is everyone so concerned about his own sake? And at the same time: listen to music! Incredible things happen about you every minute, every second. How come? I've got one, a colleague of mine, he’s absolutely like this. He’s just shocking eh! He smokes. He doesn’t move. He’s 50 and a really stupid person - stupid in the sense that he is not interested in anything. They’ve got no books at home. I mean we aren’t animals, are we? He lives like an earthworm. … Pitiful existence! … Yeah, I don’t want end up like this really. I can’t see any reason why I should. I mean that’s like a computer we’ve got. Why shouldn’t we use them as a computer, you know. Try to compute, try to put things together and sort of try to find an answer to questions you’ve got, even if my questions are not that sophisticated. I know I’m not a scientist or something like that, you know. But I mean, I’ve got questions and I’ve sort of tried to find answers for those questions. What I do is I just sort of try to find a science book to look for some of scientific or philosophical questions. So I go to library and try to find book about that particular problem and try to find what is, what other people said about that topic to get my own, sort of, make my own mind up so what might be true or not, you know. Or see what other people think about it, you know. So the more as you read and as more as you do it, the more you know. And the more you know, the more questions you get.*

*... you meet people, they’re sort of mid-end-thirty, and they look like and feel like being 50 or 60. And you meet people, on the other hand, they are 70, but they don’t look like 70 and they are totally sort of switched on, really strong. … I’ve met one on the track - he was bloody marvellous. He was about 80 or so. He still had a good body and this mind was still, sort of, really good shape, yeah! And that’s quite important for myself as well.*

*So friction, perhaps in the sense, yeah, that it means for me somehow, like not to be so well-established and not to get set in certain things. ... I mean, like the whole time in New Zealand, where we were for a fair time, but after all this time it was still like, in spite of everything, you couldn’t work out how someone acts or why someone acts the way he does and, yeah … it is always is a certain field of energy, which keeps you a little bit awake and somehow stimulates the mind. If everything always runs along smoothly, a place where you know your way around but on the other hand nothing new ever happens then I don’t feel well. I don’t like to do always the same thing.* (8)
For me it is always important to make an experience. ... And, yes, to gain experiences, to go abroad to experience how it is.

To gain experiences and learn new things, the participants are eager to constantly top up their qualifications and like making detours (e.g. often changed their jobs), which very much deviates from the ‘normal way’ in the German culture:

The other day I was asked, “Why did you change your job so often?” ... If I hadn’t changed my job so often ... well, I find that is totally okay. I can look back to many different things. I have passed through everywhere, got to know many different areas, and got to know many people because of that. And I find that is incredibly interesting. Looking back, I find it really great how it has been. I find that good. It has been a lot of fun, so far. (9)

The thirst for experiences and knowledge was the central motivator for migrating for several participants (see Chapter Four). The participants also value time for themselves, quiet and peaceful lives, and outdoor activities to reflect upon and integrate new experiences and knowledge.

**High Feminine-Masculine Balance**

We were surprised by how highly aware many participants were of their feelings. Petra not only experienced this high consciousness during her stays, but we also found many accounts throughout the narratives in which the participants refer to their feelings. Moreover, these accounts show that these participants value and trust their feelings:

I really don’t know, that is just a gut feeling that I have. ... You know the feeling that ‘This is it!’; you know.

Yeah, and then the Plunket nurse said that I should slowly start the solid food and my feeling told me that he doesn’t need solid food - I have more than enough milk ... simply a matter of my feeling. (10)

As we will discuss in more detail in the next chapter, the migration decision was accordingly not a rational decision, but a decision based on a strong feeling that migrating is the right step.

Interestingly, in strong contrast to stereotypes of men, the male participants in particular spoke about strong feelings, dreams, passions, and visions. They assigned much importance to their feelings; listened to them; and followed them passionately and with great courage. Stereotypic masculinity would imply that these male participants are ‘weak’, because they display so much feeling – which is stereotypically feminine. However, the male participants are, at the same time, very strong and determined, have very rational minds, and are very active – which are stereotypically masculine attributes. In contrast, the female participants gave Petra the impression during the fieldwork that they are, in general, not stereotypically feminine. While they also spoke about feelings and displayed much feeling, they too are, in general, very strong and determined, have very rational minds, and are very active. In other words, male and female participants have a high degree of balance between their feminine and masculine characteristics, suggesting that they can make use of both characteristics. Being able to draw upon feminine and masculine characteristics allowed them to choose from and make use of a greater spectrum of experiences and abilities/skills (e.g. emotional and rational reasoning, acting and going with the flow).

**Acceptance of Responsibility**

The participants accept responsibility for their own lives and are aware that they are the architects of their own happiness – the creators of their own lives. Thus, they actively try to ensure their own happiness with determination and persistence. They looked for opportunities and were open to them when they arose. In doing so, they followed their feelings and were flexible, willing to change, open minded, inventive, and creative. They are also realists and positive thinkers. That is, they have basically an optimistic attitude and trust in the process and that outcomes would be positive. However, at the same time, they actively create
their lives in ways that makes them most happy. The participants are confident about coping with most things, yet are aware of their limitations. They perceive problems as challenges.

**Independence and Freedom**

The participants are also very independent, and greatly value independence and freedom. Independence and freedom means to them that they are free to make their own decisions and to do what they want to do. They value independence and freedom, because it allows them to try different things out to gain experiences and to create the lives that make them happy:

*Free time, freedom and to be able to make my own decisions ... Yeah, freedom is for me not just to be able to do what I want, without considering what others want – no, not that. Its more really having the feeling: whatever I do, it’s my own decision, and I’m responsible and no one else.* (12)

Accordingly, they sought jobs in areas that allowed independence and freedom like academia and self-employment:

*I think I wouldn’t have been happy in the industry, because I really need the academic freedom to make my own decisions. I mean, here within this framework, [the institution] provides me with the salary and some basic stuff, and otherwise I am a free agent and can do what I want to do. That is good and it is the thing that suits me.*

In addition, they valued the freedom to try out different jobs without formal qualifications, because it allows them gaining new experiences and to do what fulfills them:

*I find that refreshing in countries like the States or here, you have an idea, and you have the talent somehow you can make things work. You don’t need to have this diploma of what have you not, invention or so or Berufskaufmann [professionally trained merchant] or what ever, to be a shop owner. You just have an idea: you open a shop and you make it work. You go for it, and you know where to get help, and or you don’t know where to get help. And if you fail you fail, but, well, so what? It is luck or bad luck. And I like that, I really do! I think it is much more - it is easier, it suits me.*

To actually do my own thing - whatever comes to my mind, of course within the bounds of the law, yes ... So that I can simply say: “This job doesn’t satisfy me anymore. I start something different.” (13)

Moreover, the participants value owning their own house, since this gives them the feeling of independence and freedom:

*(Petra: Is owning a house important for you?) Yes, it is like a nest. I can’t be kicked out and I can do what I like.*

*... if you got your own house, you can do whatever you like in it. You don’t have to ask. ... I can do whatever I want, you know. ... It’s a good feeling!* 

Being able to own their own house in New Zealand, due to houses being more affordable in New Zealand, was one crucial factor for migrating to New Zealand (see Chapter Four).
**Intense and Meaningful Personal and Social Relationships**

Although the participants are strong individuals, who are travelling their unique paths and love their freedom, they are at the same time very socially orientated. They value cultural life and like to be with other people. However, they value quality over quantity; they greatly value intense and meaningful interpersonal and social relationships with people they select. They select people who are, like them, very interesting and knowledgeable, because these people offer them valuable opportunities to learn new things:

[The friendships] were great and very intense. And, for example, through these friendships I’ve learned things too from different worlds - where I said to myself: “Look here, she really dealt with things that happened in the world and books too, and not only those printed in New Zealand, but topical books." And with many things she was even more topical than I ... So she was somebody who had her feelers far extended to the outer world. (15)

One participant couple used the analogy of ‘the long table’ to describe the importance of intense and meaningful friendships:

(Petra: What is the important thing about the 'long table'? Well simply sitting there talking. You just sit there together, you eat, you drink and have a chat. ... I think talking is very, very important, because everybody looks at things differently and everybody thinks differently, and then you digest everything and think through it. (16)

These characteristics and values, together with other characteristics that the participants displayed, as for instance acceptance, tolerance, and open mindedness, helped them to behave successfully in social interactions. As will become apparent in chapter five, valuing intense and meaningful personal and social relationships is one factor that makes it difficult for the participants to build up relationships with New Zealanders.

**Cultural Life and Nature**

The participants value both cultural life and nature. Cultural life does not only include cinemas, theatre, restaurants and cafes, but also lively discussion with interesting, knowledgeable people. They value cultural life, because they are used to much cultural life in Germany and it stimulates their minds by allowing them to gain experiences and knowledge:

But looking back I think that [my partner] and I are people who somehow like to have the big city closer by. We tried to live that kind of life to the full in [the town where we lived in New Zealand], and we’ve done that to the best of our ability, but of course the cultural scene is not as it is in Germany. ... With cultural, I mean everything from restaurants to pubs to theatres, concerts - simply everything. (18)

For the participants, nature is mainly house gardens, the bush, the ocean, and outdoor activities. They value these things, because, on the one hand, they feel a deep connection to nature, which they value due to their upbringing in wild spaces. On the other hand, being in nature gives them space to reflect and integrate new knowledge and experiences:

A house and a garden is a must. (Petra: A garden was important too?) Yes, definitely a garden so that I can get out into the greenery. (19)

(Petra: Is nature important to you?) Yes ... I still have very strong feelings when we drive through the countryside in the late evening and see yellow glowing lights and the glow on the hills and stuff.

... as I said, for me it was great when I came back from work, into the car and off to the beach or so, what was close, or the mountains at the back of the beach. And then I went there - doing a bit of jogging. Or I drove to the river with the dog or so. For me it was sufficient when I could just lie there and went swimming, and simply enjoyed the peace and quiet. (20)
The degree to which the participants value cultural life versus nature was one factor which influenced whether they stayed or returned, as will become apparent.

Together, these central characteristics and values of the participants encouraged them to gradually expand their horizons, which, in turn, contributed to the characteristics and values becoming more pronounced, which gradually prepared them for migrating. The evolvement of the characteristics and values also made them ready to go away, by strengthening their desire to break away from Germany and start a new life phase and their desire to go to New Zealand. The characteristics and values also affected the way in which the participants reacted to the challenges during realising the dream, as well as their decision whether to stay or return, because they influenced the attitudes and strategies with which the participants responded to challenges during establishment. As will become evident, together these attributes affected in crucial ways staying or returning by influencing reasons for migrating, expectations and goals, how the participants interpreted potential difficulties/obstacles during their establishment, and how they dealt with them. It is important to not perceive the through a dualistic lens, but more as differing in strength along a continuum.

GRADUAL EXPANSION OF HORIZONS

The conditions present during their upbringing, and the resulting interests/special loves, characteristics and values that were fostered by them; inspired, encouraged, and enabled the participants to travel and thereby to gradually expand their horizons. From the analysis, six different kinds of travelling emerged:

- Moving and Travelling within Germany
- Exchange Programmes
- Extended Independent Travels throughout Europe & Worldwide
- Studying or Working in Different Countries
- Temporary Migration
- Holidays and Placements in New Zealand

Moving and Travelling within Germany

As already stated, several participants moved during their childhood with their families within Germany due World Wars I and II. Later, during their adolescence and youth they travelled extensively within Germany. Noticeable, in accordance with their love of independence and freedom, they travelled independently. As a consequence of moving and travelling within Germany, these participants had relatively low attachments to places, were used to being different, were used to learning new things, knew that one had to work hard to rebuild a social life, and became skilled in picking up dialects.

Exchange Programs

Two participants attended exchange programs during their childhood. One participant stayed several times with different families in Britain for a few weeks, when he was between 12 and 15 years old. He enjoyed his visits, which provided him with opportunities to experience another culture and to practise English in a safe environment:

Well that was a pretty protected environment. They just brought you over there, you meet with the other people, there was sort of a family that you were going to, and the whole thing was really short. There were people there to look after you.
The other participant stayed for a year with a family in the United States, when she was 17 years old. She hated it and suffered very much emotionally, because it shook her inner core and thus she questioned herself and could not be open minded. However, she was able to understand this traumatic experience and to learn from it:

*I understood what had happened and it didn’t scare me for the future. … So that was something that taught me, whenever I really do not like it, I don’t have to do it. I don’t have to - you know - prove anything or so. If I’m not happy about it, I’m not happy with my chosen environment then I don’t have to stay there.*

**Extended independent Travels throughout Europe & Worldwide**

All participants travelled extensively throughout Europe and worldwide: several shorter or longer trips throughout Europe (interestingly especially Scotland and Ireland), holidays up to three months in the United States, four months around the Mediterranean, six months in India, several months through Asia with bikes, and working on a ship of the German merchant navy. When the participants spoke about their travels, their eyes started to sparkle. Petra could feel their excitement and passion as they relived their experiences. Although the travels were sometimes very hard, the participants reported that they had had fun and had greatly enjoyed themselves, because they had felt free and were able to do what they wanted to do, which enabled them to learn many new things:

*Oh it was fun! … I felt really free - no restrictions, boundaries and just travelling. It is more like road movie where you could, you know, move on and see a lot of things and experience a lot of … And every time new things.*

*The main thing is that I enjoyed it actually after an initial feeling of loneliness or whatever for a few weeks. I really enjoyed it …*

*And it was a totally different life from the one that we’d been leading [in Germany]. I mean [in Australia] one got around with little money somehow. And everything was casual and jolly: barbecue here, a barbecue there … A free and easy life, let’s say, in comparison to this work, work, work, just to to be able to build a house – typical German - that was the way we grew up. And there it was freedom pure. It didn’t interest anybody if we had something in our bank account and what we thought about the future. There one lived in the here and now and one didn’t think of the retirement income. (22)*

*It is something - staying for a couple of months and speaking Spanish, doing a field study in the middle of Guerrilla territory!*

As with the travels within Germany, the participants more or less cruised independently around, stopping where they liked and skipping the places they did not like. They often travelled on their own, which led them especially to accumulate many valuable experiences. However, they also travelled with their partners, which proved to be, in retrospect, a useful test of the strength of their relationship:

*… this trip to India was really like our ‘trial by fire’. Man, I tell you, travelling in India for half a year when you have no money, it certainly … We met a lot of people on the road, you know, who set out as a couple and who split up fairly smartly, because it is - it was hard. It was really hard, you know. For all the travels I have done in my life, it was the hardest travel I have ever done. … And I think having survived that for half a year it was pretty clear that we are compatible, you know.*

All in all, the participants enjoyed travelling and the overcoming of challenges gave them many valuable experiences and made them stronger and more confident:

*One other thing is, if you start travelling when you’re young - you travel a lot, it gives you a lot of self-esteem, because you’re, you know, going through all sorts of strange situations and you have to cope with*
really strange people, and sort of, you know, lots of things you have never seen, you never experience in your life before...

... you sort of get used to travelling by yourself and you get used to the fact that there is no certainty and you don’t know where you are going to be tomorrow. I think it did make me feel more confident.

... I found out that I was actually quite happy that travelling by myself. It didn’t bother me. I found that I actually started to meet lots of people. Initially, I sort of, I couldn’t. Yes, I guess when you look miserable people don’t really want to talk much with you, but when you get more relaxed about it you meet more. That was good. I felt very strong. I travelled a lot by myself afterwards, and I have always had this experience that it was a very good, self-sufficient sort of existence.

When we flew overseas, to Florida, that was the first time that we had left the European continent. That scared me a bit, because I didn’t know yet - that was a complete new experience. I didn’t know - had no idea what to expect. And after that it was basically all somehow pretty easy for me. I’ve made the experience: okay it’s not that different. (23)

The travelling either strengthened the desire to live in another country or kindled the desire as in the case of one participant:

Due to the fact that I always wanted to go to another country, away from Germany ... (Petra: Why?) I don’t know. I’ve got sort of - that must have come due to my time on a boat as an engineer’s assistant in the German merchant navy.

Studying or Working in Different Countries

One participant completed parts of his studies in different countries, while another participant worked for several years as a construction worker in many different countries around the world. The latter learned many valuable things: that one must take care of everything oneself, not try to understand every word, be aware that one gets incomplete information, and that one can be lonely and thus needs to be happy with one’s own company. These experiences made it easier for him to face the challenges during Realising the Dream:

Through all those years where I was abroad, things [challenges during establishment] were simply normal for me, since they were always like that, they can’t be any different, because, well, that’s abroad. (24)

Temporary Migration

Two participant couples lived for about five years in another country before coming to New Zealand. In both cases, they left Germany temporarily and intended to go back to Germany after some years. One couple, however, slid into migration. That is, they realised after about three years that Germany did not feel like home anymore, because more things were strange rather than familiar, and that they were dissatisfied with many things in Germany. In addition, after two years hating the country where they had migrated to, they had started to enjoy living there. Hence, they decided to not go back to Germany. The other couple had a contract for five years. During those years living abroad, the couples acquired cultural knowledge, which proved to be greatly valuable for their migration to New Zealand, especially in terms of expectations and behaviour in social interactions:

... because I had been to the States before and found that my impressions from what I thought the States were like from being there a short time, versus living there was completely misleading, so I thought I might as well go there. I also thought that if I could get used to the United States, I can get used to anything, so New Zealand shouldn’t be a problem.
I mean when we moved to New Zealand, I think we did less social blunders than we did in the States, because we were accustomed to this phenomenon of culture shock, and probably tread a little bit more carefully.

And I knew what was coming. ... I mean, I think I’ve said that before, that having been through the cultural shock once before, I knew what to expect and where to probably tread lightly as to not offend people, you know. So I had these strategies in place. ... But the feeling that I have is that here I had a much smoother transition into normal life here than I have in the States.

(Petra: And it was no problem for you to jump into like uncertainty?) If you come from Germany it will be different, but if you come from [the country where I lived before for some years] ... [Having already lived in another country] also sharpened your abilities to arrange yourself ... It was some sort of school that was very useful ...

Holidays and Placements in New Zealand

Some participants spent their holidays in New Zealand or worked in New Zealand. One couple were even in New Zealand three times, for four weeks each time, to visit their best friends who had migrated to New Zealand. One participant came twice for a holiday to New Zealand. Two participants came once for five and six weeks respectively to New Zealand; and one participant worked for six months in New Zealand. The motivation for these holidays and placements was either simply holidays, or scouting holidays. For the participant couple who came four times, the visits to New Zealand were just holidays. However, these holidays kindled the desire to move to New Zealand. The participant who came twice stated that these holidays were scouting holidays to follow up the vivid dream he had had, in order to check the reality and to look for opportunities in New Zealand. For the other participant couple, the reasons beyond the holiday and placement in New Zealand were not so clear-cut. It appeared that he first and foremost wanted to fulfil his dream of spending a holiday in New Zealand. Because the holiday was marvellous, he encouraged his partner to do her placement in New Zealand. In doing so, he created, on the one hand, the opportunity his next holiday in New Zealand. On the other hand, he created an opportunity for his partner to experience New Zealand in the hope that this would kindle her desire to live in New Zealand. In any case, the holiday and placement strengthened their desire to migrate to New Zealand and most importantly enabled them to experience how New Zealand felt for them:

... we knew then already that we just liked this place and that we, we just had a feeling about it that we belonged here somehow. ... It was just a feeling that either a feeling of having been here before or a feeling of just feeling at home. It was strange: a feeling of that we have always have been there.

[First holiday:] Yes, with mixed feelings. ... [Second holiday:] I revisited New Zealand again, and again it was a challenging thing, because of the new relationship, I think, and also my previous experience helping me to expect some of these things I had an overall closer, warmer, and more attractive feeling about New Zealand.

The latter quote also shows that these holidays were very valuable in that they assisted in forming more realistic expectations. In particular, the placement proved to be very valuable:

I knew what to expect, because I’ve worked - I’ve been [in New Zealand. And so, at least in theory, the knowledge was there. It's still another thing to live through it, but I at least I didn't, you know, come with any, totally other ideas than the reality was. ... We knew where we were going. I've particularly talked to [my partner], who hasn't been living in another country like I have before. ... I've told him: “Hey, it's not only sunshine, don't measure like that.”

The placement had the additional advantage of allowing the participant to make friends, which then helped them when they came to New Zealand.
Overall, three of the eight stayers and four of the eight returners migrated to New Zealand without having been to New Zealand before. While this is remarkable, it did not seem to influence the likelihood of returning alone, since three stayers did not experience New Zealand before they migrated. It did, however, influence the likelihood to stay or to return, when considered in combination with other factors. For example, one stayer was very disappointed when he came to New Zealand. However, because he believed that in his profession one needs to stay at least three years in a job otherwise, one’s career would suffer substantially, he thought that he had to stay and moved beyond the first big disappointments.

To summarise, before the participants migrated, they undertook considerable travelling, studying, working, and living in countries around the globe. Distinctively, they were not tourists in the traditional way. Rather, they travelled usually by untraditional means (i.e. cruising around independently on their own and without particular destination). Interestingly, only nine of the fifteen participants had been to New Zealand before. The participants reported that they had had fun and had greatly enjoyed themselves when they travelled, because they had felt free and able to do what they wanted to do.

Extended travels further reduced attachments to family and places and increased being used to being different and having to learn new things. It also resulted in learning and/or improving English; acquiring self-knowledge, confidence in one’s self, and cultural knowledge; and experiencing how New Zealand feels. For example, extended travelling ensured sufficient English skills. The higher their level of English proficiency, the higher their feelings of well-being and the fewer their difficulties in establishing a good social life, work life, and identity. Likewise, living, studying, or working in another country allowed them to gain insights into other cultures and accustomed these participants to culture shock. As a consequence, they knew what to expect when they started living in New Zealand, they were more accepting and respectful of the New Zealand culture, they were more careful not to offend people, and they had strategies in place to prevent social blunders. As a result they had a much smoother transition. Similarly, travelling to New Zealand enabled the participants also to gain first hand information, which led to more realistic expectations and goals. In addition, the travels kindled in some participants the desire to live in another country, whereas for other participants it strengthened the desire.

Taken together, travelling prepared the participants step by step for more difficult challenges making them ready for migrating. Travelling built up a greater response spectrum and made them stronger. Having a greater response spectrum for managing challenges made it easier for them to actively deal with challenging situations and uncertainty. Travelling made the participants more confident and trusting in their selves and their ability to cope and to survive on their own. Moreover, it led to a further evolvement of their characteristics and values.

**PERSONAL OR INSPIRED DREAM**

In all participant couples except one, the men were the driving force and the women followed. The one exception was where the woman of the couple, after seeing a slide show about New Zealand, said that she had liked what she had seen and that she wanted to live there. He immediately liked the idea, since he always had dreamt of leaving Germany:

*And after we have sort of finished the slide watching session, my wife said that she was actually quite excited about the countryside and the country itself and she said: “Oh, that's a beautiful country, I'd like to live there.” And I said to her just: “What keeps us away? Just give it a try”. ... From this moment on the idea about New Zealand was born, due to the fact that I always wanted to go to another country, away from Germany.*

From this point on, he was, however, driving their migration, since he had always wanted to leave the country anyway, and he organised everything.
The analogy *driving force* was used by male and female participants to describe the role of the men in the migration, suggesting that both partners were highly aware of the role they and their partners had played. At first sight, this pattern seems to reflect traditional gender roles, yet both male and female participants were highly aware of this scenario and the women are, in contrast to the traditional perceptions of women, very strong and active women. Hence, we had a closer look and found that the men followed their personal dreams and inspired the women with their dreams. Three codes emerged in relation to this category:

- **Men: Personal Dream**
- **Women: Inspired Dream**
- **Partnership & Family: Paramount**

**Men: Personal Dream**

As a result of their upbringing and the gradual expansion of their horizons, the men developed their dream to either live in another country and/or to live in New Zealand. In one case, the participant did not dream of living in another country, but dreamt of working in academia in a particular area. However, he could not get a post-doctoral position in Germany. But because he was determined to fulfil his dream to work in academia, he took an opportunity to do his post-doctoral work with a professor who did exactly the work that he wanted to do and created the right conditions for doing so. From there, the couple slid into migration, and they gradually grew into living in another country (see *Temporary Migration*).

To fulfil their dreams, the men were the driving force. They tried to inspire their partners, either through words or through showing them New Zealand (e.g. holidays in New Zealand). However, in doing so, they were very careful and showed much consideration:

*I would have certainly not come, if she did not want to go.*

*Yes, I do believe that I’m more the driving force, but I would always be considerate when [my partner] wouldn’t want that. Certainly one had to push a bit and say “Hey come on let's do it.” So certainly I am the driving force in the whole story in going there and as well as coming back. But at the end of the day, I can only do it when I know that she agrees, otherwise it wouldn’t work - you need two people to take such decisions.* (25)

*I think also I was the driving force. I think at the beginning, I was the driving force for [the other country we lived for some years] as well as for New Zealand. ... I think my wife was also excited about it, but I think it was my own vision in the beginning that I thought: 'Yes that should be the right way.' And later on [my partner] came also around and was sure she wanted to go with me.*

In one case, the man waited for three years until his partner was ready to migrate also:

*I always wanted to go to New Zealand since I was probably 16, 17, 18 – something like that. I had read something in books about New Zealand and then I had a friend in Scotland, he told me about New Zealand – how beautiful it is. ... And then sort of talked [my partner] into that little bit: to go and have that 6 months, you know, these 6 months placement in New Zealand. And so she did. ... I didn’t want to push her really, you see. I mean ... I thought: ‘Okay, if she didn’t want to go that’s it.’ I mean I was quite sort of determined to go and I had a big desire to go, great desire to go, whatever. So, I always said to myself: ‘Well, if she doesn’t want to go, then we will stay in Germany.’ ‘It wasn’t that bad – put it this way. I wouldn’t have gone for myself. ... Yeah, she wanted to be in that job for a while and see how it ... So she did. It sort of came to the point where she was probably right for it as well. She sort of after three or four years doing the same got bored.*
Women: Inspired Dream

The women were very aware that the men were the driving force:

... [my partner] was the one who was the bigger force in that.

[My partner] is certainly the driving force - more than me for sure. (26)

Interestingly, several women stated that they are quite sure that they would not have migrated on their own, because they liked living in Germany and they would have been happy in Germany as well:

Well, as I said, it wouldn't have broke my heart if I'd stayed in Germany at the time. That would have been just as good at that moment. ..., if I hadn't been together with [my partner], I wouldn't have landed in New Zealand at all. I would have been just as happy in Germany - I would have been able to live there too. (27)

Two different motivations for why the women followed and two different ways of making the decision emerged through the analysis. The couples were more likely to stay if the women were open to the idea of migrating, were ready to go because they had sufficient conducive characteristics/values, beliefs/attitudes, and capabilities; had all the experiences they wanted to have in Germany; perceived the move as an opportunity beneficial for themselves and for their children; and if the migration decision was either made jointly but independently and/or the women were highly committed to the migration decision:

When we decided to come here and do this, we both decided that. It was not, even though it was that [my partner] was the driving force, but it was not that I just talked along and every opportunity I had to say: “See, I told you!” It was: we made the decision together and so we just had to work to make it work, to make it turn out. (Petra: Do you feel that you making the decision together then contributed to your sticking together when you had problems here and did it work out?) Yes, I am sure, because otherwise ... Yes, it is a commitment that you make. And we made this commitment and we have to follow it through then. Nothing more was quite clear. ... But we knew that this was very important that the decisions had to be made not necessarily together, but that both would carry the decision. That was very important.

I went along with him, because I liked the idea. I wouldn't have said that I don't like Germany any more and that is why I have to leave. That was an opportunity and I just took the opportunity. ... I am still not sure if it is more me ... I mean it is more [my partner] I think, but I am not sure whether I just followed that decision or if I also, I mean I'm also someone who likes challenges, but I think in this I kind of probably more followed his decision. I mean it was always a decision that we both made ...

In contrast, when the women just went along to help their partner to fulfil his dream and compromised what they wanted and felt as right for them; the man made the decision alone and pressured the women; or the women were not committed to the migration decision; the couples were more likely to return:

Somehow I just went along, mainly because [my partner] wanted it so much. But it didn’t make me suffer in any way. And I knew, and so much trust I had in myself, that I would find something, even if I wouldn’t be able to work, that I would have something to do or that I would study again or but I was very interested in - and I think it was also good - to do something in the direction of art. ... In as so much, I didn’t go there with flying colours, because I had... (29)

... she says: “I don’t want to live here. That’s not for me. I only went along to do you a favour and to fulfil your dream.” (30)
Partnership & Family: Paramount

That the men were careful and showed consideration when inspiring the women, shows that the relationship was very important to them. That the relationship and family is paramount is also demonstrated in that some couples made a deal before they migrated:

Well, before we went away, we told ourselves that if one of us begins to suffer under the whole thing - be it homesickness, be it whatever else, which comes into it or somebody doesn’t like it, no matter who - then all three will pack and all three of us will go back. We already had decided to do it like tha so that we do not say we split up or so.” (31)

This concern for the relationship carried on throughout the establishment phase in New Zealand:

I said to [my partner]: “If we can’t make it, if you don’t like it, we go back! Don’t worry.” So I would never ever forced her to stay here against, you know, feelings or whatever. Or if [my partner] would have said: “No, no, I don’t like it. I want to go back.” after six months, we would have packed all back into the container ...

SUMMARY

In summary, the participants gradually developed the dream and their readiness to migrate. The way in which the participants grew up laid the foundations for the development of their dream to live in another country and for their readiness to migrate, in that it led to the forming of conducive interests/special loves, characteristics and values. These interests/special loves, characteristics and values inspired, encouraged, and enabled the participants to travel within Germany. The new experiences and abilities that the participants gained by expanding their horizons within Germany led to the further development of their characteristics and values, making them stronger and more confident of expanding their horizons further (e.g. long travels worldwide, placements, working abroad, temporary migration). The experiences and confidence gained through travelling and temporarily working and living in other countries, again further formed their characteristics and values; led gradually to their developing the dream to live in another country; and made them ready and open to realising their dream of leaving Germany and living in another country, to creating the right conditions, and/or to seizing the opportunity/chance when the conditions were right to move to New Zealand. The outlined process could be seen as a preparation process and could be depicted as a continuous upward spiral as presented in Figure 3.2. As a result of this upward spiral, the participants felt that their migration to New Zealand was either all in a line right from the beginning, or that the idea to emigrate was hidden in their minds for a while:

I did the whole former Eastern Germany and I did the whole Eastern block, but I think it is all in a line, you know. When there is the next chance and you can go to South America - you just take it. And then if you are already a bit more mature and you have an interesting job and you have a chance of doing this job in a fascinating environment of [the country where we lived before for some years] - you do it. It is just one line, I think - it is just one way from the very beginning, I think. ...

Yeah, that was in my mind before ... maybe it was sort of ... Yeah, I travelled quite a lot. So it must have been in my mind for quite a while. I reckon. Not as a concrete idea – more or less sort of hidden sort of thing, I would think. (Petra: How do you mean hidden?) Yeah, when I’m looking backwards I would think that ...

Every time when I went to Scotland, for example, I thought sort of: ‘Oh, yeah, I might just go away from Germany and stay here.’ I mean that was quite unrealistic, because there is no work [in Scotland] Yeah, I would be so much better. But then I thought: ‘Oh no, no, no - no!’ I went back and felt all right. So I went
back and sort of did the things I always did, and it was okay. But, because I sort of come and go, I think it was something present for years – yeah, some sort of desire to go and have another experience somewhere else.
CHAPTER 4

ENLIVENING THE DREAM

Whatever you are capable of dreaming you are indeed capable of experiencing. ... Take your steps with consideration for your fulfilment and your heart’s deepest wishes and dreams.

(St. Germain, communication from 'The Masters in Light' through Paul Walsh-Roberts, 17 October 2002, Singapore)
Dreaming about and being personally ready for living in a different country was not enough to lead to migration. To migrate, several reasons and conditions needed to come together or needed to be created at the right point in time. Accordingly, actually migrating - making the dream become true – required the development and coming together of particular characteristics and values, and the right reasons and conditions at the right point in time:

I think many people have the same dreams, and the last bit of backbone and the last bit of decision needed to do that is not there. Or perhaps their mum said: “You don’t go.” Or perhaps their wife said: “I will leave you forever.” or “Just don’t go, don’t leave me alone.” Probably then many people can’t do it. ... I always felt most of the people would miss their readiness. They always had their mouth full of words and ideas, and if it comes to the point when - yes, so what? Nothing happens! ... I think it is all about your ideas and dreams and personal inputs.

This chapter provides insights into how the participants enlivened their dream to migrate by discussing the selective code, *Enlivening the Dream*. This code was derived from four axial codes:

- **REASONS AND CONDITIONS**
- **EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS**
- **MIGRATION: A TRIAL**
- **ORGANISATION OF PREPARATION**

**REASONS AND CONDITIONS**

The reasons for migrating and the conditions/circumstances surrounding the migration decision were specific for each participant couple and varied greatly. All together we identified 109 reasons and conditions, many of which were closely intertwined. Because the high number and interconnections would have made it very difficult to disentangle the reasons and conditions, we decided not to separate them. As will become apparent, most of the reasons and conditions for migrating originated in the participants’ upbringing and reflect their characteristics and values, which are, in turn, linked to the conditions in Germany (push factors) and the conditions in New Zealand (pull factors).

In order for the participants to arrive at the decision to migrate, several reasons and conditions needed to come together or be fulfilled at the right point in time:

*So all those different elements came together and they really, really gave me a big kick to come here.*

*Through pure accident, yeah, a lot of things came together ... I’m not religious or anything, but somehow: it just all came together – it fitted somehow, like a big jigsaw puzzle, that somehow all comes together.* (32)

However, even if only one reason or condition had not been present or fulfilled, the whole migration decision would have been tipped over:

*By chance many things came together, but every single thing could have overturned the decision. Everything had to come together in order to do it at that moment. ... I’m quite convinced also if the weather had been bad that summer when [my partner] was here, really rainy, I'm quite sure we wouldn't have decided to come to New Zealand. And all the other things wouldn't have mattered. ... It was just all the things came together that made it for us in that moment to - we did it.*

It might seem as if the right reasons and conditions came together coincidentally. However, linking together the upbringing, the characteristics and values of the participants, and their dreams/desires, it seems reasonable to suggest that the participants actually worked, consciously or unconsciously, on creating conditions conducive for making their dream come true. In addition, as we argued in the previous chapter,
the experiences during upbringing and travelling, prepared them for migrating as the follow quote confirms too:

*It was just all the things came together that made it for us in that moment to - we did it. ... I can't explain why, but I'm open to live in another country, where other people probably can't imagine to live there ever. So I've [lived in another country] before I moved down [to New Zealand]. And then, I had my experience of work, I had my experience of travelling - all the things I wanted to do before - I've done that. ... and then it was all right to move to New Zealand.*

The participants searched, found, or had the challenges presented which provided them with the opportunity to gain the experiences they needed in order to work on particular sides of the self - to achieve deeper insights into their selves and to live a more fulfilled life.

Corresponding to that the migration was ‘in line right from the beginning’, the migration decision was not logical:

*But I don't know what actually, whether there was any logic, you know. ... It's funny how we make up decisions. I mean, I don't think you actually can, you never do, you are not logical about anything.*

*I don't think that it was a conscious decision that we said Germany is violent or Germany is too crowded or whatever, at least not for me.*

Rather, the migration decision was commonly emotional; the decision was based on feelings or intuitions – on what their heart said. This is in line with the participants being highly aware of their feelings, listening to them, and following them. This interpretation is supported by the many accounts in which the participants referred to their feelings with respect to their migration decision. The following quotes represent the majority of participants:

*(Petra: How did you make the decision?) It felt right. ...
... it just felt like the right thing to do.*

However, in making the migration decision, some participants also asked for and/or let themselves be guided by cues or signs. For example, one participant couple believed that God sent them several signs that they should go. The first sign came during a church service, when they were still wondering whether to go to New Zealand or not. After this church service, the participant said to his partner:

*"I tell you what, listen what is been said in the sermon when the preacher has its thing." And he was talking about what is written in the bible: that you shall leave father and mother, you know. Jesus said: “Leave father and mother and follow me.” And for me was that then: we should go - we should leave. And that's what we did.*

The second sign was his receiving three replies from one place in the North Island, when he searched for a job in New Zealand:

*... there is a saying: when you get three answers about certain things it is like it comes from higher being. Isn't it a coincidence I had three replies from my ads from [the city in New Zealand where we live now], you know. (Petra: And that means?) ... that means you have to go there.*

The third sign was that although the couple never had much money, they had enough for the migration. The fourth sign was regarding their cat. They were concerned about leaving the cat behind. However, the cat vanished a fortnight before they left Germany. Lastly, they could not fly out of Frankfurt, because there was no flight available anymore. Instead, they had to fly out of Zürich. On the day they would have flown out of Frankfurt, a bomb exploded in the Frankfurt airport. Because of these happenings the couple had the feeling...
that their migration worked like clockwork – that everything fell into its place. Consequently, the couple believed that they should go to New Zealand and that some higher being was looking after them.

Another participant, although she did not believe in God, also believed that their return migration was due to higher intervention:

Yes that was simply meant to be: that these job offers came, the fact that this apartment was here, and that we were here in October and no other month. It was meant to be! I am completely convinced - nobody can make me think otherwise. If I were religious, I would say: “that was all determined by God.” (33)

While the migration decision was at the time predominantly based on a strong feeling, in retrospect – with the help of the clarity of hindsight stemming from distance and detachment – the participants could identify reasons for their migrating. In addition, the analysis of the participants’ stories brought to light further reasons, which the participants were not aware of. Taken together, it can be concluded that usually a combination of push factors (i.e. Desire to Break Away from Germany) and pull factors (i.e. Desire to go to New Zealand) led finally to the decision to migrate. Since the factors were spread throughout the narratives, it is difficult to represent these interpretations in quotes. The following quote stands, therefore, for the majority of participants:

I believe that – in looking back - it was as much as getting as far as possible away from that [trauma] as much it was coming [to New Zealand] as a positive destination.

For all except two participant couples, the dream to migrate started with the push factors and only later did the pull factors become important. That is, the participants’ desire to leave Germany and to emigrate to another country operated first and then later their desire to emigrate to New Zealand emerged:

I think, well, going away from Germany hasn’t had much to do with New Zealand for quite a while. Probably was a desire to go away from Germany, but not knowing to what places.

... and the decision to go to New Zealand was basically not New Zealand specifically. In principle it was a matter of going somewhere else, to leave the hometown in order to get experience somewhere else. It could have been somewhere else too, but New Zealand offered itself. (34)

In some cases, it took a very long time to realise the dream, since the reasons and conditions were not right for several years. For instance, one participant had a vivid dream of New Zealand in 1971. In 1981 he came to New Zealand for a scouting holiday. However, he did not migrate to New Zealand, because he had mixed feelings about New Zealand since the reality was completely different from what he had expected. No opportunities arose for him in New Zealand. His wife did not want to migrate and when, he returned to Germany, he had to fix a disaster at work and two close friends died. Some years later, he and his wife separated. In 1987, he came back to New Zealand for another scouting holiday with his new partner. Although his new partner signalled her willingness to do new things and felt a strong feeling as if she belonged to a particular place in New Zealand, and he had closer, warmer, and more attractive feelings for New Zealand, he did not migrate, because he could not imagine working in his profession in New Zealand for so much less money than he earned at home or changing his career. Two years later he migrated with his partner, because the conditions changed: he had a very bad accident and was sent into early retirement. This change in conditions provided him with the financial foundation to start somewhere new. The perseverance displayed by this participant also shows that it was important for the participants to follow their dreams and do what they wanted to do.

In sum, the Upbringing and Gradual Expansion of Horizons and the resulting gradual development of Characteristics and Values led to the development of the dream, Push Factor: Desire to Start New Life Phase In Another Country and the Pull Factor: Desire to go to New Zealand.

The following codes emerged under Reasons and Conditions:
Push Factors: Desire to Start a New Life Phase in Another Country

The participants believed that life develops in different life phases. Two participants maintained that life presents changes around every seventh year. As a result, one starts reflecting on and questioning one’s life:

I would say at certain intervals in your life changes occur ... [About every seven years one asks oneself:] Where am I? Where am I going? What do I want here actually? Why am I actually here? (35)

I think it was more also like a phase in my life, ... I felt like I’d done my travelling, I'd seen the world, you know. And it's all right. I can [migrate]. I do not feel like I have missed out.

I'd come to a different stage and all the way you live your life changes.

We were just in such a phase where we said to ourselves: Okay, something is to be done, because my assembly job - I can’t do that forever. And [my partner] with her job – she was sick of that too, because there were problems that were really mobbing [unfair treatment and exploitation by her boss]. (36)

The result of this reflecting and questioning was that some participants felt, as a consequence of their circumstances in their lives at that time, dissatisfied and/or unwell, or they wanted simply to do something different or new. In either case, they desired to move on and to start a new phase:

... the idea really was to see how, how far we could really start more or less from scratch. Just to start completely new somewhere else different.

Well, because I thought that starting a new life I wouldn’t want it in Germany, because Germany was so much connected with my old life. It was a synergy to your family, with the language you are talking in, it’s a way of life, it is the way you live, all your things - it is more or less quite, quite ... how to put it? ... that is your old life and I didn’t want that. I thought that coming here or going away from Germany would give me a new life.

... new life, new beginning, everything different ... (37)

In my case it was more – I felt I had to do something different. I had to do something for myself like learning a language and getting a job in a different culture - that sort of thing just to keep my brain going. Something like this keeps you really, keeps you going, keeps you young and fit ...

For other participants, their life circumstances just fitted for starting a new life phase:

... my job contract just came up for renewal. At this point we needed to decide whether I take it up or not. And that I had made this experience [of working in my profession in Germany (she wanted to make this experience)] and that I had, so to speak, my wild years behind me with travelling around and so – that I had done that.
I automatically started with the conditions, because I retired and retiring means normally that a new life starts anyway as a retiree. And so, I was starting anyway a new life. ... For me the migration of going somewhere else it was part of the idea that you start a new life.

Several interrelated desires seem to have led in combination to the Desire to Start New Life Phase In Another Country:

- Desire for Self-Development and New Experiences & Knowledge
- Desire to Get Away from Germany
- Desire to Break Away from Old Life

Desire for Self-Development and New Experiences & Knowledge
The participants’ Quest for Self-Development and Thirst for Experiences and Knowledge about Self & the World emerged as the central motivator for migrating. Across the accounts, they frequently referred to their migration as adventure and challenges. They perceived migration as an adventure, because migration from Germany to New Zealand, is a leap into the unknown, which entails many changes and uncertainty, but which also presents many opportunities and challenges for gaining new experiences and to learning new things important for their evolvement:

It was also surely love of adventure ... the desire to experience something new, to live the lure. (Petra: What kind of lure?) The lure of the unknown, what might come - different environment. In and of itself, that is an adventure already. ... Yeah, love of adventure in as so far to experience different things. A start into the unknown - that, too, is an adventure. ... (39)

I think it's more the adventure side. I thought it is a challenge of being able to adjust in a different culture and gaining a lot, all the experience you can gain; your personal things. I don't think that anyone needs to do that, but for me personally I thought it's a valuable experience to be able to, you know, be in a different culture. ... It is more like road movie where you could, you know, move on and see a lot of things and experience a lot of new things. (Petra: What were your priorities at this point in your life?) ... Actually, an intellectual challenge of managing and coping in a different country and the emotional range you would experience by exposing yourself to a situation like that.

I just looked for something different where I'm not knowing, you know, what the future might bring. Sort of moving into a different culture and using a different language day by day sort of thing then knowing you might be in a dead end in eight months or so. Lots of changes at the same time. Yeah, challenge – something sort of you can grow on and cope with the loss of being away from your friends and all this sort of things. So it always kept both sides. It got the sad side, but it also got the side of, yeah coming out of it as a stronger person as I went into it.

I think it was something present for years – yeah, some sort of desire to go and have another experience somewhere else. ... I felt I had to do something different. I had to do something different. Like learning a language and getting a job in a different culture. That sort of thing just to keep my brain going. Something like this keeps you really, keeps you going, keeps you young and fit and that sort of thing. ... Yeah, challenge – something sort of you can grow on ...

Desire to Get Away from Germany
In addition their Desire for Self-Development and New Experiences & Knowledge, the conditions in Germany were not in harmony with the characteristics and values of the participants. All the conditions in Germany, which pushed the German immigrants away, centred on crowdedness and long history. These conditions hampered the participants in their full evolvement – like a seedling who carries all the potential for a strong evolvement within itself and strongly desires to develop and use this potential, but could not fully flourish, because too many other plants were growing too close, competing with the plant for space,
light, oxygen, water, nutrients essential for full evolvement. Over time, the constant disharmony accumulated to dissatisfaction with their lives at a certain time in their life, and to feelings that their selves and personal evolvement were oppressed. The following reasons and conditions, which are directly linked to the conditions in Germany, generated in various combinations the desire to get away from Germany:

- Oppression of Self and Hindrance in Personal Growth
- Dislike of Some German Characteristics
- No Close Friendships
- Not Able to Afford House
- Living Disconnected From Nature
- No Job Prospects
- Dissatisfaction With Job
- Environmental Concerns
- Dissatisfaction With Political Conditions
- Escaping Grey Weather

Oppression of Self and Hindrance in Personal Growth
Participants perceived Germany as being too crowded, having too much family history, being at the end of its developmental cycle, and being cold and intellectual. Because Germany is crowded, many things are highly defined and regimented. There is, for example, a high level of bureaucracy and inflexibility regarding qualifications. Another consequence of the crowded conditions in Germany is that the way of living is fast and hectic, which leads to a highly stressful life, and people being unpleasant (see Dislike of Some German Characteristics). In addition, families in Germany could look back to a very long family history. While this was good in some respects, it also had disadvantages: families expected many things from their children, irrespective of their children’s wishes. For instance, one participant’s father was a doctor and thus, the participant was expected to become a doctor too regardless whether she wanted to, because children should continue the family business. Further, some participants’ families were very settled in the way they did things and insisted on the participants doing things as they had always been done, and/or penalised them when they thought or did things differently. Because Germany is predominantly cold and intellectual, the male participants especially felt uncomfortable. Taken together, the participants felt that these prevailing conditions in Germany did not fit with their characteristics and values, and oppressed their unique individual selves hindering their self identification and growth. Hence, they felt dissatisfied and unhappy:

Well, I simply – that was all totally cramped. (40)

Well, the big difference in Germany was always that - it is like an anthill. And how do you define yourself? You define yourself through your job, you define yourself through your education, you can define yourself through the brains, and through your lifestyle and what have you, but still in this mass of people you are completely indistinguishable. You are in always this enormous competition of everybody else. And the just sheer numbers of people you are together with. And the enormous tradition you have to incorporate and orientate yourself in it. I found that also in Europe extremely oppressive. ... It is too much history, too many people. ... That makes the pressure. ... And I felt that in Germany the parameters wouldn’t quite be fitting - it was too tight, too small, too close for my liking. And I felt more breathing space and living space and future also ahead of me [in New Zealand].

And you’re like in a kind of a current whether you like it or not. You can always say: “I swim against the current! I’ll do things differently!” - but there are a lot of things, which you simply can’t do differently. (41)

... [in New Zealand] is a lot less bureaucracy and [in the country in which we lived before] we didn’t have any or almost none. And then you’ve got your head free. You’ve a clear head, you can be with yourself much more. You can be with others much more too when you are together with them. (42)
... we sort of had the impression to grow in faith, or in our Christian belief, that Germany was not the right place.

The participants especially did not like the constant stress in their personal and work lives, created by the crowded conditions in Germany, and they found that it was difficult, if not impossible, to get away from that hectic way of living:

_I simply wanted to do away with this ever-lasting stress as I had in the end at [the company for which I worked for]. I simply wanted to end that. But if you are here in Germany, you can twist and turn, but you end up again and again in a situation where you are under stress._ (43)

**Dislike of Some German Characteristics**
Participants perceived their fellow countrymen, in general, as unfriendly, aggressive, hectic, superficial, and stressful. They attributed these unpleasant characteristics to the crowded conditions in Germany. Because the participants value deep interpersonal and social relationships, they had great problems with these characteristics:

_I noticed things that I didn’t like about Germany: the very fast way of living and that people were incredibly unfriendly._

_Well, it is like this: Germans can be very stressful in their own way. And somehow I noticed that when we came home for the first time. Then we really saw for the first time our own people: how hectic they are, how aggressive, and by and large how unfriendly ..._ (44)

**No Close Friendships**
One participant stated that he had felt lonely in Germany, because he did not have many friends. Because the participants travelled and moved around so much, and took many detours from a ‘normal, straight’ life path, their horizons had widened in comparison to those Germans who had stayed at home and adhered to the ‘normal, straight’ life path. As a result, the participants seemed to have outgrown many of their fellow countrymen and thus, found them superficial and narrow-minded. Additionally, as the last quote indicated, after being away from Germany for longer times they _saw for the first time_ their fellow countrymen and became aware of these unpleasant characteristics. These two processes negatively affected the building of friendships, which led to feelings of loneliness:

... actually we felt pretty lonely there town in which we lived in Germany, because we didn't know anybody and culturally there was not a lot offered. Previously, we had been living in another town in Germany for some time. And with all our travels, we've been away for more than one year, through that one gets totally different horizons in regards to people one has to do with. (45)

Yeah, provincial in as much as I hardly found anyone – actually I found no one, who gave me the impression that they had looked over the fence or who also have had a look what's beyond the next hill. And I felt about the life [in Germany]- as I told you before – it is a matter of getting through school, looking that one finds a secure place to work nearby, and once you got that to quickly find a suitable partner for life whom you marry as soon as possible, and to have children as soon as possible, and to build your own house as soon as possible – something like that. Well, I simply – that was all so cramped. ... at this point in my life I felt cut off mentally from other people. (46)

These issues became even more pronounced when migrants returned to Germany.
Not Able to Afford Own House
Because of the high population density in Germany, house prices are high in comparison to New Zealand. Thus, many participants would not have been able to afford a house or it would have been a great struggle for them. However, because the participants value owning their own houses, since it makes them independent and gives them the desired connection to nature, not being able to afford a house made them dissatisfied and they longed to own their own house:

I wanted to have a house. ...Yeah we both knew that houses are cheaper [in New Zealand] than they are in Germany. ... See, buying something like this, a property of ¼ acre, four bedroom, 150 qm house in Bremen would cost you $750,000.00 if you want to live a little bit outside with a little bit of green, you know. So that would be entirely impossible to buy something like this for us. We would never ever to be able to afford that in Germany. ...But just to buy a house here, it was so easy really in comparison. Just something I sort of had in my mind probably when I came, yeah having a house, having your own home, you know.

It's for this reason too, that we live here now - I live here now. That you've got a place, where you're just there for yourself and can somehow decide for yourself, like how you arrange everything around you and where you live, in comparison now to some kind of rental flat - that's important to me too. (14)

Living Disconnected from Nature
Also as a result of so many people living in Germany, many Germans live in big cities, disconnected from nature, and could not afford houses with gardens. Since the participants love nature, this disconnection was especially problematic for them and they longed for living conditions that would enable them to reconnected with nature:

... the apartments we had. I remember you would look out the window and see one tree somewhere, and you see the next set of houses, and you spent 45 minutes to just get out of the city. And, I mean, we just didn't want to live that way. We wanted to look out the window and see some green stuff and have a garden to have a barbecue and, you know, this kind of thing ... (Petra: Is nature important to you?) Yes. Yes, I think I quite ... I still have very strong feelings when we drive through the countryside in the late evening and see yellow glowing lights and the glow on the hills and stuff. That is one of the moments where I often find: “Oh, what a good decision to come here.”

No Job Prospects
Some participants did not see any job prospects for themselves in Germany and thus, were dissatisfied. This condition coincided with times when the German economy was in a bad shape, the unemployment rate was high, and/or when there was an oversupply in certain professions (e.g. teachers). This situation forced the participants to look for alternatives somewhere else:

... that contributed to my dissatisfaction: the lack of a job prospect. (47)

... and the situation was such in West Germany that you could not, neither of us could easily have gotten job. I think [my partner] got a very good PhD grade and I had a 2.8, but that wasn’t good enough. That grade would not have allowed me to get a job as a teacher.

It was striking that nearly all participants came from Northern Germany, which is, and always has been the weakest economic region in Germany.
Dissatisfaction With Job
Those participants who worked in Germany reported that their jobs were either too stressful or too boring, that the jobs were too critical for their health, or that they did not want to work for somebody else anymore. The high stress levels experienced at work was the greatest issue, and resulted in the desire to end the continuous stress at work, to work less, and to have a less stressful life:

After finishing with my retraining, I worked without end over-time like the dickens. I didn't want that anymore. (48)

... for me, one of the main reasons was that my mates, those over 50 who had the construction job for ever, they had been divorced two or three times, were in debt up to here despite their enormous pay packet, for they had gone through so many marriages ... And more than half of them were sick with some tropical disease which they had caught, or simply the heart, or blood circulation resulting from frequent changes of the climate and all this air travel and all that. It was then that said to [my partner]: “I don't want that any longer. That is too critical for me to carry on with it.” And that was actually one of the reasons why we said, “Okay, we are now going to change all that.” (49)

Environmental Concerns
Especially the participants who left Germany in the 1980’s were concerned about Germany becoming increasingly dirty and polluted, and that nuclear power stations and nuclear recycling stations were built near to their living places. One participant got active in saving the environment. However, he became increasingly disillusioned and frustrated, because he did not see much progress on this front:

So like it got increasingly dirtier, more polluted, acid rain, nuclear power station in ’86. And that was also one fundamental reason why we said: “Okay let’s head off now!” Then Chernobyl went up. That was in May 86. (50)

And also, during that time they tried to build a nuclear recycling plant approximately 15 km away from the place we used to live. This was one factor as well, you know.

Dissatisfaction With Political Conditions
Similar to the environmental concerns, the dissatisfaction with political conditions was particularly present for those participants who migrated during the 1980s, because at this time the cold war was at a high point. Some participants felt like living in an occupied country, because many American soldiers and missiles were stationed near their living places:

[Germany] was in the middle of the 80s a the height of the Cold War – no end of Americans! We lived [in this city] and a few kilometres further all these medium range missiles were stationed . ... you really noticed this tension everywhere, this political tension. And this, at least for me, was evident in the everyday routine. (51)

It was actually pretty political here in the West of Germany - pretty explosive. ... This whole cold war could be felt quite considerably, especially here in the south Hesse region. And here there were Americans in large numbers stationed, ... You really had the feeling, yeah, like we were still an occupied country. (52)

Two participants, who were very active in fighting against the capitalist system, did not feel any progress anymore in there efforts in the mid 1980s. Consequently, they felt defeated and became disillusioned:

When I was younger, I was involved in political activities ... and that came to a point in the late 80s or mid 80s maybe, yes mid 80s I would think, where it sort of didn’t go any further, ... this sort of enthusiasm you got when you are quite young was quite worn down. ... And maybe I saw it sort of, a little bit as sort of personally – yeah, it’s like a defeat sort of attached to it, to that sort of thought, you know what I mean? ...
Yes, as I said, I thought, I felt a little sad about the sudden broke away [of the Berlin Wall and thus, the Eastern Block and the Socialist System, which he perceived as a power balance to the Western Block that ensured world peace]. It came together with a general feeling of, yeah, couldn’t really make any progress anymore on that front.

I was pretty active. Somehow there was no success at all - so somehow one tilted like Don Quixote against windmills.

Another participant was dissatisfied with how Germany unfairly favoured foreigners. He did not want to see this anymore and thought if he does not see it anymore, the problems would be gone:

... and then what shitted me [in Germany] – like you say in slang – were those things, that when you come [to Germany] and you say, I’d like asylum here, for example as a foreigner, you get given everything, or shall we say, a fair bit. And that was always annoying, because they – it’s great when they all come here – but they have done nothing for the country or anything and make money out of it. And then I see an East German, who’s always been a German, and they haggle over 20p for his pension, because he lived once too far to the East one year or whatever. And I always found that unfair and I just didn’t want to see it any more, you know. I just wanted - so to speak again: if I can’t see it, then the problem doesn’t exist. (53)

Escaping Grey Weather

Interestingly, the weather in Germany played a significant role for some participants, as it seems to be the case for many Germans as one participant pointed out:

*Grumbling about the weather is part of the concept for [or characteristic of] Germans.*

Many of the participants seemed to be summer people, who feel only well when it is warm and sunny; when the days are long and bright; when nature is alive; and when they can wear short clothes. However, summer people do not feel well when it is cold; when the days are short and grey; when nature is having a break; when it rains for a longer period; and when they have to wear many clothes. Thus, during winter they often get depressed:

*I like sun - the nature alive. And I always in some way got depressed in winter when everything was dull, and cold, and misery and misty.*

*Well, then we had a 'German summer', a 'liquid sunshine' as the Irish call it: rain without stopping - and that really got to us. So we said, I mean we said then: “What the heck are we doing here?”* (54)

Several reasons that contributed to the participants’ Desire to Get Away from Germany were very much the result of the black and white thinking many participants had before their migration as will also become evident later in the discussion. They thought that everything in Germany is bad and everything in New Zealand will be better. Thus, they were highly critical of Germany, left Germany, and migrated to New Zealand:

... to paint it so black and white, ... yes, was, I reckon, just at the time a consequence to say: “Okay, then just leave me alone. Then Germany can just keep to itself and I’ll look for somewhere else in the hope that it’d be considerable better somewhere else.” (55)

This quote also demonstrates that this black and white thinking contributed to inflated expectations; to the expectation that New Zealand will be a paradise where everything is better.
**Desire to Break Away from Old Life**

A combination of many reasons and conditions discussed in *Desire to Get Away from Germany* contributed to the desire of most participants to not continue to live in the way they had lived, because these reasons and conditions came together in a way that dissatisfied them and/or these changes in conditions forced them to change their life in some way. This is well expressed in the following account:

(Petra: Why did you want to go away from Germany?) Yeah, it was different reasons. The main reasons, I would think, was probably, because I was, when I was younger, I was involved in lot of political activities and that came to a point in the mid 80s where it sort of didn’t go any further, didn’t sort of, you know, this sort of enthusiasm you got when you are quite young was quite worn down. And I was married to someone and that marriage broke. And I couldn’t really see, in this point in time, to carry on in the same way I done for a long time. And maybe I saw it sort of, a little bit as sort of personally – yeah, it’s like a defeat sort of attached to it, to that sort of thought, you know what I mean? ... So felt defeated on that sort of front. And then the wall came down. And that is probably another one. So, all of a sudden, we are going from 60 million to 80 million people. ... And so I felt myself, I felt sort of situation in jobs, sort of it is deteriorating - it is not getting better, it is getting worse.

Not only did these participants not want to continue their lives the way they had lived it, they also had come to a point where they could not see how to continue with the life they had lived:

*I didn’t know how to stay [in Germany] anymore.*

*And I couldn’t really see, in this point in time, to carry on in the same way I done for a long time.*

The desire to break away from their old lives also originated in the following reasons and conditions which do not directly relate to Germany:

- **Breaking Out of Routine**
- **Leaving Potentially Adverse Events Behind**
- **Fleeing from Relationship Problems**
- **Escaping Difficult Relationships with Family**

Note that all the following four reasons and conditions were very closely intertwined and occurred in various combinations.

**Breaking Out of Routine**

Some participants were very happy in Germany. They had everything: secure jobs, house, good friends, and best prospects. However, they found the imaginations of having to do the same job or the same things for the rest of their lives, and of their life being planned out, unbearable, because this kind of life was in conflict with their characteristics and values (e.g. *Thirst for New Experiences and Knowledge*). Hence, they wanted to break out of the routine and their pre-planed life to do something different - to experience new things:

*That can't have been everything! Simply breaking out here – adventure – simply doing something new.*  (56)

... I believe it was very important to break out of the normal thing - to do something different from what we’d been doing day in day out. And as I’d said before, it’s unthinkable for me now that I should have to work another 23 years to finally reach the state where I’m finally free. (57)

... And you can kind of calculate about your career in the public service, kind of. I didn't think that that was so appealing.
Leaving Potentially Adverse Events Behind
It is striking that 10 out of 16 Participants experienced one or more adverse and/or potentially traumatic
events in their life (e.g. mother committed suicide, taken hostage in an armed hold up, burglaries, life
threatening car accident, loss of baby due to clinic mismanagement, parents died when very young, near
death experiences, confrontation with witchcraft and magic). These difficult situations caused them much
distress. They felt that their identities were shattered, and they experienced depression, burnout, being totally
dependent, disabled and/or felt out of control. In same cases, these problems led to relationship problems. To
forget the terrible time they had had, their desire arose to get away and leave their problems behind. In a
sense, they fled:

I felt relieved also of the burden to leave everything behind me. I probably even fled; I didn’t know how to
stay there anymore. I just wanted probably to get away elsewhere. ... And I probably also tried to get away
from that incredible trauma I have had after the accident - I mean you just want to run away. You want also
just to forget this incredible hard time you had. So in this respect, I believe that also looking back, it was as
much as getting as far as possible away from that as much it was coming [to New Zealand] as a positive
destination.

Well, in the half year following up to the decision that we actually did go to New Zealand, our flat was
burgled, our car was burgled twice, I was taken hostage in a post robbery. And that probably accumulated to
the wish to get away for a while.

Some participants were aware that these potentially traumatic experiences contributed to their desire to leave
Germany, whereas others did not speak about this connection.

Fleeing From Relationship Problems
One participant couple experienced relationship problems, which they perceived as resulting probably from
the traumatic death of their baby. Particularly the man thought that they would leave behind their relationship
problems by moving to another country:

Actually, from my point of view, this leap to New Zealand: to just leave everything behind including the
relationship problems, that one had at the time, and to simply starts something new. And on start something
afresh and thereby also solves the reasons for the problems ... (58)

Escaping Difficult Relationship With Family
Another participant couple experienced a particularly poor relationship with their parents/in-laws, with
whom they had lived together for several years. The woman felt greatly controlled and pressured by her
parents:

I had always the Druck [pressure] from Germany. Now, I’m free. (Petra: What kind of pressure have you
had in Germany?) My mum always said you have to do it like that, that, that, that, you know.

The man felt very badly treated by his in-laws. He felt that they harassed him, constantly put barriers in front
of him, and made serious false accusations against him:

... we had planned, even if New Zealand wouldn't have been our new destiny, that we would leave the house
of my in-laws. (Petra: Why?) Due to the fact that ... me as just a master tradesmen or tradesmen as such was
not the favourite son-in-law they expected their lovely daughter should have. They wanted at least a
university graduate. And so the treatment wasn’t that nice. And it doesn't matter what I tried to do, I had
always barriers put in front of me.

As a consequence, they both felt that it was not good to live there any longer and that they had to leave.
Taken together, the analysis of the participants stories suggests that migration was easier for those participants whose migration was motivated by a desire for personal growth and to do something new in order to gain new experiences and knowledge, by a feeling that the conditions in Germany were not in harmony with their characteristics/values and beliefs/attitudes, and/or hindered their personal growth. In contrast, the migration was more difficult when the participants migrated primarily because they wanted to get away from Germany since they perceived Germany highly critical and believed everything in Germany is bad (black-white thinking), and were completely dissatisfied with the conditions in Germany. The migration was especially hard for those participants who predominantly fled/escaped from problems (e.g. shattered identities, depression, burnout, relationship problems) they had experienced in Germany as result of potentially adverse/traumatic events in their life and did not proactively deal with the roots of these issues, because their problems resurfaced after a while. These participants had very inflated expectations - they assumed that that everything would be better in New Zealand than it had been in Germany and that their problems would disappear. Consequently, these participants experienced a very high level of disappointment during the establishment phase.

**Considering Alternative Migration Destinations**

As mentioned above, all except two participant couples desired first to leave Germany and their desire to migrate to New Zealand emerged later. This pattern also found its expression in the fact that all but one couple considered other countries as possible migration destinations. Even those participants who had dreamt about living in New Zealand, nevertheless carefully considered alternative migration destinations. The favourite alternative migration destinations were Australia, Scotland, United States, Canada, and Ireland. The two couples who had lived in another country previously also considered returning to Germany. One couple thought about returning for their parents’ sake and thus, applied for jobs in Germany. However, no job opportunity emerged. The other couple liked what another German immigrant to New Zealand told them and decided that New Zealand offered good opportunities that they should not miss. The consideration of alternatives suggests that the participants consciously selected New Zealand as their migration destination, based on knowledge acquired through different sources (see *Acquisition of Information*).

**Birth of Idea to Migrate to New Zealand**

In six participant couples, the specific dream to migrate to New Zealand was born and/or strengthened after acquiring information about New Zealand; after reading and seeing pictures about New Zealand in picture books and articles, seeing documentaries and slide shows about New Zealand, having holidays in New Zealand, and/or discussions with other Germans (e.g. friends, colleagues) or New Zealanders during holidays:

*I always wanted to go to New Zealand since I was probably 16, 17, 18 – something like that. I had read something in books about New Zealand.*

*We look slide shows and all those sorts of things. They show you all those beautiful pictures about Milford Sound and - that creates lots of desires.*

*... we met a guy who came two or three times. He was an expert from a New Zealand university and he was a German guy. So we learned what he was doing and how interesting it could be to study [a specific subject]. And so we came in the end, after we had planed to going back to Europe, we said: Why not going to New Zealand and study, have a postgraduate study so we could, my husband, could be an expert, and I could try to find something to study myself, and the kids would enjoy New Zealand – New Zealand must be a wonderful country!*
And then, as I said, [my partner] did meet the two people, one of whom was in this New Zealand Club. And through them we practically established the contact to this club and became informed – more or less – about New Zealand. Also via the internet. And simply through talking to him - he knew so much already, he had many journals about New Zealand and about the economy and all that stuff. (59)

One participant got the idea to migrate to New Zealand from a vivid dream during sleep:

The first time I ever thought of New Zealand consciously was when I had a dream in probably August 1971. ...And I was dreaming quite vividly. ... and I remember quite clearly then talking about that, after my afternoon sleep, with my fiancé at the time that I had this dream about this country and I thought it would be New Zealand and that I would like to live there. ... It was a very, very clear dream at the time. ... I noted in the cover of my Bible that I dreamt of New Zealand and that I will go there some day ... I wouldn’t call it a longing, but it was some sort of a poking of an idea, which would follow me and I would follow the idea.

Pull Factors: Desire to Emigrate to New Zealand

As discussed above, apart from one participant who had a vivid dream about New Zealand, in all other participants the dream and the readiness to leave Germany and to live in another country developed during their upbringing and the associated expansion of their horizons. However, the specific dream to migrate to New Zealand emerged in most cases after considering alternative migration destinations and gaining knowledge about New Zealand. Six interrelated reasons and conditions pulled the participants to New Zealand:

- **New Zealand: Dream Country**
- **English Speaking Country**
- **Having Friends in New Zealand**
- **New Zealand Offered Job and Working Rights**
- **To Hold Permanent Residence**
- **Loophole to Australia**

**New Zealand: Dream Country**

The participants made the decision in favour of New Zealand, because New Zealand was for them, as it is for most of their fellow countrymen, a dream country:

New Zealand has a reputation and you just start dreaming, if you hear the word New Zealand - you start dreaming.

... Germans always have this dream to go at least once in their life to New Zealand.

The reasons why New Zealand was a dream country for the participants can be subsumed under the following codes:

- Green and Clean Paradise Image
- Beautiful Country & Relaxed Life Style, yet European
- Provides Great Business & Study Opportunities
- Multicultural Country
- Furthest Away
- Safe and Fantastic Country for Raising Children
- Environmentally Conscious and Nuclear Free
- Good Social System
Green and Clean Paradise Image
One of the major reasons that pulled the participants to New Zealand was the image that Germans hold of New Zealand as a green and clean paradise. This image is created by New Zealand being heavily promoted as a green and clean paradise via picture books, books, slide shows, documentaries, and brochures:

... just the normal German image sort of the paradise, and clean and green.

New Zealand stands for: clean and green, healthy and natural.

... here are those attractive and colourful documentaries you can see on TV about Australia and New Zealand. All is so pretty: Milford Sound and Bay of Islands. It is like a permanent holiday - shiny brochures, where everything is terrific. And all the people so friendly, so nice – which was true. They always smile. Problems do not exist there. That is what one associates with New Zealand – the permanent holiday country, where the world is still intact. (60)

I must say New Zealand is one of the countries I think everybody gets quite excited about because it is a very special country, a very special place. One might have illusions, but it is something. I think if you have the chance, you go to New Zealand.

This image made New Zealand so attractive for the participants because it suggested a good fit with their characteristics and values. The persuasiveness of this image is reflected in the account of a participant couple who actually wanted to migrate to the United States:

... and then we took a liking to the idea of going to New Zealand, because we were probably thinking, like all the rest of those who hear and think about New Zealand: Oh, paradise, or something like it, and all is super ... (61)

Beautiful Country & Relaxed Life Style, Yet Seemed European
For many participants, New Zealand was also attractive, because it seemingly combined the best of two worlds. The participants were pulled to New Zealand by its beautiful countryside, the relaxed New Zealand lifestyle, the slower pace of life, and the friendly New Zealanders they either experienced during their holidays or about which they learned in the various presentations of New Zealand. This lifestyle very much appealed to the participants, since they wanted to go away from the hectic and stressful lifestyle in Germany and from Germans whom they perceived as unfriendly and aggressive. In addition, for many participants, New Zealand’s culture seemed at first glimpse similar to the European culture, the culture which they knew:

... when I came here before in 1989-1990, for half a year and travelled around, I liked the landscape, I liked the people - they are really friendly - and the beauty of the country. And at the same time the familiarity that it still was more European. I felt easy - like in Europe. It's not, you know, totally exotic - I think that would have probably scared me. I wouldn’t be really prepared for an adventure like that, you know, living in a totally different country. From the outside it seemed to be very much of what we are used to, you know. Only people are much friendlier and more relaxed.

And New Zealand was the favourite country for me, because there is also kind of a European lifestyle ... 

Provides Great Business & Study Opportunities
Some participants came to New Zealand, because they saw great opportunities for setting up businesses and contributing distinctively to the development of New Zealand:

The only real attraction of New Zealand was probably that it seemed to be so underdeveloped ... There were so many things to do, really. ... And then you would come into play and you felt really you were somehow
the first, and you would be really contributing to that sort of new country and could somehow occupy it yourself. That was probably my main attraction. It wasn’t so much the lifestyle here, or so much just the countryside – there are beautiful country sides in Europe – but at least [in New Zealand] they seem to be open and unoccupied.

I saw the opportunity to work hard and make money in order to live here, and I have no doubt that anybody could do that here - that New Zealand was a country giving everybody more than a fair shot of opportunity.

Another participant wanted to top up his qualifications and found out that the New Zealand institute is one of the leading institutions worldwide in the area he intended to study. The institute offered subjects of interest to him and the study fees were reasonable due to a bilateral agreement between New Zealand and Germany.

Multicultural Country
Another reason that emerged as to why the participants were pulled to New Zealand, was that they desired to live in a multi-cultural society as a result of their desire to live their unique lives:

I merely came here, because I wanted to live in a multi-cultural society ...

Further, they wanted to migrate to New Zealand because they perceived New Zealand as a young immigration country with many first generation migrants. Accordingly, they expected that New Zealand would be open to new immigrants and appreciate diversity, and thus, they would not feel as foreigner. They also thought that many like-minded people who had had similar experiences would live in New Zealand:

... it is an immigrant country, whereas the States, you will always be a foreigner.

... [New Zealand and Australia] were immigration countries and thus, we knew there were people who had our experience and were open to immigrants.

Furthest Away
For some participants, New Zealand was attractive because it is the country furthest away from Germany. This great distance was perceived as making the migration more exciting and more of a challenge, because it entails a real change:

London is much too close to Germany - nothing exciting, you know! So it had to be something distant ...

And then we decided to go for New Zealand, because it just was further away. ... You know, I mean, compared between Scotland and [New Zealand], Scotland wouldn’t have been that much different probably to what it would have in Germany. But that is what we thought: ‘if we have a change, we have a real change.’ And so the real change, first of all, was the physical distance, and then obviously lifestyle and people and all that.

Some participants consciously wanted the great distance, because they thought it would produce an additional pressure of not giving up:

I think the decision was only because it was further away, and being further away meant that it was more of a challenge and probably more different to Scotland where you had a better chance of giving up, because you have just 10 hours in the car and then you are back home again.

The greater distance also meant that New Zealand is a safer place, as will become obvious in the next code.
Safe and Fantastic Country to Raise Children
Many participants felt drawn to New Zealand because they perceived New Zealand as being safe. It was firstly seen as safe, because no poisonous and dangerous animals live in New Zealand:

... also we were thinking about Australia. I said: “No, lots of these crawling creatures there - snakes and all sorts of stuff like that.”

Secondly, New Zealand was perceived as safe, because it is so far away from the places of international conflict and it is insignificant as a military target:

New Zealand - so far away from all the trouble. And New Zealand is so insignificant that anyone would sort of waste a shot to come down here, you know.

The participants also chose New Zealand, because they saw it as a fantastic country to bring up children. New Zealand was perceived as being safer (less crime, far away from international conflicts, nuclear free) and healthier (less pollution) than Germany, and a place where children would grow up in closer connection to nature. In addition, the participants believed that it would be an advantage for the children to grow up bilingual and to learn English as their mother tongue. One participant also thought that his children would have more opportunities in New Zealand in the future:

... [my partner] also got pregnant and the idea that this is a fantastic country to bring children up to was quite also clear in my mind. I thought: ‘Oh, that is a fantastic country to bring up kids, because they have all this future ahead of them, instead of Europe which is really at the end of its cycle.’

Environmentally Conscious and Nuclear Free
New Zealand was highly attractive, because of its green and clean paradise image and its well-known nuclear free stance, both of which suggested to the participants that New Zealand is an environmentally conscious country:

I said: “Oh, New Zealand clean and green country, they probably have fantastic public transport.“

I mean New Zealand is at the end of the world and it is some sort of green paradise. I mean I knew for instance about New Zealand’s nuclear free stance and that it wasn’t not part of the ANZUS anymore, the Australia- New Zealand- United States military agreement ... New Zealand dropped out of that, because of the nuclear question.

Good Social System
Another reason why the participants came to New Zealand was that they had heard that New Zealand has a good social system and social security was something which the participants perceived as being increasingly important due to them getting older and/or having children:

[New Zealand] had social security. They had a system that was more, yeah basically a health system, a health insurance system and all that what didn’t exist in the United States and which was for us becoming more important, because as you get older you need to think of things, like schooling and health insurance and old age pension and stuff like that.

English Speaking Country
Apart from perceiving New Zealand as a dream country, the participants were also pulled to New Zealand, because it is an English-speaking country and English was the only other language they could speak:

It had to be an English-spoken country. (Petra: Why?) Because we couldn’t speak any other language really.
Having Friends in New Zealand
Several participants had friends in New Zealand, who had migrated there some years ago. Having friends in New Zealand not only facilitated the migration in general; it was also an important condition for coming to New Zealand in particular. For instance, one participant couple had best friends who migrated to New Zealand some years before them and they visited their friends three times in the years preceding their migration. As a result, they decided to migrate to New Zealand:

And so we did visit them, like always four weeks every year. ... and after the third year, we said, “Four weeks in one year is not enough, let's stay for a little longer.” (Petra: Did you develop a taste for it?) Yes, quite right – exactly that. (64)

Without these friends, the participants would not have migrated to New Zealand:

Well, I believe we would not have gone to New Zealand had it not been for the friends we had there. Possibly we might have gone even without them, but without anything, means to say, I'm going to Timbuktu, not knowing anyone there - no, we would perhaps not have done it. We would rather have stayed [in Germany]. (62)

More or less we kind of stumbled into this land, surely through them ... (63)

Friends eased the migration in that they gave valuable insider information about New Zealand and supported their friends, especially during the establishment phase (see also Social Support in Chapter Five):

They were of course pretty important for us: a point we could call upon and we didn't know anything ... and they did help us enormously. (67)

We got some friends, who had emigrated there. We did visit with them and therefore, we had a connection. We could make use of that. We had through this - let's say - the feeling that things would be easier, somehow. (66)

The last quote suggests that friends in New Zealand reduced the perceived risk of migration by giving a sense of security. Remarkably, all the participants who had friends in New Zealand returned later. This indicates that, while having friends in New Zealand facilitated the migration, friends did not guarantee staying.

Offered Job and Working Rights From New Zealand
The male partner of one participant couple was offered a tenure faculty position in a New Zealand university. Although it was rather risky for a person in his profession to come to New Zealand, he greatly valued the security this job offer presented him:

... I got tenure, which at that time I thought was a pretty secure thing. ... A post doc is a pretty tough existence and the fact that someone would pay you a salary - that the money would go on indefinitely and you wouldn’t depend on your research output from one project to land a job in the next project – was very appealing.

His wife greatly valued the fact that New Zealand gave her, as his spouse, the right to work, because she saw working as means of gaining independence again.
To Hold Permanent Residence Permit

One participant couple had applied for a permanent residence permit when New Zealand changed the immigration law from the priority list to the point system in order to have the option to migrate to New Zealand. They had the permit for a long time and according to New Zealand immigration policies the permit would have expired soon. Thus, they needed to make a decision whether or not to take it up:

*We had the visa to come to New Zealand and at that stage it was like you had five years in total before they would look into this visa to take up permit again. ... So at that time it was clear if we didn't actually come to New Zealand to live in New Zealand, we wouldn't get another residence permit.*

Loophole to Australia

One participant couple actually wanted to migrate to Australia. However, they could not find employment in Australia. When headhunters from New Zealand showed great interest in him, the couple decided to seize the opportunity and emigrated to New Zealand. They said:

*We thought: Yeah, we have that chance now. It looks as if we really have a chance to emigrate even though it is not Australia but New Zealand. We'll simply try it for now, and consider New Zealand a loophole to Australia. So let's go then to New Zealand first. When we stopped briefly [in New Zealand] in the course of getting the visa for Australia, it was so nice there and the people were so nice to us. Well, we'll have a look around, given that it is so close to Australia. Perhaps we will have the possibility of emigrating to Australia via New Zealand.*

In sum, various combinations of these discussed reasons and conditions generated the desire to migrate to New Zealand. The analysis of subsequent migration experiences shows that the participants who held this utopian image when they migrated were more likely to return, because they arrived with highly inflated expectations and consequently were bitterly disappointed when they experienced the ‘real’ New Zealand.

Belief: Important to Follow Dream

In the end, the participants dared to take the leap and really migrate because they believed that it is important to follow one’s dream. Following their dreams is important for various interrelated reasons. Firstly, the participants maintained that because one is the only person who can know one’s self, one has to find and go along one’s own unique path by listening to one’s self, what one’s feelings say and by going along with what crosses one’s mind:

*You are the only person in the world who knows what is going on inside yourself and there are certain things you can’t share - with no one, not even with your partner. It’s not because you can’t say it, it’s because it’s just the way it is. ... So after all you have to make your own mind up what you want, what your place is, where you place is in life. ... I have to do all my own decisions - I have to go my own way.*

Secondly, the participants desire to live their lives to the full and to live their lives, as they want to do, in order to be able to say on their deathbed that they had lived their lives as they wanted to have lived them:

*I have to go my own way, because eventually I would come to the point, you know, when you sort of going back to that circle, where you probably ask yourself what you have done with your life? And so I know perfectly well that I can say: “I did what I wanted to do!”’ So, I mean, whatever I did, for the moment I did the decisions, that was what I wanted to do really.*

Thirdly, not following up their dream to migrate to New Zealand would have felt like a defeat for the participants, and/or that they would have missed a good opportunity to live according to their dreams. The latter might have led to regrets when the look back on their lives and they don’t want regret not having done what they could have done:
It would have been harder for me to such sort of let this dream go and not trying it. I mean I would have coped with that as well, you know, but it would have felt more like sort of a defeat. To myself I would have thought sort of: ‘Well, you had that opportunity; it might fire back on you at some stage. Maybe when you are 60 or 70 or so and when you looking back and you say: “Why on earth didn’t I go?! I’m bloody stupid! Why didn’t I go?”... So I could say: “Okay, I tried it. I didn’t work – okay! That’s the way it is, you know, but it’s okay.”

Because I believe it's the dumbest thing you could say at all, to say: “Ah well, I might yet be doing it when I reach my retirement.” One can see all the things that might happen, if you don't somehow more or less try to live your life just as you had imagined it – then the day may come when it will be too late. (69)

Interestingly, some participants said that having a dream is like falling in love and leads to a strong desire to follow it up.

Those participants who dreamt about leaving Germany and migrating to New Zealand, and believed that it is important to follow one’s dream had a less difficult establishment phase. Because they developed the dream to migrate to New Zealand as a result of their upbringing and of their gradual expansion of their horizons, they felt the migration was the logical step for them to take and that they were well prepared/ready for the migration. Hence, they strongly felt that the migration to New Zealand was the right path for them. As a result, they approached the migration without doubts and with confidence.

**Conditions Facilitating or Hindering Migration**

In addition to the above discussed reasons and conditions, the participants mentioned several other conditions, which are independent of Germany and New Zealand and which made it more difficult or easier for them to migrate. These conditions were closely intertwined and included:

- **Having Guilt Feelings or Not**
- **Degree of Closeness to Family**
- **Having Siblings Living in Germany or Not**
- **Reactions from Family**
- **Having Friends in New Zealand or Not**
- **Migrating as Couple/Family**
- **Having Children or Not**
- **Degree of Financial Basis**

**Having Guilt Feelings or Not**

Some participants reported that they had had guilt feelings regarding leaving the family and/or friends in Germany. This guilt feeling was more pronounced when the participants had a closer relationship to their family and/or friends, no siblings lived near to the family, and the family exercised moral pressure and made it more difficult for the participants to leave. One participant couple stated that they did not dare to leave for a long time:

> We had always wanted to go to another country, but we didn't have the courage, because here in Germany we are in close touch with our families and somehow, we didn't dare to sever our family ties. (70)

A shift in attitude was necessary to dare to leave or to cope with feeling guilty later on. Believing that staying because of their family and friends would be an unreasonable sacrifice and attitudes underlying the belief that it is important to follow one’s dream lessened guilt feelings:
... but I mean, you know, I think it is my life, and I don’t wanna make the sacrifice of living in Germany because my parents want me there.

But then, you know, that is my life and I think that if you sacrifice your entire life, or two thirds of it so that you can be close to your parents, I think that is an unreasonable sacrifice. It just would make you feel miserable.

But after all, I mean, I think anyone has to sort of make their own decisions, make their own minds up what one wants in life. ... I mean I like to have some good friends, you know, but I have to do all my own decisions - I have to go my own way, because eventually I would come to the point, you know, when you sort of complete the circle, where you probably ask yourself what you have done with your life. And so I know perfectly well that I can say: “I did what I wanted to do!” So, I mean, whatever I did, for the moment I made the decisions, that was what I wanted to do really. ... That’s what I said to my parents when we left. I said: “Well, I know how you feel, but after all I have to do my own decisions, I’m going to go my own way, and I know why I like to do that. And that’s the way it is.”

**Degree of Closeness to Family**

The migration was easier when the participants have had loose ties to their family or when their parents had already died. Besides reducing guilt feelings as discussed above, loose family ties also emotionally eased the separation. Interestingly, the relationship to mothers, in particular, seemed to play an important role for both genders:

I never had such an intimate relationship with my mother that I would have said because of that: No I won't do it. (71)

Well that's probably one of the reasons maybe why I think it was easier for me to make the step, because my parents are both dead.

**Having Siblings Living in Germany or Not**

Having siblings who live near their parents also made it easier for the participants to deal with their guilt feelings and, thus, made it easier for them to follow their dreams:

I mean, I still feel, at times I still feel guilty about being [in New Zealand], especially now that they are getting older. And I am just glad that my sister is living [in Germany]. ... Well, so that if something did happen and if they suddenly needed assistance for something that somebody would be there who can provide that. And also[the parents] have the feeling that one of the children is still close.

**Reactions from Family**

Although some reactions of parents supported the migration (see Telling Migration Decision & Reactions Family), other reactions made the migration more difficult. Some participants reported that their parents were shocked, could not understand that they decided to leave, were disappointed, or doubted the success of the migration. Participants who experienced those reactions felt morally pressured, experienced more guilt feelings, and were not supported by their family in realising their dream:

Parents can be quite good in putting their kids under some real moral pressure: that one leaves them behind and one is so ungrateful if you want to go through with it and won't be [in Germany] any longer ... Yeah, my mother for example: “Well, we may never see you again ...” (72)

**Having Friends in New Zealand or Not**
As discussed under **Pull Factors: Desire to Migrate to New Zealand**, friends in New Zealand facilitated the migration decision because knowing that they would provide social support reduced the risk and increased the sense of security. Having friends in New Zealand eased the migration by leading to more realistic expectations and goals, because the friends provided valuable insider information. The emotional and physical support provided by friends straight away during establishment, made the first hard year considerably easier.

**Migrating as a Couple/Family**

Migrating as a couple or family had both advantages and disadvantages. Partners and/or children were especially important in the beginning, when the participants left their friends and had not yet established a new circle of friends. Then, partners/family were vital in providing social support:

*So I think the most important thing was also that I wasn’t there by myself and that [my partner] wasn’t there by himself - that we were together. So in this respect we also knew that it doesn’t matter where you would end up, that we would still be together and make the best of it and to have that support.*

*... it was important for me to have [my partner] there, because for quite some time he was my only social contact really. ... So I think at that time when I didn’t have these soul-mate friends that I could talk to him ... I think it’s important when you do these big steps leaving your country and all that, that you have somebody like a safe haven, you know. That one don’t even have to talk much. It’s like playing ping pong or something like that, you know. You just say: “Oh, and that and that again.” And your partner just says: “Oh yeah, I know!” Just this empathy that is there and the shared experience.*

*... so long as there’s two of you then it’s only half as bad: you can talk about things and you can get over a crisis too.* (147)

Partner and children also provided security in the uncertain waters of migration:

*I mean the security was the partnership, when, you know, you didn't have the security of what's going to be in New Zealand.*

*I had the feeling [migrating] will be difficult, but I didn’t really know what would come. But I also had the feeling: ‘As long as we stay together, it shouldn’t be a too big problem. We will cope with it somehow.’*

Other people might have said: “Oh, I'm giving up.” if they would been alone, but there was sort of inner force which gave strength and said you have to go through that. Further, the partners reduced loneliness:

*It is different and better to go as a family, not alone. Alone you will feel alone, lonely. But if you go as a family, you will feel bound together with your family, you know.*

The other advantage of migrating as a couple was that it helped the participants to maintain their language, culture, and identity. It seems reasonable to infer that the things partners could reduced distress and facilitated well-being. However, partners could only provide all those things when the relationship was strong and intact. In this respect it was crucial that the relationship was a loving friendship and a unit, that the partners were a good team and complemented one another, that they had common goals that they worked together towards, that they held similar values, and that both loved travelling. However, if the participants migrated with serious relationship problems, as two couples did, the above outlined advantages were reduced and the disadvantages became magnified during the establishment period, making it even more difficult. These links show that it is a good idea to test the relationship before migrating to find out whether the relationship is strong enough and intact, as one couple did by travelling together through India:

*... this trip to India was really like our ‘trial by fire’. Man, I tell you, travelling in India for half a year when you have no money, it certainly ... We met a lot of people on the road, you know, who set out as a couple and*
who split up fairly smartly, because it is - it was hard. It was really hard, you know. For all the travels I have 
done in my life, it was the hardest travel I have ever done. ... And I think having survived that for half a year 
it was pretty clear that we are compatible, you know.

On the downside, migrating as a couple hindered the development of new social support networks and 
learning English. Migrating as a couple hampered social interactions. Because the participants had one 
another, they were not forced to meet and mix with other people as much as single migrants. Less social 
interactions meant less social support. The other disadvantage was that migrating as a couple impedes with 
learning English, since the participants commonly spoke German at home and could fall back on the partner 
to get things they wanted. Low English levels, in turn, negatively influenced finding work and building 
social networks. Thus, as some participants believed, migrating as a couple can slow down the assimilation 
process:

... as a couple you don't assimilate as quickly probably as you would if you come as an individual, ... 

A particular difficulty seemed to arise when the partners varied greatly in their level of previous experiences 
abroad: if one partner was experienced in living in other countries, whereas the other was not. This was the 

case with one participant couple. Because he had worked on long assignments worldwide for several years, 
for him, many issues arising when living in another country were normal, and he had developed many 
successful strategies for dealing with them. In contrast, his partner and their child had never lived in another 
country before. Hence, for them everything was new and they could not fall back onto previously learned 
attitudes and strategies. When the couple lived in New Zealand, they did not realise this difference and he 
expected that it would be equally easy for them both. Therefore, he wondered, but did not try to change 
things and/or to support his family more deliberately. This case demonstrates that it is, in cases like this, 
important that the more experienced partner is aware of the differences and consciously tries to support the 
inexperienced partner and members of the family.

In sum, migrating as a couple/family reduced distress and facilitated well-being, because partners could 
provide social support and security, give strength, reduce loneliness, and help to maintain the German 
language, culture, and identity. These potential advantages were only effective when relationships were 
strong and intact. However, migrating as a couple/family could also make the migration more challenging, 
because it could hinder the learning of English and hamper social interactions. In these cases, all the negative 
effects associated with insufficient English skills and social networks were more likely to occur, thus 
increasing the likelihood of returning.

**Having Children or Not**

Migrating with children can, as argued above, give strength. Additionally, children fostered social contacts 
by bringing parents in contact with parents of other children as we will discuss in the next chapter. These 
contacts reduced missing family and friends, and ensured more social support. However, as one participant 
maintained, not having children eased the migration:

*It was certainly positive that we had no children. If there had been a child, one does not make the decision 
to go so easy.* (73)

This point of view is supported by the fact that children can create several additional difficulties (see Chapter 
Five, *Issues related to Children*) and that these challenges did not need to be faced by migrants who migrated 
without children.

**Degree of Financial Basis**

The financial basis before migration was another decisive factor influencing migration. The participants were 
either anxious that they would not survive financially, or that they would not be able to earn enough money
to afford a similar living standard to that in Germany. Hence, some participants worked hard (e.g. took on a
second job) before migrating in order to create sufficient finances:

*I sold the seconds for [the company I worked for]. Which gave me quite a bit of finance for my goal or sort
of for the whole adventure, you know.*

One participant’s bad accident resulted in early retirement, which gave him sufficient finances for migrating:

*The accident opened the economic possibility for me. It meant that I had an income [pension] I hadn’t to
work for. New Zealand had to offer me a lot, but not enough income, and I thought: Okay I can settle here in
New Zealand, because I have an income anyway.*

As will become obvious in the next chapter, sufficient finances made it easier to migrate, because this
financial cushion helped soften the drop in living standards and reduced the pressure to find a job straight
away.

**EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS**

After the participants had told me about why and under which conditions they had migrated to New Zealand,
they went on speaking about their expectations and goals. The analysis showed that characteristics and
values of the participants and the information the participants acquired about New Zealand shaped what they
expected to find in New Zealand and what they wanted to achieve in New Zealand. The expectations and
goals also reflect reasons for migrating to New Zealand. Because many participants treated expectations and
goals as the same, we decided to treat them together also. Expectations and goals can be divided into four
codes:

- Inflated Expectations and Goals
- Realistic Expectations and Goals
- No Expectations and Long-term Goals
- Difficulties Forming Expectations

When analysing the expectations and goals, it was difficult to determine whether the expectations were
indeed unrealistic, because the participants came to New Zealand at different times and New Zealand’s
society has changed a great deal in the last 10 years. For example, one participant expected a good social
welfare system. While this was a realistic expectation in the mid 1980s when they immigrated to New
Zealand, it would not be a realistic expectation at the turn of the century. Hence, we included only those
expectations in the inflated expectations code, which were obviously inflated and which the participants were
disappointed about.

**Inflated Expectations and Goals**

Those participants who were completely dissatisfied in Germany, had experienced many problems, had less
travelled and had not been to New Zealand before their migration had especially inflated expectations. They
expected that everything would be better in New Zealand than it had been in Germany and that their
problems would disappear:

*Speaking categorically now: life is better and people are friendlier, and the weather is better, and, and – I
could carry on with that forever. But now speaking really categorically, quite definitely and without
equivocating, that was what we expected. I intended to leave the problems I had behind me and do not take
them along.* (74)
As a result of the green, clean paradise image about New Zealand that prevails in Germany, many participants expected that they would come to a green and clean paradise as the reasons for migrating to New Zealand show. In particular, the participants expected that New Zealand’s society would be like a paradise that the social welfare system would be very good, that the crime rate would be low, that everyone would be environmentally conscious, and that the race relations between Maori and Pakeha would be excellent. Workwise, many participants expected New Zealand to be an economic wonderland. They also expected that, because of the good qualifications they gained in Germany, which has a reputation for its good education system, they would have no problems having their qualifications recognised and, therefore, they would have excellent prospects of employment.

Realistic Expectations and Goals

Those participants who had gained experiences of New Zealand during previous holidays or placements in New Zealand or while living in other countries had more realistic expectations. They expected migration to be hard, especially in the beginning. They knew that it would be exhausting, particularly because of the different language spoken in New Zealand. They expected that they would earn less money and/or that they might have to work in low-income jobs. One participant knew that he would have to work harder to achieve a similar living standard to that which he had in Germany. Those participants working in professional jobs (e.g. lawyer), which depend very much on language competency, assumed that it would be difficult to find a job in their profession:

*I mean in Germany I worked as a lawyer and I thought already that it would be not easy for me to find a job in that area, because I thought law is very much language and I mean I didn't have the, or myself, how I see myself and my ability to express myself in English, and this finesse of as you would have as a mother tongue speaker. I was sceptical whether I would feel really confident or whether that would, yeah. And then the other thing is that it's a different law system.*

Those participants working in practical jobs assumed that they would be able to work in their professions, because the technical side of a job is similar around the globe and it does not rely so much on language ability:

*I mean I knew from the technical side it wouldn't be different. I mean the current doesn't flow in a different direction as it does in Germany – it is all the same, you know! And the physical laws are the same.*

The participants were confident that they could be successful in New Zealand in their professions, because of their good German qualifications and their German work attitudes (e.g. hard working, being precise). They assumed that New Zealand would be civilized and multicultural. In general, the goals the participants had were very much in line with their characteristics and values and reflected the reasons and conditions for migrating from Germany to New Zealand. However, even for the participants who had already been in New Zealand, it was very difficult to anticipate how things would be, because living in a country is different to travelling through a country, as they realised later:

*It was quite different when I was here as a student than it was when we emigrated here.*

*Otherwise, it you travel as tourist through the country, as I said, you don't see what's happening to the left or the right of the road. You only see your tourist itinerary, and you have the money, and you don't know that you have to earn all that first, whatever there is or so. And then you have – even as a local or as an immigrant too – you have other things to worry about than looking at geysers that bubble up and other such things.* (75)
No Expectations and Long-term Goals

Interestingly, a few participants stated that they had had no expectations and long-term goals; they had only desired to leave Germany, in order to put an end to the continuous stress they had had in Germany:

There was no goal in the sense that one could say I wanted to do this or that in New Zealand. The only goal was to emigrate - to get away from [Germany]. (76)

The participants without expectations and goals trusted that things would turn out somehow and that something would develop for them. Their short-term goal was simply to live and enjoy, to see what develops, to find out how New Zealand feels, and/or to survive a year (also see Migration: A Trial):

Goals? We didn’t have any goals. ... I think the short-term goal was - first of all I was pregnant for the first time, it was [my partner’s] and my first child, and I think the short-term goal was just to live - to enjoy that to have the child here. ... So the short-term goal was really just to see what would develop. And I think we both always had a very big trust that things will turn out and that things would come along and that we don’t have to make a big effort to actually find out or go and search for what you really want to do. I think things fall into place if you are in the right place. And because we knew that we were in the right place, just because our feeling that was so strong, we just came here and thought something will come up. We were just trusting that. ... So there was no long-term goals as far as I am concerned. It was really just short-term goals, just to see what would happen

I mean, I honestly didn't have so much planned or so, you know. It's more: let’s see it all, what's happening.

No, I don’t think you – I’m not the person of making too much my mind up about what will go on. ... I’m not sort of trying to think through all the things. I just let the things come and cope with it along the way. I’m that sort of person. ... I jump into something and think to myself: ‘I will cope. I will see what’s happen. And when it happened, then I make my decision. Then I will see what I do.’

As one participant suggested, having no or low expectations might be of an advantage, because:

... the lower they are the more likely you will be pleasantly surprised.

Difficulties Forming Expectations

Many participants stated that, in hindsight, it was difficult, if not impossible, to imagine what they could expect in New Zealand and that expectations were more or less speculations. Consequently, migrating was a step into uncertainty:

... You do something out of the blue – you got no sort of really comprehension idea of what will go on. They are speculations, really.

I assumed it would be different, you know, but I was pretty blue eyed at that time, you know. I just had no idea!

I don’t think it was any kind of sort of a clear picture or ideas. It was just a sort of general feeling that it wouldn’t be easy.

The only reliable aspect in migrating was for the participants their feeling that the migration was the right step and that they migrated with their partner/family. The expectations the participants held were linked to the degree of disappointment during the establishment phase. The more the participants had no or realistic expectations and goals, the less disappointments they experienced during the establishment and the better were they able to handle disappointments. New Zealand promoting and presenting New Zealand heavily as a
clean and green paradise with a society that embraces multiculturalism contributed to unrealistic expectations, since this image does not correspond with the truth.

**MIGRATION: A TRIAL**

The decision to leave Germany and to come to New Zealand was a freely chosen decision:

... *as an immigrant in this day and age, for educated people like you and me, we have a choice basically where we want to live, you know. I mean it’s not necessarily a right choice, but we could live in other places, and we chose to come to New Zealand ...*

However, for all participant couples, except one, the decision to migrate was not an absolute decision. Rather, the participants saw the migration more as an attempt. They wanted to try to migrate to New Zealand to see how it goes and feels. Some participants gave themselves up to two or three years trial time before making a final decision whether to stay or to return:

*Okay, we take up this chance or challenge, and give it a go. And with that if we are not happy or we can't adjust to New Zealand, we will go back.*

*I had set myself a limit of two years and than I thought that I will see after these two years what the story is, decide what to do and let’s see how it is.*

By seeing migration as a trial they ensured, firstly, that they could stay flexible in their pursuit of happiness: if it went well and they were happy with their chosen environment, they would stay; but if it did not go well and/or they were not happy, they would either return or go to another place. Secondly, by seeing migration as a trial and ‘selling’ it to their family and friends as a trial, they reduced their pressure to succeed, because this interpretation counteracted the possibility that family and friends would see them as having ‘failed’.

Those participants who perceived migration as a trial were also more likely to leave the door open to Germany by leaving a good impression at home and at work, which reduced the pressure further:

... *we came here and we said: “Yes, the idea is, if we like it here we want to stay.”, but it could have very well happened that after a year or two all this was not decided and we would go somewhere else. ... We were hoping that we would like it here and stay here, but it was not an absolute decision.*

... *leave [the door] open behind you, you know. It gives you a much better feeling, because you know: If it doesn’t work, puff. I’ll fucken go back, you know. Shit, bloody Kiwis, you know, they’re all arseholes. Go back, who cares, you know. So nothing wrong with that. It’s quite important.*

*And we committed ourselves only tentatively for one year to see what the year will bring, how things develop, whether we have the possibility of staying [in New Zealand], and whether it works with jobs etc. That's the way we approached the thing. Sure, we always had still the possibility of returning here at any time. (77)*

*So then, we’ll [migrate to New Zealand] and we will - we will give us time, up to a whole year. And if we then return after a quarter of a year or half a year, well then that is okay too, at least we can say we tried. (78)*

Not committing to staying in New Zealand was also important for ensuring the survival of the relationship. As discussed previously, for many participant couples, the relationship was paramount. One strategy they employed to protect their relationship was to see migration as a trial, because this left them the option of returning if one partner did not like it:
For us it was quite important not to commit ourselves to anything, because, well, you have only got your partner and so you totally have to rely on him – so the relationship is more important than anything else in that moment. (Petra: What do you mean by not committing yourself?) Like: Oh we have to stay here for a certain time – something like this, you know. Or we have to be successful in what we doing. Sort of: Give it a go and see! If someone doesn’t like it, then we go back.

Bringing together everything we have discussed so far regarding the migration decision, the likelihood of staying was greater when the decision was either made jointly but independently by the partners, and/or the women were highly committed to the migration decision; when the participants had based their decision on their feelings (emotional vs. rational); when the decision was based on first hand information (i.e. own feelings/impressions of New Zealand); when the participants were aware that the experience of travelling is different to living there; when the participants considered information that disconfirmed their expectations.

In making the migration decision, proactively asking for and/or letting themselves be guided by cues or signs was also beneficial. Everything falling into its place during their emigration, confirmed the participants’ decision to migrate and strengthened their confidence.

Perceiving migration more like a trial and ‘selling’ it to their family and friends as a trial greatly facilitated the establishment phase, because it greatly reduced the pressure to stay if they did not feel well or happy in New Zealand. Firstly, those participants who perceived migration as a trial were more likely to leave a good impression at home and at work, and to maintain contact with family, friends, and work relationships. Keeping the door to Germany open in these ways kept opportunities alive for returning. Secondly, ‘selling’ migration as a trial counteracted family, friends, and colleagues seeing them as having ‘failed’ if they would return. In sum, seeing migration as a trial allowed the participants to stay flexible.

**ORGANISATION OF MIGRATION**

After the participants decided to immigrate to New Zealand, they started organising their migration from Germany to New Zealand. The organisation consisted mainly of two simultaneous processes:

- **Building Foundations for the Life in New Zealand**
- **Dissolution of Life in Germany**

These two processes contained many different tasks. Hence, the participants were very busy and experienced this time as physically and emotionally stressful. At the same time, however, they also felt very excited.

**Building Foundations for the Life in New Zealand**

Building foundations included four main tasks:

- **Acquisition of Information**
- **Application for Work Permit or Permanent Residency**
- **Job Search**
- **Financing Migration**

**Acquisition of Information**

The acquisition of information about New Zealand and the permanent residence permit application process took place throughout *Living a Dream* and continued throughout *Enlivening the Dream*. The way in which the participants gathered information and the kind of information they collected affected the decision making process, and their expectations and goals. Some participants did not inform themselves about New Zealand, because they were too busy or were not the type of person who gathers information before going somewhere.
Other participants did not gather information for they believed that information or impressions are often misleading anyway:

*I had basically no information. ... I had been to the States before and found that my impressions from what I thought the States were like from being there a short time, versus living there was completely misleading, so I thought I might as well go there.*

*I just didn't take the time for myself to become better informed. ... Yes, for me it is always like that: as soon as I arrive there, I become interested in everything, but not ahead of time. I also go on a holiday and say to myself: “Okay, let's go there now and when we are there then, I look around to see what there is.”* (80)

However, most participants acquired information about New Zealand and the application process. They obtained this information either second hand from others or first hand themselves by contacting the appropriate authorities. The second hand information included information given in picture books, travel guides, books about migration, and magazines for New Zealanders and Australians in Europe, the internet, documentaries and slide shows. However, the information given by these sources did not prove to be of much use. They generally generated or strengthened the green and clean paradise image of New Zealand and thus led to inflated expectations, resulting in more disappointments. Travel guides contained only information specific for travellers. Except for the magazines and the internet, much information given by these sources was outdated. Second hand information also included information given by New Zealanders; German friends or acquaintances living in Germany, New Zealand, or Australia; the migration agency; and headhunters. This information was much more useful, but was also often outdated or wrong.

First hand information was information the participants gained themselves during either holidays or placements in New Zealand. This kind of information proved the most useful, because the information was up-to-date, and also included emotional information (i.e. their own impressions). The latter is especially important, since the participants assign much importance to their feelings.

As the participants discovered later, the major difficulty in obtaining information was that they did not know what to look for and that the information available during travelling through New Zealand was different to that needed for actually living there. Thus, it does not seem worthwhile to travel to New Zealand several times. Instead, the most useful information appears to have been gained while actually living in New Zealand for a while as, for example, during a placement:

*I've been to New Zealand before and I knew a little bit how it would be to live in New Zealand and I never felt like going to New Zealand would be like paradise or something, a dream and never thought there wouldn't be any problems ...*

Overall, first hand information led to more realistic expectations and goals.

Three additional general difficulties in acquiring information emerged. The first difficulty was that New Zealand’s society changed so rapidly during the last ten years. Thus, much of the information the participants obtained was already outdated when they migrated and resulted in disappointments. Accordingly, it is very important to either obtain up-to-date information or to check how up-to-date the information one acquires is. The internet is a great help for getting current information. Especially internet forums, in which Germans at different stages of their migration process and German living in New Zealand exchange information, are of great value. Internet forums are not only a wonderful source of up-to-date, specific, and timely information. In addition, other migrants participating in the forum can provide emotional as well as physical support at various stages of the migration process. However, on the down side, negative postings can potentially negatively affect the migration process.

The second difficulty was that the participants often did not know what to ask for, because they did not know what might be important to know:
... but you don’t actually really know what to ask. It’s, I mean, you try to make stabs at what might be important or so.

This issue can potentially be counteracted by internet forums for one can read postings by other potential migrants and migrants already living in New Zealand.

The third difficulty concerned the usefulness of information. Some participants were so determined to fulfil their dream that they ignored information about negative issues in New Zealand and difficulties one might encounter, or they thought it might not apply to them, in order to protect themselves from doubts about migrating. One participant described this very vividly:

*I read these [negative] things, but I did not read them as carefully and intensively as I read the things I wanted to hear. When there was something written which I approved of and which suited my plans, I took them in more carefully than those things which did not really... With these things I thought that they must not necessarily apply to me. You know, in the course of preparations, while reading all these things, I was so keen to get there that the things which I didn’t want to hear, I did not hear or did not take them into my head, because I always was afraid that I might read something that would make me unsure or could change my mind, you know. (81)*

Application for Work Permit or Permanent Residency

Interestingly, not all participants entered New Zealand with a permanent residence permit, reflecting that the migration was for them a trial rather than a permanent decision, and that it was difficult to find the job offer necessary for applying for permanent residency from within Germany. The participants either entered the country via a visitors’ permit, work permit, or permanent resident permit. Some participants applied for their work permit or permanent residency while still in Germany, whereas other participants applied for them from within New Zealand. Some of the participants gained their permanent residence through the ‘High Priority List System’ and some through the ‘Point system’. Here we will only discuss the application process while still in Germany.

Those participants who applied while still in Germany, made their applications through the New Zealand Embassy in Bonn or later the New Zealand Immigration Service in London. Most participants managed their application alone. One participant was supported by an employment agency while, in the case of another participant, his employer took care of the entire application process. One participant couple employed a migration agency. The processing time varied from six weeks (via employment agency) to one year (alone). Both either too short or too long processing times led to distress. The brief waiting time increased the pressure during the organisation phase, because it put time pressure onto the decision making of the participants and created difficulties organising the dissolution within such a short time. The very long waiting times, in contrast, led to distress, because the participants had to live with a high level of uncertainty over a long period of time. During this time, their concerns that they would not get the residence grew, doubts whether migration was the right step emerged again, they were exposed to the increasing doubts and ‘Schadenfreude’ (gloating) of family and friends, and the plans they had made for migrating (e.g. when to ship the container, when to start working in New Zealand) became increasingly mixed up. The latter increased the distress during the establishment phase. Because they could not send the containers of their possessions early enough, many participants had to live without their things for several weeks.

One of the most difficult requirements of work permits and residency permits was obtaining an offer of employment from a New Zealand company while the participants were still in Germany. Firstly, it was difficult for the participants to search for employment and to conduct job interviews at such a distance. Applying from Germany to job advertisements in New Zealand and flying before the migration to New Zealand to find a job were successful strategies for securing employment. Secondly, they experienced difficulties in finding employers who were willing to offer the kind of open opportunities necessary for the residency application. Potential employers were cautious to offer indefinite employment, because they did not know the German immigrants personally nor their work. Often, they had difficulties assessing German
qualifications, due to differences in the education and training systems. Further, having to prove that they cannot find a New Zealander for the particular job caused too much work for many potential employers. Moreover, since it often takes a long time to have the application processed, the employers need to be willing to wait until the immigrant receives the approval. As a consequence of all these obstacles, employing an immigrant seems to be just too difficult for many New Zealand employers. Consequently, many participants had to migrate to New Zealand without a permit. Arriving without having a job contributed particularly to distress in men, because it put them under great pressure to find a job during the anyway very busy establishment. Not having employment increased financial stringency and led to a drop in the living standard. It also compounded language issues, because learning and improving English was mostly facilitated by working.

The application process is very expensive. As well as fees for the application itself, applicants have to pay fees for required additional documentation (ELTS test, German police certificate, medical examination including a chest x-ray, and evaluation of German qualifications). These high costs contributed to financial stringency and drop in living standards during the establishment.

While migration agencies have the potential of greatly facilitating the migration process, they can also turn the migration into a nightmare if one does not check their credibility. One participant couple not only had to pay a very high fee, but they also discovered during their establishment that the practices of the migration agency were illegal and dishonest, and that much information given by the agency was either outdated or wrong. The high fee contributed to financial stringency during the establishment and the illegal and dishonest services led to much distress.

While applying for a work or permanent residency permit from within Germany tended to increase the distress in the pre-migration phase, it considerably reduced the distress during the establishment. Having the permit when arriving in New Zealand reduced uncertainty regarding whether the participants were able to stay in New Zealand. They could also start working immediately reducing the time without an income, which lessened financial stringency and eased any drop in living standard during establishment.

**Job Search**

Remarkably, except for one participant couple, it was always the men who worked first. Usually, the women stayed at home in the beginning, because they could not work in their professions (e.g. lawyer, nurse); did not continue studying, because they perceived their level of English comprehension as insufficient or were expecting a baby; or wanted to be at home to ease the transition of their children. Interestingly, only the men in three participant couples (two stayer couples and one returner couple) had jobs to go to in New Zealand, reflecting again how difficult it is to organise a job over the distance. The man in one stayer couple had a pension high enough for financing their day-to-day lives, the man in one returner couple had a study place financed by his agency, and the man in another returner couple had the assurance of a job offer from the migration agency. Two of the three men with jobs found their jobs through applying from Germany and the United States to job advertisements. The third man flew to New Zealand to find a job, after his German friend in New Zealand had told him that he had to come himself to find a suitable job:

*And then he wrote to me that the only way if you want to find a job, you have to come over here and look for a job for yourself, you know. So after talking to [my partner], I or we have decided I have to come over here and do it myself.*

The other two participant couples (one stayer couple and one returner couple) migrated to New Zealand without having secured a job. Arriving in New Zealand without a job contributed to distress, because it put them under great pressure to find a job at a time when so many other things had to be organised as well and, when they could not find a job straight away, it contributed to a deeper drop in their living standard and to financial stringency.
Financing Migration

Financing the migration was especially a great concern for those participants who did not have a job to go to. Some participants tried to get together starting capital sufficient for surviving the first year in New Zealand without an income. They saved money, worked in second jobs, asked for a payout of inheritance, and/or sold possessions (e.g. furniture, car):

... when we had dissolved everything here, we sold lots of things and furniture, because we somehow needed the money, too, for a fresh start over there ... (83)

And we had to practically sell the furniture and say: “Okay, if we come back, then we’ll just have to buy new stuff”. That was important for us – to be liquid, cos we wanted to have a certain safeguard, financially. (84)

...and then to free up a bit of money from the inheritance. We just needed somehow a bit of capital to get started. And we had nothing. I had studied and [my partner] had worked, and we’d lived on that. So that we had somehow a little bit of capital to start with, at least until we had a job, you know. And so there was a bit of friction, I guess you could say – unspoken. Not particularly pleasant stuff [to get the inheritance]. (85)

While these modes of generating enough starting capital increased the distress before the migration (e.g. exhaustion due to working two jobs, conflict with family regarding inheritance), they produced a financial cushion which helped prevent financial stringency and alleviated the impact of lower living standards. A sound financial basis also reduced the pressure to find a job quickly. As a result, participants with adequate capital did not need to accept jobs unsuitable to their qualifications. This reduced distress during the hardest first year and substantially increased the likelihood of staying.

Dissolution of Life in Germany

Parallel to building the foundations for their life in New Zealand, the participants had to dissolve their lives in Germany. The dissolution primarily included:

♦ Telling the Migration Decision: Reactions from Family & Friends
♦ Overcoming Moral Pressure & Guilt Feelings
♦ Dissolution of Apartment
♦ Saying Goodbye

Telling the Migration Decision: Reactions from Family & Friends

For the participants, telling their family and friends their decision to migrate was often a very difficult step they dreaded. They feared that their parents would react negatively and try to hold them back (i.e. moral pressure). Further, they were anxious that it would not be easy for their parents to accept their migration to New Zealand, because New Zealand so far away, which means that when something happens to them their children might not make it back in time:

And I mean if it would have been in England, it would have been not a problem – you know, one hour and you are back. But by knowing it is New Zealand and it’s a really long way away and they are quite old. There was always the possibility it could be a final farewell, you know.

Those participants who slid into migration dodged the unpleasant step of telling the decision and gave them as well as their parents time to slowly get used to it:

I think that was the thing, because it was “just for a year”, and then it was: Okay for another year ... There was never really a discussion that it was a final break. It was really an extended holiday, and [my partner] and I had been on holiday for half a year before, so this was just a bit longer and it has turned out to be just a bit longer than that ...! And we never really consulted - after it was quite clear to us that we wouldn’t go
back to Germany - we never asked for any approval or such from our family. I think by that time both our families had both cottoned on to the fact that we would not come back.

Interestingly, none of the participants actually asked their parents for permission or approval for their migration, which reflects their independence as well as their determination to fulfil their dream.

When the participants told their family and friends about their decision to migrate to New Zealand, they encountered a great variety of reactions along a positive-negative continuum. Towards the positive end of the reaction spectrum, some parents were happy for their child and proud that they had the courage to dare to do something so special:

... they were quite happy to see me doing something quite different to anyone else in the family.

Other parents were happy because they saw it as a good opportunity for travel to New Zealand. In the middle of the reaction spectrum, parents were sad because they did not want to lose their children. Often, reactions from parents were a combination of being happy and proud, but also sad:

It was a bit ambivalent I would think. On one side, they were quite happy to see me doing something quite different to anyone else in the family. On the other hand, they didn’t want to lose me, of course.

My mother was sad. ... So I think for her it was a hard time that her son wouldn’t return, wouldn’t join her a bit more often as it should be. But I think she also understood. I think she – I think everyone is a bit proud. ... And I think they are, yes, proud and sad at the same time.

However, some parents were absolutely shocked. They could not understand why their children wanted to leave Germany, especially when they believed that their children lived a good live in Germany:

... [my parents] were really shocked. They were ... they couldn’t understand it at all.

... in any case I know that [my parents] didn’t understand when we left, because we like gave up two good jobs ... (89)

Some parents were shocked because they had doubted that their children would really go ahead with implementing the decision or had not taken talks about migrating seriously because it was to threatening to them:

[The in-laws] didn't believe that we really want to leave the country and their house.

... they all knew it – we had talked about that this was our plan. ... as I said, they didn’t want to take it seriously since the decision or even the thought of it was simply much too unpleasant then for [my partner’s] parents or my mother. (87)

Some parents discouraged their children with comments like: you will not manage, you will not like it, or you will be back anyway. Some went so far as to tell their children that they could not leave them, to indirectly blame them, and to make them feel guilty through comments like: Why do you leave us alone?, you are ungrateful, or you won’t be there if I need you. One parent couple even blamed their son-in-law for their daughter leaving them and broke the contact with the participants for about 18 months. These reactions put moral pressure on the participants by increasing their guilt feelings and by putting them under pressure to explain their decision. In the case when the parents broke the contact, the participants were without the much needed social support from their parents during the first hard year in New Zealand:

And they certainly put some of the blame on [my partner]. Unconsciously or consciously they had to have a culprit - they just could not understand. (88)
The participants showed an understanding of the negative reactions of their parents. They acknowledged that their decision must have been hard for their parents and that their reactions were an expression of the grief they felt. The parents reacted more positively when they were younger and/or liked travelling, when they were more liberal, and when they knew how to explain it to their friends. Some parents became more positive when their friends found it interesting, when they saw slides of New Zealand, and/or they visited their children in New Zealand, because this increased their understanding of why their children wanted to emigrate to New Zealand and they saw that their children were happy and well in New Zealand:

*With my parents, things started getting better after they had been to New Zealand. ... And ever since then, I have to say, it was all right. They had seen how beautiful it is and that we feel well.*

The reactions of friends also varied along a negative-positive continuum. Although no friend said they should not do it, some reacted negatively. According to the participants, their friends could either not comprehend how one could migrate at all, doubted their sincerity, were envious, did not believe that they would stay in New Zealand, or discouraged them:

*What I experienced fairly often was - yeah, this inability to understand: How can anyone want to emigrate! (90)*

*And they said then: “Oh, why are you leaving? You got everything.”*

*... they said to my parents: “Oh, you will see they will come in a year or two years time back”*

*Due to the fact that I couldn’t tell them any positive or give them any positive answers [because they had to wait for so long for the answer from the New Zealand immigration service whether they got the permanent residence permit], they were always doubting that we will make it at all, you know. And their smile went always further and further - nearly hit the other side of the head.*

*A few were somehow kind of envious, a bit, reacted enviously along the lines of: Huh, it’ll come to nothing anyway, they won’t hack it anyway ... (91)*

Some friends were sad and concerned for the well-being of the participants. Other friends loved the idea, were thrilled because they saw the opportunity to come, and/or admired them for being so brave as to take a step like that:

*... all people said: “Oh, that is really good for your career for you to go abroad.”*  
*They said: “That is all a good thing.”*

*Then there were friends who said to me: “Man, that’s really great”. (92)*

*I mean, they probably, well they thought that was yeah, quite a step to take, more, yeah. ... They pretty much accept it, if not thrilled.*

*And in principle, they are all - they all admire it. (94)*

*I mean, there’s someone who’s off to New Zealand – that is just something quite extraordinary for those living [in Germany] anyway. (95)*

Taken together, family and friends responding positively eased the migration, because it strengthened the migrants in their decision, and ensured emotional and financial support during their migration. This support reduced homesickness, financial stringency and lowered living standards. In contrast, more negative reactions increased guilt feelings making it much harder for them to migrate and strained family relationships. As a consequence, participants doubted their decision and had to cope without much financial
and emotional support from their family and/or friends during the establishment phase, when it was hardest for them.

**Overcoming Moral Pressure & Guilt Feelings**
Overall, in order to migrate, some participants had to overcome considerable moral pressure from their families and friends as well as their own guilt feelings. Those participants who overcame moral pressure by believing that staying because of their family and friends would be an unreasonable sacrifice and that they need to do what is right for them (see *Guilt Feeling or Not and Belief: Important to Follow Dream*) experienced less guilt feelings and doubts. As a consequence, their migration was much smoother.

**Dissolution of Apartment**
The dissolution of the apartment included deciding what to take and what not; selling, giving away, or leaving with parents or friends; packing the container or parcels; getting out of the rental property contract; and finding a successor for the apartment:

*Sold everything. Sold, given away, stored - dissolved everything. The only thing we did not want to do without were our pictures and our books. That's what I can't sell. Children and books – I can't sell them. Well, we then started putting things in parcels and forwarded them, poste restante, to Wellington. Cleared out the flat. (96)*

What the participants took with them varied from taking nearly everything (e.g. including a complete workshop) to only personal things (e.g. clothes, photos, books, objects of great persona significance). Those participants who already had been in New Zealand had the advantage of knowing better what was worth taking with them and what was not. As indicated above, many participants had to sell much furniture in order to get the finances together for establishing themselves in New Zealand and they lost quite a lot of money through selling.

**Saying Goodbye**
During the organisation of the emigration, the participants experienced a great mixture of emotions; they were sad as well as excited. While they were sad to leave their family and friends, and their old life behind, they were excited about their new life. They did not know what they were in for. However, they were ready to go and were not frightened to take the step. The final saying goodbye was for many participants rather dramatic. The quotes also reflect that the step to migrate was a step into great uncertainty:

*It was exciting and a bit sad. But also it's hard to imagine, I mean, how it would be, you know, you can't, I think you can't really realise the step of leaving people behind ...*  

*You do something in the blue – you got no sort of really comprehension of what will go on.*  

*I was not frightened at all. Nothing. I was ready to go.*

In addition to the outlined major foundation and dissolution tasks, the participants had to take care of many other things often within a short time frame like quitting their job, selling the car, organising good container deals, giving formal notice of the migration, organising good flight deals, and organising and giving a farewell party.
SUMMARY

In summary, the participants only decided to migrate when several right reasons and conditions came together or were fulfilled at the right point in time. They consciously chose to migrate, but the decision was usually an emotional rather than rational. The reasons and conditions were highly specific for each participant couple, diverse, and intertwined. A combination of the desire to start a new life phase in a different country, the desire to go to New Zealand, and the belief that it is important to follow one’s dream led finally to the decision to migrate to New Zealand, whereby the push factors preceded the pull factors. The migration decision was also influenced by factors independent of both countries mainly having guilt feelings or not, degree of closeness to family, having siblings living in Germany or not, reactions from family, having friends in New Zealand or Not, migrating as couple/family, having children or not, and degree of financial basis.

Before migrating to New Zealand, the participants held expectations and had goals in regard to their life in New Zealand. These expectations and goals were shaped by the characteristics and values of the participants and the information the participants acquired about New Zealand prior to their migration. However, in hindsight, the participants stated that it was nearly impossible to imagine what they could expect in New Zealand and, thus, the migration was a big step into uncertainty. Although the decision to migrate to New Zealand was a conscious decision, it was not an absolute decision. The participants considered the migration as a trial, in order to stay flexible in their pursuit of happiness, to reduce pressure on succeeding, and to protect their relationship. Once the participants made the decision, they started organising the migration. The organisation of the migration entailed two simultaneous processes: building foundations for life in New Zealand and dissolution of life in Germany.
I think it is a good mixture of the dreams and being tough enough to match reality to make it.

(Participant)
Realising the dream refers to the experience of living in another country. Establishing themselves in New Zealand felt like a new start for the participants. Indeed, in the beginning, many participants felt like a newborn or a beginner, because they had to start from scratch. There were many things they did not know and they had to learn so much at once. This chapter contains the analysis of the experiences and events the participants encountered when they started to live in New Zealand under the selective code, *Realising the Dream: Starting a New Life*. This selective code emerged from four axial codes:

- **ARRIVAL: A DREAM COMING TRUE & FEELING AT HOME**
- **THE BEGINNING: THE HARD FIRST YEAR**
- **OBSTACLES & SPECIFIC ATTITUDES/BELIEVES AND STRATEGIES**
- **GENERAL INFLUENCES ON ESTABLISHMENT**

**ARRIVAL: A DREAM COMING TRUE & FEELING AT HOME**

When the participants arrived in New Zealand, they felt, despite the long travel, tremendously proud, high spirited and uplifted, because they made their dream come true and live it. This overwhelming feeling is well expressed in this quote by a participant:

> So we came down ... and we had an absolute marvellous time! ... like a dream come true, you know what I mean? You probably have seen the pope coming out of the plane kissing the ground - yeah, that was what I felt when I left the plane in Auckland! ... I mean there are two things I always wanted that was a BMW motorbike, my one I bought eventually, and to go to New Zealand. And I went to New Zealand! And something like this coming true – that is an amazing feeling really!

Remarkably, even tough they had never been in New Zealand before, several participants had the strong feeling that they already had been in New Zealand and that this is their real home:

> ... we just had a feeling that we belonged here somehow. ... It was just a feeling of having been here before or a feeling of just feeling at home. It was strange: a feeling of that we have always have been there.

> ... that is just a gut feeling that I had. ... You know the feeling that: ‘This is it!’, you know.

Overall, the participants experienced right from the time of their arrival a closer, warmer, and more attractive feeling about New Zealand. However, the establishment proved to be very hard and entailed many challenges.

**THE BEGINNING: THE HARD FIRST YEAR**

The new start and particularly the first year in New Zealand were, for the participants, often a struggle and they found it very hard to establish themselves:

> It was so hard. Yes! ... I mean if you emigrate, don't imagine it's easy, peasy life. It's hard! It's hard! It's hard! It's the way it is.

> ... it couldn't get worse kind of thing.

The first years were the most difficult, especially the first year. One realises all the things, which one has given up by moving to New Zealand and I had moments where I wouldn't have migrated again.
Like, particularly the first year. If you haven't got the social network yet, your social isolation and finding your way around in a different system. It's hard work!

The beginning was hard for women and men for different reasons. Usually the men worked first and the women stayed at home, because the women could not work in their professions (e.g. lawyer, nurse); did not continue studying, because they perceived their level of English comprehension as insufficient or were expecting a baby; or the couple decided that the women would stay at home to ease the transition of their children. If the men did not already have a job when they arrived, they felt under high pressure to find work, because they felt it was their job to support the family. This pressure was intensified when the men felt it was particularly their job to support the family for they had been the driving force for the migration, when the couple experienced financial stringency and drop in living standards, and when the women stayed at home.

In contrast, those women who stayed at home after their partner had started working or studying often felt frustrated and lonely, which made them missing their family and friends more (homesickness). These feelings were not only a result of having to stay at home, but also of being far away from their families and friends, not yet having a new circle of friends for various reasons (see Culture Shock’late: Social Differences and Social Support), and having to deal with many migration issues on their own, because their partner worked full-time. In addition, not working made the women financially dependent in the beginning, which was frustrating for these women who were used to and valued independency. Interestingly, the female participants themselves did not mention that they felt lonely. Rather, their partners told me about the loneliness and frustration their wives experienced in the beginning:

But it was all a bit difficult. And [my partner] got also frustrated, because - I think a day after arrival - I had to jump into the course. And it was very tough.

She had to stay at home. While I went to work, she was at home. So I had some social contacts, she had nothing. And it was certainly harder for her the first sort of, I don’t know, one and a half years or so, than it was for me.

However, after surviving the hard years, the participants reported that their lives became increasingly easier:

... the situation has improved quite dramatically.

... after a year we have just gotton on your feet ... it’s going better with your English, because you’ve just been working every day ... you feel a lot freer and you start to actually speak and don’t have to secretly translate every word. (101)

But then [my partner] went to university and did some studying. We met the first people and made a couple of friends. It slowly went better and better.

The analysis revealed that there were several turning points that drastically improved the participants’ situation and their well-being in the beginning. Finding appropriate work and starting to study were the most important turning points, because they lessened the financial stringency, enhanced the participants’ identity, and increased their independence:

And I think that the really good part was that I had a proper job here with my own income and [my daughter] being in school - I really felt my independence again.

But since I've started, you know, my new career, it's different, because, then now I'm quite happy with what I am doing.

Other key events that greatly enhanced the participants’ well-being and made life easier for them included the unpacking of containers and the decoration of their house, finding the right house, and having a dog:
And I hated everything. ... Then after that we went for a walk, and we went down the road and all of a sudden there was this property or this driveway and it had a sign on the bottom ‘Sale’. And then we looked at this house ... We really felt that this was - this house just drew us in.

[My partner] was frustrated. ... And she found a wonderful house ... And I think from that point onward, it was all much easier.

... and from then on things started to improve with [my partner], because then we’d got the dog. And from then on things livened up very much. (102)

OBSTACLES & SPECIFIC ATTITUDES/BELIEVES AND STRATEGIES

In the course of the interview, the participants told us about many obstacles they encountered during their establishment. Some of these challenges happened in the beginning, some emerged later, and some are ongoing. Three broad categories of challenges emerged from the analysis:

- Confrontation with Many Things at Once & Much Uncertainty
- Obstacles Related to Things Left Behind in Germany
- Obstacles Related to New Life in New Zealand

The emergence of the latter two codes suggests that during realising the dream to start a new life – particularly during the first hard year - the participants were challenged by a great variety of obstacles not only related to their new life in their host country New Zealand, but also to things left behind in Germany, the country of origin. Leaving things behind generated feelings of loss and grief. These obstacles were, however, seen by most participants as challenges providing opportunities to grow as the following quote illustrates:

Yeah, challenge – something sort of you can grow on and cope with the loss of being away from your friends and all this sort of things. ... It got the sad side, but it also got the side of: yeah coming out of it as a stronger person as I went into it.

All the obstacles in themselves represent factors that could contribute to the return of German immigrants depending on whether they perceived them as an issue and how they dealt with them. In this section, we will discuss each of the various obstacles and present at the end of each obstacle discussion the specific attitudes/believes and strategies that the participants used successfully to overcome the specific obstacle.

Confrontation with Many Things at Once & Much Uncertainty

The participants were very busy in the beginning, because they had to organise many basic things at once including selecting a place to live, setting up a base for establishment, finding and buying a car, finding and renting or buying a house, buying household things and furniture, improving the house, and establishing their children at school. In addition, they had to apply for work visas or permanent residence if they had not done that yet in Germany, apply for recognition of their qualifications, apply for practising permission from professional bodies, do parts of their qualification again to get their qualification recognised, and find a job. The execution of these tasks was often complicated by insufficient language skills and factors such as having no social support, not knowing how things worked and where to get things, and finding things unfamiliar. Typically, many things came together in the beginning to put pressure on the participants, which is well illustrated in the following quote:

There was a person, she called herself a friend or what [my partner] thought was her friend. She told us we could stay with her for a while until we would find a flat or whatever. So we came. We stayed with her for a
couple of days and that all turned into an absolute total disaster ... we had only limited resources moneywise so I had to find a job. [My partner] was pregnant. She is a lawyer, but she can't, she wouldn't be allowed to work here, you know, as a German lawyer. She had to do some study at the university anyway. She couldn't find a job straight away – it was rather me. I couldn’t find a job straight away, because it takes you a while to go out and all that. We had no car. And [the friends we stayed with] made lots of pressure, because they wanted us to go. So that ... yeah, all together ... Then I had lots of English problems as well. ... And then there was lots of pressure, you know. You know your wife is having a baby soon, you need a flat or whatever. Then we had a look and we what we saw was absolutely disastrous: expensive, really bad quality. We couldn’t find anything really decent and we had no stuff here, because the container was still on the way.

Especially the beginning was also characterised by much uncertainty. The establishment was a start from scratch in a totally new and unfamiliar environment. Although the participants did seek this challenge of not knowing what would be, when they actually were in the position, some felt nervous or a bit depressed and thus hated everything. This hard time in the beginning put great pressure on the relationships. Indeed, many German immigrant couples did not survive the migration, as many German immigrants told me when we contacted them during snowballing. However, in times of high uncertainty it was commonly the partner that gave security and support:

I mean difficult from when we were here: finding a job, then trying to learn a language and all this uncertainties, which made me quite nervous for quite a while.

... felt a bit depressed, because we had nowhere to go. We didn’t have a house - we had nothing really. ... And I hated everything. And I told the fishermen that I hated boats, I hated the sea, I hated islands, and then he said: “Well, you are in the right place here then!” And I was just very depressed, I think.

I mean the security was the partnership, when, you know, you didn't have the security of what's going to be in New Zealand.

Because they had so many new things to learn and to do, and because they were under much pressure to do those things, the participants felt usually tremendously tired and exhausted during the first months, as one participant described vividly:

There are so many things that you don’t really know what bothers you! ... I mean it’s quite exhausting, because sometimes you can’t follow the conversation. For no particular reason I was coming home and felt totally burned out. My brain was sort of - like someone put a straw into you and sucked it out of you, you know. I’ve never felt like this in Germany. It was just absolutely tiring and it took me quite awhile, about eight, nine months, and then it slowly disappeared, you know. But it’s sort, it’s a tiring experience. Really it is! ... You’re always, sort of, running on full speed all the time.

Obstacles Related to Things Left Behind in Germany

Although the participants had looked so much forward to living in New Zealand, soon after their arrival they usually had to face four obstacles related to things they had left behind in Germany:

- Missing Family & Friends
- Missing Familiar Things
- Guilt Feelings Regarding Leaving Family & Friends Behind
- Fear Something Bad Happens to Family & Friends

Not having family and friends around was especially problematic in the beginning, when the participants had not yet established a new circle of friends in New Zealand.
Missing Family & Friends

Usually shortly after their arrival – after the first euphoria was over - the participants started to realise soon what they had left behind in Germany. That realisation led to feelings of loss and grief, missing many things, and homesickness. Most of the things the participants missed in the beginning, they still missed at the time of the interview. First and foremost, the participants missed their family and friends:

*That is probably the hardest thing of living away from your family. And I think also the thing that I really miss - more than the bread actually - to be able to just drop in.*

The degree of missing depended on the degree of closeness to their family and friends, as well as the number of friends. Interestingly, both female and male participants missed their family and friends. In addition, because the participants had not yet good friends in New Zealand in the beginning, many participants experienced loneliness. However, as pointed out above, women usually felt more lonely and homesick due to their greater isolation.

Because they miss their family and friends, the participants tried to keep in contact with them by phone calls and through trips back to Germany. Although phoning became increasingly cheaper, participants could not afford to phone as often as they would have liked to in the beginning, when they needed it most, because they usually experienced financial difficulties. Trips to Germany are very expensive, especially for the whole family. Paradoxically, but understandably, even if the participants were able to afford trips home, they found them exhausting and emotionally difficult to cope with. For these three reasons, many participants either could not afford to go home regularly or did not want to go:

*You know [in Germany] there is at least the chance to occasionally see your relatives, at least once a year or so. ... my mother turned like 64 or 65 and we were in New Zealand and I rang up. And I was homesick for my mother, you know. I said: "Mum, I’d really like to come. I’d really like to come to your birthday." She said: “So, come then!” And so I said: “I can’t pay for the flight, Mum” And so she paid the flight for us, because we just couldn’t manage to save up enough. For four people a flight to Germany – that is madness with one person earning! You know, my girlfriend saved 10 years long, sometimes 50 cents, sometimes $1. She saved for 10 years. She came last year with her three children! But she alone, her husband didn’t come. She really scrimped and saved. (105)*

*But normally, it is not a holiday. Certainly, I come back and I need a holiday because it is so intense: you meet family, you meet friends, and all chatting and chatting ... No, I find that I wouldn’t miss it, you know. I enjoy it. I love meeting up with friends and family, but it certainly would not count as a holiday in my book. Often I find, after that: ‘Thank God school starts again!’, which is rather weird.*

*Yeah, it was exhausting. The problem is, you know, if you’re away from your home, wherever you are, they’re in their own home. They’re at their home turf - they’re playing on their home turf. And for them it’s pleasure, you know, but they don’t want to be interrupted in their daily routine. They’re sort of still want to have that. It’s a sort of odd situation really. And then you stay for a couple of days and then you feel a little bit of tension arising, you know what I mean, because you’re interrupting their routine some sort, and ... I don’t know ... I didn’t like it that much really if I’m honest!*

*... so we’d spent the time here [in Germany] then, being rushed from pillar to post, said hello and goodbye to all the relatives and were basically relieved when we finally left. (109)*

*And the thing is that I found also: I had this anxiety or so, this thing seeing them and then knowing at the same time, knowing it's only for a couple of days and then we're gone again. It was such exceptional situation the whole stay. And I found it not so easy to, emotionally, to cope with that.*

For one participant, this problem was so serious that it contributed to his return. Not having family and friends around was especially problematic in the beginning, when the participants had not yet established a new circle of friends in New Zealand.
This obstacle was overcome first and foremost by working in their profession, because that meant that they could afford staying better in contact with their family and friends. Other useful strategies used by the participants included getting a dog; searching for cheap phone deals and flights; writing letters and diaries; talking with partner, other German immigrants, and/or migrants from other countries about experiences and feelings; and actively building up a new circle of friends. Partners could help their homesick partners best by providing space for talking and empathetically listening. Family and friends could ease homesickness by regularly ringing or writing, paying for flights home, and visiting their children/friends in New Zealand. New Zealanders bringing participants in contact with other German immigrants assisted greatly by helping building up a new circle of friends. Likewise, all the strategies used for making new friends were highly valuable too (see Culture shock’late: Social Differences)

**Missing Familiar Things**

Other familiar aspects which the participants missed from Germany include specific German foods and product choice, celebrating traditions the German way, high paying jobs, cultural life, speaking German, and travelling to other countries. These things are either not available in New Zealand, difficult to find, or difficult to organise. With regards to food, the participants miss most of all German bread, sausages, chocolate and ‘Gummibärchen’. Luckily, over the last years, specific German food has become more and more available especially in bigger places:

*The only thing I never thought of and have my struggle with is the bread. But if you want to have a good bread you have to pay mega bucks, you know. But it is available but it's also horrifically expensive, you know.*

*Some things were frustrating, because I was used to be able to buy anything what came into my mind, especially material wise for the workshop. It is changed in the meantime, but if I look back, about just the goods which were available in the supermarket, you bought a lot of - you say in German 0815 cheese blocks - just was a different name written on, but the cheese was basically the same. Sausages were the greatest insult. I can remember once we went to the supermarket and there was a lady there with a little sort of stall and she had sausages and she said: “Oh, would you like to try our Frankfurters?”, and I said certainly, you know. I had a bit, and thought the sheep bags buck (mutton) came straight away out of it. I said: “Look lady you are really lucky.” And she said: “Why?” And I said: “That you are not in Frankfurt. If you would hand out those Frankfurters in Frankfurt, they would stone you to death.” ... So you couldn't have the same or other sausages which is still common here. There is more sheep meat than mutton in them than what normally should be in it. But things have changed, taste have changed and you can get now German style or European style sausages, because Dutch people have a certain influence and you can get proper food. Also coffee and all those things - it's amazing what is now available and during that time you just had to take what's there, you know.*

To nevertheless be able to eat German food the participants tried to finding out where they can get it from even if that means that they have to order products from bakeries, butcheries or ethnic speciality food stores in Auckland, Wellington, or Christurch, and/or produced it themselves at home. For example, some participants backed their own bread and brewed their own beer. Family and friends sending parcels with German food/products or bringing German food/products with them when they visit help tremendously. Supermarkets in New Zealand offering specific German food can greatly assist German immigrants dealing with this issue.

The German tradition the participants miss most is Christmas. Summer Christmas is something the participants can not get used to. Commonly, they do not experience any Christmas feeling, because they weather conditions are not right. Christmas atmosphere just does not arise for Germans when it is hot and light until nine or ten at night:
Summer Christmas – I still can’t get used to it, you know. … I’m not Christian, but of course you know, having grown up in a Christian society I observed festivals like that and I love Christmas actually, but I don’t really celebrate it here...

Some participants dealt with missing celebrations of traditions by changing their attitudes/believes, creating their own unique traditions, and/or integrating different traditions:

... somehow the magic, when you get older, the magic is gone a little bit, you know. It’s like celebrating your birthdays, not quite as important as when you were twelve or sixteen, you know, when it was huge thing. So it’s not so bad ...

I miss those traditions a bit, but on the other hand I celebrate Guy Fawkes with a bad conscience - with a bad conscience I have to say - but I love fire works. Maybe that’s the Germaness in me that I miss fireworks and so I happily latch onto customs like Guy Fawkes. A little bit of a hotd potch (variety), we also do Halloween. Halloween was always my favourite American festival – love it! Absolutely adore Halloween! I mean I always think it’s odd, here you live in New Zealand and you celebrate – as a German – you celebrate an American festival, you know. ... I think, you know, you adapt to something that goes beyond your cultural heritage and what the life here is, you know.

Because the participants love travelling, are interested in other people and cultures, and value personal growth and gaining new experience, they miss cultural stimulation and travelling.

Travelling to other countries is New Zealand more difficult for the participants than it was in Germany for several connected reasons. Firstly, New Zealand is located so far away from other countries. That means one has to fly to other countries, which is costly and takes long. Secondly, the wages in New Zealand are quite low, which makes it more difficult to save for flights. Thirdly, the holidays are only 15 days long, which means one has not so much time for travelling. Lastly, if the participants have sufficient money and time, visiting family and friends usually has priority:

That’s one of the things, I think that both [my partner] and I are missing, you know. We tend to take quite long holidays in the summer - longer than a lot of New Zealanders. I mean we usually travel for five weeks or so. And [my partner] would love to travel the entire summer holidays, but I can’t, because I usually have to be back in school a week before the holidays start. But again with the fact that, if you travel somewhere for two weeks, it takes you six days to get adjusted and then the holidays are almost over.

And here it's more: It's New Zealand, it's compact, it has big variety, but to get anywhere else you need an aeroplane. (Petra: Which is expensive ...) Yeah, expensive and you don't earn that much money - at least most people don't, generally.

To counteract the obstacle of cultural stimulation, some participants go back and forth between Germany and New Zealand. A useful strategy for dealing with the issue of travelling was to have holidays together with family and friends at different places instead of visiting them in Germany. This strategy also counteracts exhausting holidays in Germany.

Guilt Feelings Regarding Leaving Family & Friends Behind
While the participants overcame their guilt feelings regarding leaving family and friends behind when they decided to migrate, the guilt feelings resurfaced when the family and friends went through difficult times, when the parents grew older and their health deteriorated, and when the participants got children. In those times, the guilt feelings were very common and serious. The guilt feelings were especially pronounced when the relationship with the parents is close and/or the parents made it clear that they would like their children to come back.
Again the attitudes that it is their lives and that it is important that one live one’s own life, and that one needs to seize opportunities when they arise lessened the guilt feelings. Regularly ringing once week, flying home about every two years, and sending videos of children home helped the participants also to reduce these guilt feelings. Family and friends helped participants deal with their guilt feelings if they did not apply any moral pressure, but instead supported them by encouraging them, keeping in regular contact, and visiting them in New Zealand.

**Fear Something Bad Happens to Family & Friends**

The participants also live constantly in fear that something bad is happening to their family and friends, and that they are not there in time see their loved ones again or to help:

*But it is hard I think overall when you live so far away from your family and all the crises and emergencies. Oh, and I hate it, every time the phone rings at night, say three o’clock, I think: “Who is it now?! [Who his ill or died?]”*

In particular, the participants are afraid of serious illness or death of close relatives and that they are financially not able to fly back or that they might arrive too late to see them still alive and to say goodbye. This concern is related to New Zealand being so far away from Germany, because that makes flights expensive and it takes such a long time to fly to Germany. Hence, even if they could afford a flight and get a flight immediately, it might take too long. This fear is very common among German immigrants, with the above scenario being perceived a one of the hardest things of living in another country so far away from home:

*[The death of close relative] is probably the hardest thing of living away from your family.*

To cope in times when something bad happened, some participants prepared by taking death messages given to them when migrating or when visiting in Germany seriously and having an extra account for emergency flights. Taking the death message seriously allowed them to say their final goodbyes to the loved one. Having an extra account for emergency flights meant that they could quickly decide to fly home when they felt that this was necessary. When the participants were not able to fly home, they tried to emotionally support their family by regularly talking issues through with their family. When they could fly to Germany, it greatly helped them to get involved in all the funeral arrangements. Pulling the *I’m from New Zealand and have to get home card* helped speed up things surrounding the dying of a person. When back in New Zealand, doing something relaxing and talking much with family about what happened assisted in going through the grieving process far away from their family.

Having family members, especially siblings, taking care of things at home, ringing the German migrants if they needed support, waiting with the funeral, and involving German immigrants in organisation of all arrangements greatly helped the participants coping with this difficult situation. For many German migrants, the low wage structure in New Zealand and only getting 15 days holiday were social conditions in New Zealand which pronounced this issue.

In sum, the overcoming of the obstacles related to things left behind in Germany required the participants to develop of detachment from many things at once, several beliefs and attitude changes, and the development of new response strategies.

**Obstacles Related to New Life in New Zealand**

The participants told me about many challenges they had to overcome when they established themselves in New Zealand. From the analysis of these challenges, eight interrelated codes emerged:
Drop in Living Standard & Financial Stringency
Disappointments
Discontentment with Some Characteristics of New Zealanders
Language Issues
Practical Issues
Visa & Permit Application Issues
Work Issues
Culture Shock’late: Difficulties Interacting & Building Up Friendships
Issues Surrounding Children
Leisure Issues

Drop in Living Standard & Financial Stringency
At the beginning, the participants usually rented a house or cabin, or lived with friends for a while. The participants arrived in New Zealand with only a small number of suitcases to start their new life. Many had to live on what was in those suitcases for quite a long time, because their containers arrived months later on account of the long distance and delays in the processing of their visas or permits. Many, especially those who had not build up a financial cushion in Germany, experienced financial stringency and an unexpected sudden sharp drop in their living standard during the beginning:

We didn’t even buy a book or so, because we didn’t have the money, you know. It was rather tight. ... Yeah, but, I mean, still not that tight that we didn’t now and then went to café and had a coffee, you know. ... But it was tight. It was really tight.

[At Christmas]: no presents at all, nothing. We had nothing. Only our little [daughter] became a little present from her teacher. ... we have not had the money.

The stuff was still, that was by sea mail, so the stuff came months later. We actually had to find this flat where we could have some furniture ... It was a pretty horrible flat, but it was cheap.

We had it good, because we worked both in Germany and [my partner] had a really good income. My income wasn’t that great, but the combined income was quite decent. And we had a relatively cheap flat – a nice flat. And then we came to New Zealand: Oh, the wages are poor, the prices for the flats are unbelievable high. So our lifestyle all of a sudden just plunged down, you know. So we didn’t like that and we didn’t sort of expected it either, you know.

We didn’t have a car then, so we, [my partner] had a bike, he bought a bike. We had some furniture. The guy who rented us the flat loaned us some furniture for the time that ours wasn’t here, but we didn’t have pots and pans and stuff like that.

As these quotes suggest, several reasons contributed to drop in living standard and financial stringency. Firstly, the participants often bought only the essentials and cheaply. Those participants who knew that their furniture and household items would arrive sooner or later, did not want to spend too much money on buying things. Those participants who did not ship their furniture and household items had to buy many essential things within a very short time, because they had to start from scratch. However, spending much money within a short time frame in combination with not knowing when they would get a job, how much they would earn, and whether they would stay at all was very uncomfortable. Secondly, because participants had to get an accommodation quickly, needed only an accommodation in between because they wanted to buy a house anyway, did not know whether they would get a visa and when they would get a job, earned much less in comparison to what they had earned in Germany, and/or perceived the rents high in comparison to Germany, they usually only rented relatively cheap accommodations. Commonly, the houses or flats were not furnished. Different housing styles, lower housing standards (e.g. outdated interior designs, poor insulation, no central heating), and lower standards of cleanliness magnified the situation for the participants, who, like Germans in general, highly value cozy living spaces. Thirdly, the participants were
generally on a tight budget, because they experienced difficulties finding an appropriate job, earned much less than in Germany, and/or usually only the males worked, because the women stayed at home for various reasons (see also Work Issues):

We only had [my partner’s] income. That was enough to get us through, but we didn’t really have any funds, you know, nothing really, no savings. It pretty much just covered our expenses.

And now I don’t know, but if I wanted to achieve something [in New Zealand], like for example, to become financially secure, then I’d have to have worked at least 14 or so hours a day, in order to, with the wages that I had, to be able to say: “Okay, I haven’t had to supplement it and that was sufficient to survive.” (99)

For some participants, this sudden drop in living standards was very depressing as the following account describes:

And so then there was nothing more inside [in the house we had rented]. There were these really heavy curtains inside. The house must have been empty for quite a while: full of spider webs and so on ... Then it all kind of started with [my partner] a bit, you know, all the spider webs inside and everything, a bit old, how should I put it? The wallpaper like you don’t get here anymore, it wasn’t exactly modern or anything … And then [my partner] said: “I will not be able to stand it in here.” ... And then there was the time when the furniture wasn’t there yet – I’ll never forget how that was. I mean, how [my partner] just lay there and these inflatable mattresses, you know. And then early, I get up and, yeah: “Would you like a tea or coffee or something?” – Nothing, no answer at all, as if you were just thin air, just saw right through you and eyes all red from crying - and for days on end never getting up and so on. (98)

These depressions set usually in motion a downward spiral which contributed to their return. However, other participants found living on a minimum as something very exciting, and as a great challenge and experience. They thought of living on a minimum as something exciting, and as a great challenge and experience:

But probably I have always thought of it as a challenge, as a: that it's possible!

Other beliefs/attitudes that helped coping with this situation included knowing that many New Zealanders manage with less, being optimistic and hoping that things will improve, hanging in their (perseverance), and allowing sufficient time for establishment:

Also I know in New Zealand, people who have to cope with much less money, much less money! ... But it was tight, it was really tight, but not like I think a lot of families [in New Zealand]. Just experienced that when I was in Hamilton at a workshop and I stayed with a solo mum with three children, three girls, and lovely person. And I mean, everything clean and tidy and so. Also I know in New Zealand, people who have to cope with much less money, much less money! ... But it was tight, it was really tight, but not like I think a lot of families [in New Zealand]. Just experienced that when I was in Hamilton at a workshop and I stayed with a solo mum with three children, three girls, and lovely person. And I mean, everything clean and tidy and so. ...[My partner] always said "Yeah, we do not have any reason to complain."

Strategies used to lessen financial stringency and drop in living standard included: expecting that it would be hard, building a sufficient financial cusion before the migration, taking care that container arrives at the
same time, and getting out of the situation by doing things one enjoys and one can do very well in New Zealand:

_We actually perceived that it will be hard in the beginning. So we said: “okay that is a start.” We were pleased that we had a little bit cushion on the bank that we could go and take the money._

_We sort of did lots of things, you know. Like, we went up to the Wairarapa, went up to Mt Holdsworth for a couple of days, and tracked around there and sort of, you know, because we had - going out of that bloody shitty place in [here we had the flat] was quite important and sort of: you only get depressed, so you had to do something. We thought the best way of not getting depressed is just hop in a car and do something._

One participant couple had a backpacker holiday before arriving, which made the drop not only less drastic, but also help to recover from the stressful emigration, to recharge their batters, and to bridge the shipping of the containers. Both partners working, particularly both partners working in their professions, greatly reduced financial stringency and increased the living standard. The assistance by New Zealanders and other German immigrants was crucial for coping with this obstacle.

**Disappointments**

All participants experienced disappointments during the first years, because many things they found in New Zealand were contrary to their expectations. The participants overcame some disappointments quickly, but others took several years to get used to. This section only discusses the disappointments that were directly mentioned by the participants. However, disappointments are also present in all the other sections.

The main factor that pulled many participants to New Zealand was the green and clean paradise image. The participants were mostly all disappointed that this heavily promoted image, and other things which one connects with this image, did not correspond with the truth at all:

_I think that people have this perception that New Zealand that it is just so vast and green and clean, but since I live here I think that is just perception._

Yeah, another thing is, as I said, they poison this country. I mean the use of poison here is just shocking. ... Kiwi’s got no conscience about their environment. (Petra: Which is quite a contrast if you think about, you know, having the image of a beautiful…) Yeah, but it’s nothing else but an image!

Well, my first disappointment as I remember was that I said: “Oh, New Zealand clean and green country, they probably have fantastic public transport” And I flew to Wellington and I wanted to take the train on same day to [the city where we live], and I was told that they only have one train a day. ... And it always annoys me that I can’t board a train on Saturday morning and be at the ski fields one and a half hours later, and board that train and be back in [city where we live] at night, because the tracks are just so that you can’t.

In addition, as one participant pointed out, many participants realised that when one is living in New Zealand and has to work, one does not necessarily have the time, money, or energy to enjoy and use the beautiful scenery New Zealand has got:

... lots of people would say, “What New Zealand, you live there? That must be fantastic.” That’s always in the same vein, like: “Oh you lie around the whole time in the sun and have fun?” But it’s not like that at all. When you’ve got to earn money, then for a start you’re eight or nine, ten hours out and about. And when you do physical labour, it’s a question of whether on the weekend you feel like going tramping, even when you’re surrounded by mountains. All incredibly appealing there, but you’re just simply not up to it. (110)
Many participants were disappointed to find that things such as the social system, the economy, and the crime rate had changed for the worse over the years in which they were thinking about migrating to New Zealand:

*The country: beautiful nature - that much I knew. But I’d always read about New Zealand as this economic wonderland and so on. What they’d reformed: the whole social security system in those days, no water rates - but that’s still the ways it is to some extent ... and free local calls and that sort of thing and everything. And how it was in those days - that you could always leave your door unlocked and so on. And that’s what I had in my head before I moved [to New Zealand]. Then I got [to New Zealand] and the first thing that I read, the first newspaper: a doctor murdered somehow in Foxton. This gang had attacked him and killed his receptionist and then the doctor himself. And then in Wellington that there was so much crime and also in Auckland so much crime. And the neighbours told us: “Yeah 10 years ago you didn’t have to even lock your doors, you could leave it wide open and everything, but that time is long gone!” (111)*

Some participants were disappointed to find that New Zealand was in many areas so far behind Europe. Indeed, several participants found that New Zealand was like the former East Germany (GDR), because New Zealand was so much behind, many things were not available, and personal networks were more important than abilities:

Probably didn’t realise how far behind [New Zealanders] are to developed countries in Europe. Because when I was [in New Zealand during a holiday], you know, you don’t see factories from the inside. So after 6 months working here sort of opened my eyes and I couldn’t believe it: they are 20 years behind. I mean they got a handful of companies doing high-tech stuff, but, in general, the industry – if there is a industry – it’s really, really, really, really old.

(*Petra: New Zealand was like East Germany?) Yes, in East Germany where what you want you can’t get and you had to take what is available, you know.*

... some things reminded me quite a bit of the GDR (*Petra: Yeah? What for example?) This who you know thing. *[In Germany] I didn’t know a soul. I mean [in the city in Germany where I live now], I went and applied and got a job based on what I had achieved there. But in New Zealand it was more like its not what you know that’s important, but who you know and only through them can you get somewhere.” (112)*

Several participants were disappointed to find that there was much more racism than they had expected and that, although New Zealand is promoted as multi-cultural, in reality multiculturalism is not embraced by the society:

*There is much more racism than I thought. This is another quite important point for me. They are much more racist than I ever thought. Particular Pommies. Sort of quite shocked of how racist those Poms are against Maoris in particular.*

*What is the problem with the race relations? The problem is that - my understanding - is that, first of all, we go through a lot of motions in terms of political correctness to make race relationships appear better than they are. But if you talk to your average Kiwi, they don’t seem to be embracing that sort of thing, you know, a lot of it.*

*I mean I do get annoyed with all this political correctness thing. That is just something that annoys me. Especially it annoys me this thing that I am called a Pakeha, that everybody who is not a Maori is Pakeha. Especially since I’m think it actually means ‘potato nose’. ... And, you know, as I said I merely came here, because I wanted to live in a multi-cultural society and putting everybody who is not Maori into one thing and call them all Pakeha is just not good.*

Some participants were discontented with the architecture and poor quality of houses. Taken together, the disappointments led to doubts in some participants about whether it was right to come:
And I do remember coming here thinking: ‘Oh my god, this is really quite provincial. This is terrible! What have I done?’ But really it was just the first day that I thought: This is a mistake!’

In some participants, the disappointment and doubts contributed in crucial ways to their return. This link will become clearer in Chapter Seven.

The degree of disappointment depended on the kind of expectations the participants held before they migrated. Those participants who migrated with more inflated expectations were more disappointed during the establishment phase and experienced more difficulties. This link is well reflected in the account of two participants:

I had just the normal German image sort of the paradise and clean and green. And I still remember how we were terribly - it actually took the first few years to get over the disappointment.

I was slightly disappointed about just about everything, because I had a totally over-inflated image – it was, you know, this is like a real paradise. No country on the planet would have been able to live up to that.

In contrast, those participants who migrated with more realistic expectations or non-expectations were less disappointed and experienced less difficulties. In particular, those participants who expected that many things would be different in New Zealand society, although it looks very similar at first glance, handled the emerging disappointments better. The participants’ expectation that New Zealand society is similar to the German society led to more difficulties as the participants became aware of the subtle, but decisive differences between German and New Zealand culture.

Participants tried to get over the disappointments by believing that if one lives long enough in New Zealand one will get over them, trying to understand why things are the way they are by finding out more about the concerning issue (empathy), believing that it would be smart for career to stay for some years:

(Petra: How did you get over the disappointment?) I think there were two parts to it. Part one was that I realised looking back that some of the things that I was expecting [in New Zealand] were completely unrealistic. And that probably if I lived here long enough I would get over it. I think that there was also the thing in the [other country where we had lived before] and where we were right from the start terribly, terribly disappointed, but that after a while you get used to it. The experience was that you get used to it and from then on it is okay. And part of it is that in a job like mine, it is not a good thing to come to a place and then go away after two years. You know, you basically you lose a lot of momentum that way. So partially the smart thing to do was to just stay put. Even if we hated it, I think it would have been a smart thing to stay, at least for four years or whatever, two years, until you sort of could accomplish something here and do a little bit of track record. I thing there was limited choice from that perspective to go.

After staying in New Zealand for several years, the things which had disappointed this participant were outweighed by the things he appreciates in New Zealand. He even decided to stay when a job opportunity arose in another country.

Other strategies to remedy disappointments included avoiding contact with things one doesn’t like; reminding oneself of positive things New Zealand offers, appreciating and focusing on them; and being together with other German immigrants and/or immigrants once in a while to moan to let off steam and to discuss their experiences (see Social Support):

Well, for instance, one thing that disappoints me here tremendously is the architecture. Walking through [the city in which I live] especially on the Sunday depresses me, because I think it looks boring and ugly. And so the way to cope with it is to make sure you don’t walk through [the city] on a Sunday afternoon.
Yes, trying to see the positive things as well. You do need to remind yourself or I need to remind myself every once in a while. And again, if you drive on a late Sunday afternoon coming back from a trip and you see the soft golden light on all these hills - it looks really, really good.

Strategies to counteract inflated expectations in the first place we already discussed in the previous chapter. In general, for many participants the disappointments faded over time.

With regards to social conditions, New Zealand heavily promoting the green and clean paradise image, and good race relations contribute to high levels of disappointments, because it promotes inflated expectations. The deterioration of the economy and the social system, as well as the increase of criminality also led to higher disappointments. To remain attractive for immigrants, New Zealand needs to ensure a healthy economy, a good social system, and a low crime rate.

Language Issues
Language issues were the central barriers for a stressfree establishment, because insufficient language skills impeded all other areas of life. The level of English skills the participants had at arrival varied greatly from not sufficient to excellent depending whether they have had English at school and the amount of previous travelling, studying, working, and living abroad (Expanding Horizons). Although most participants could speak at least some English when they came, many experienced difficulties with understanding the New Zealand slang in the beginning, because the slang is so different to the English they were taught in Germany. In addition, English courses some had taken at home proved useless, because they only taught tourist English. Further, some participants had difficulties writing English. The participants with lower skills had difficulties understanding New Zealanders and were frightened to speak. They felt awful, frustrated, and exhausted.

Low levels of English skills had a negative effect on the participants’ social life, work life, and identity. With regard to the social life, participants with insufficient English skills had difficulties understanding New Zealanders and were frightened to speak. Hence, they felt like outsiders and had difficulties building up social contacts, which amplified missing family and friends, and contributed to experiencing loneliness and isolation. Accordingly, they had difficulties establishing a social support network and it was harder to find out how things work in New Zealand. With regard to working life, low English skills hindered their finding a suitable job and maintaining a job. This link was, however, more true for intellectual jobs and less true for practical jobs. Not working contributed to financial stringency and to setting in motion the below described downward spiral. With regard to identity, participants with insufficient English skills and low inner sense of self started to doubt themselves, especially when New Zealanders treated them as stupid because of their low English skills as one participant observed with his respect to his partner:

And [the Kiwi colleagues] were of the opinion that you were stupid, when you don’t speak English and so on. And [my partner] was susceptible to that sort of thing ... And then when you try to knock them down a peg or two by saying, well you really can’t and she knows that the other one is actually more stupid, then she had a huge problem with it. (120)

Participants with lower English skills felt exhausted, awful and frustrated. For most participants who came with low English levels, it took about a year for their language to improve enough to make things easier.

Barriers to learning and improving English included not working, fear of being laughed at, fear of making mistakes, migrating as a couple, and having many German friends. On the positive side, the German accent helped to establish contacts with other Germans. For most participants who came with low English levels, it took a year for their language to improve enough to make things easier.

Individual beliefs/attitudes that helped improving English were daring to speak and not having a bad consciousness regarding making mistakes, laughing about own mistakes, not being ashamed of German
Es ging mir so mit knapp über 30, daß ich nicht Englisch sprechen wollte in [dem anderen Land wo wir vorher gelebt haben], weil ich dachte ich mache das erst wenn ich es richtig kann. Und das ist verkehrt! Du mußt dich trauen Fehler zu machen! Es ist viel besser und kein Mensch reißt dir den Kopf ab.


Und ich habe auch vorher immer gesagt, du machst dir dann Gedanken, „Hoffentlich lachen die dich nicht aus.” Aber dann habe ich mir immer vor Augen gehalten, daß hier in Deutschland ja auch Ausländer, die versuchen, deutsch zu sprechen, die lachen wir ja auch nicht aus. Wenn ein Türke oder, ist ja egal woher er kommt, wenn er irgendein Verb verdreht, dann lachen wir ja auch nicht. Und das habe ich mir immer vor Augen gehalten und habe gedacht: Mensch, wenn die das können, dann werden die dich auch schon nicht auslachen. Und das ging also ganz gut.


As the last quote indicates, the German accent also facilitated getting to know other Germans (see Culture Shock’late: Difficulties Interacting & Building Up Friendships).

Learning to speak English was mostly facilitated by working. Working gave the participants many opportunities for practising and forced them to overcome their barrier to speak, since they had to interact with colleagues and clients to keep their job. This link between work and language operated in both directions, which could set in motion a downward and an upward spiral. If the participants came with insufficient English skills, they had more difficulties finding work. Because they did not work, their English did not improve much, resulting in lower chances of finding work. Not working made their financial situation more difficult and contributed to dissatisfaction, leading to their feeling distressed and unwell. In contrast, if the participants came with sufficient English skills, they had fewer problems finding work. Because they worked, their English improved dramatically, resulting in good chances of finding more appropriate employment later on. This observed language-work link underlines the importance of arriving with sufficient English skills and/or temporarily accepting work below one’s qualifications to get into the above discussed upward spiral. However, because of the problems associated with learning English in Germany, temporarily working below one’s qualification might be more useful as the next quote by a participant who had studied at a university in Germany shows:


Working in jobs in their qualifications improved their financial situation and made them satisfied, leading to their feeling well.

Other strategies that supported learning English were flatting with New Zealanders, reading and listening a lot, figuring out the lyrics of rock songs, watching children’s TV programmes, reading children’s books, paraphrasing unknown words, not trying to understand every word, asking people to correct, making friends and talking much with sympathetic New Zealanders who were patient and corrected mistakes, and looking up some of the terminology specific for own’s profession before starting to work:

Und habe Englisch via Kinderfernsehen gelernt. Kinderprogramme sind optimal, um eine Sprache zu lernen. Du weißt genau was die sagen, es sind kurze Sätze, es wird präzise gesprochen – also in guten Kindersendungen wird wirklich gut ausgesprochen und artikuliert – vom Inhalt her verstehst du es sowieso, und dann kannst du auf die Worte achten. Das hat mir viel geholfen, auch wenn [mein Mann] immer ausgelacht hat.

Ich bin also Künstler im Umschreiben geworden: A thing for a thing, you know what I mean! Something like that. Also Umschreiben kann ich nach wie vor hervorragend!

Schon die Sprache, daß eben dort völlig anders gesprochen wird und so. Und ich bin da mit hingegangen, ich habe einfach das gehört, was ich hören will und den Rest habe ich außen vor gelassen, weil ich habe nicht versucht, jedes Wort zu verstehen, was die mir gesagt haben. Und [meine Frau] hat krampfhaft versucht, auf jedes Wort zu hören: Ja, und ich habe ihr immer wieder gesagt: „Versuch einfach, den Zusammenhang raus zu erkennen, über was die erzählen und nimm das, was du hörst und laß den Rest außen vor.“

The learning was greatly facilitated by New Zealanders who took time to converse and correct German immigrants, did not laugh when they made mistakes, and gave them private lessons:

Also er ist Engländer und sagt: „Du kannst 100% mehr Englisch als ich Deutsch kann. Also: mach einfach, mich interessieren deine Fehler nicht. Wenn du willst berichte ich dich.“ Wir haben dann immer Kaffee getrunken und uns über Gott und die Welt unterhalten. Und er hat mir dann geholfen Begriffe, Worte die ich umschrieben habe: „Okey, das heisst so und so.“ Und dann lernt man das eben auch.

Wir haben uns nur auf Englisch unterhalten, weil das alles Kiwi-Frauen hauptsächlich waren. Und die haben mir dann auch einfach weitergeholfen in dem sie mir den Raum gegeben haben beim sprechen, den ich eben brauchte, und die Zeit. Also nicht schnell, schnell, und: Oh Gott, die kann ja kein Englisch. Im Gegenteil. Also die waren immer alle sehr hilfsbereit. Die wussten halt wie mein Englisch ist und das war in Ordnung – das ist akzeptiert worden.
Practical Issues
Especially those couples who had migrated to New Zealand in the 1980’s told me that the range of goods was very limited and that they could not buy material and tools, familiar German food (e.g. bread, sausages, beer), decent clothes and furniture, and German newspapers. As already discussed under disappointments, because the participants were used to a wide range of goods and to being able to buy anything they wanted in Germany, they felt disappointed and frustrated, and longed for many things. Further, this limited choice made them feel isolated in New Zealand. The degree to which this obstacle was an issue depended on whether they were fashion-conscious and whether they lived in rural as opposed to urban areas. However, during the last years, amazing changes have occurred in this respect within New Zealand. Now the range of goods is much wider and they can buy many specific German things, such as bread, sausages, and newspapers. This change in New Zealand society suggests that for future immigrants, this practical issue will be less pronounced.

Another practical issue, which still holds today and which especially happens in the beginning, was that the participants had trouble finding certain things in supermarkets and other shops:

Yeah, I like to do some renovation on the house in Germany. Okay, you know the places. There is something like the ‘Bauhaus’ or whatever – you know the places to go to. You got an idea what to do, what to buy, and where to get it from. Well, it’s totally different [in New Zealand]. You don’t even know – the first six months, eight months - I wanted to do things, I couldn’t even find out where to buy it, because they don’t have sort of the same sort of shops here, you know. The shops are different. So you sort of have to find out, but it takes you quite a while to get a grip onto that, you know.

Not finding things they needed was very frustrating for the participants and it took them quite a while to find out where to get things. Making friends with other German immigrants and/or New Zealanders, who they could ask, was a very useful strategy that helped dealing with this obstacle. Other German immigrants passing on their knowledge and experience where to get things, what things to get (e.g. what can be used as substitutes for specific baking ingredients or building materials), or how to do certain things yourself (e.g. baking recipes adjusted to New Zealand ingredients, bread recipes, brewing beer) was of great assistance.

Visa & Permit Application Issues
The participants who applied within New Zealand for a work and/or permanent residency visas/permits experienced several obstacles in addition to those who were experienced by those participants who applied offshore in Germany. This obstacles influenced the migration process in crucial ways for, contrary to those ones who had applied within Germany, the participants were already in New Zealand and could not work without a work or permanent residence permit.

The gaining of visas/permits was complicated by the NZQA, the professional bodies, and NZIS. The NZQA and professional bodies emerged as biggest obstacle, because they unjustifiably devalued German qualifications in substantial ways or did not recognize them. The professions of four participants were not recognised by the NZQA or the professional bodies (i.e. vet, master trader, nurse, and lawyer). In order to gain their recognition, without which they are not allowed to work in their profession, the participants, who at this time had already worked for many years practically and in an often specialised manner, needed to take specific papers at the university and/or to sit a theoretical overall examination for which they charge high costs. These requirements made the participants disappointed, frustrated, and angry. Three of the participants did not study and/or sit the exam. They refused, firstly, because they could not see the point. It did not make sense to them, since they believe that Germany has an excellent education and training system and thus, perceived their German qualifications as being of very high standard. Moreover, they had proofed that they could do the work successfully by working in the profession over many years. For these reasons, the requirements made dem feel humiliated and unfairly treated. Secondly, they were happy to have done the very demanding exam once and many years had passed since they studied the theoretical aspects of their professions. Thirdly, several participants could simply not financially afford to study instead of earning money, and to pay study and/or examination fees. Not being able to work in their profession meant that they
had to work in odd jobs, which left them not only dissatisfied and frustrated, but also added to financial stringency. Devaluing qualifications or not recognising qualifications forced participants to either stay at home or to work under their qualifications in odd jobs for much less money. This led to loneliness and homesickness, and financial stringency and to frustration (see also Low Wages & Odd Jobs). This sad state of affairs is demonstrated in the next quote by a participant who started with working below his qualifications just to get his feet into the work market and the quote in the next paragraph:

(Petra: You told me about that you wanted to have your qualifications recognised ...) ... yes, because I thought that I was worth more than I sort of experienced in this workshop. And talked to a Union guy who once visited us and I told him the facts and he said: “Ah, that shouldn’t be a problem. Just send all your qualifications to the trade’s qualification board.”, which I did. All copies I sent in and I got the whole thing back with a nice letter that I had to sit - if I want to have those papers recognised - sit those exams all again. And during that time, I think I was 45, and I said: “I gone through all the hassle, I don’t wanna sit all those exams again.” So I said: “Forget it!”

While one participant had no problems at all with getting her qualifications recognised by the NZQA and the recognition process took only a week, another participant experienced very sloppy work. She had the feeling that the NZQA delayed the process even though there is a critical shortage in the participant’s profession in New Zealand. After eight months processing time, the participant gave up. Because the participant did not have her qualification recognised, she could not work in her profession and was forced to work for much less money. As a consequence, she experienced dissatisfaction at work and the couple ran out of money. Finally, they returned, frustrated:

And so then we sent it off and waited one month and then another month, and then we rang up: “Yeah, this sort of thing takes time” And I said: “You said, send us $200 and it’ll all be done in a flash. And now the money’s there it’s all going to take a bit longer?!” . They said: “Yes, no and oh well, we’ll see. It’s already being processed; it’s on someone’s desk.” “Good”, I said. So, we waited another month and I rang up again and: “Yeah, no there’re a few problems and back and forth.” And then they said it would have to all be paid again. I said: “The $200 has already been paid”. “Ah right, so that’s already been paid?”. Then we sent them the receipt: “Yeah, ok now since we’ve got that, it’ll all go through much more quickly.” And up until the day we left the country, we didn’t hear another word from this office. ... And that would have made all the difference. I mean, when [my partner] would have earned $14-$15, and I $10 we would have managed it pretty well with that. (121)

In addition to the obstacles build up by the NZQA and professional bodies, the participants had to face other obstacles. Although it was easier to look for appropriate jobs from within New Zealand, obtaining a job offer was nevertheless very difficult for the reasons discussed in the previous chapter and reasons we will discuss under work issues. Because not all the documents the New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS) or NZQA required were on the application forms and they usually had left their documents with a person they trusted in Germany, they had to obtain documents from Germany again. Obtaining documents from Germany was not only expensive contributing to financial stringency, but also time intensive delaying the time of application. After they had everything together and handed the application in, in same cases it took the NZIS a very long time - up to a year - to process the applications in some cases, delaying the opportunity to start work even further. Furthermore, the application costs added up drastically over time. While applying within New Zealand is a little bit less expensive, the costs of the permits are nevertheless very high. In addition, new required documents had to be copied, certified, and translated. Given that some documents contained a lot of pages, additional costs could be very high. Taken together, these application obstacles contributed to financial stringency and uncertainty, and consequently to much distress and anxiety. Further, by not being allowed to work, the above outlined work-language upward spiral could not be set in motion hampering the improvement of language and pronouncing all the issues related to insufficient language.

On the positive side, the treatment by the New Zealand Immigration Service was experienced overall as positive by the participants. Indeed, we were positively surprised that the narratives of the participants did
not contain complaints about their treatment since, according to Petra’s experience, many German immigrants experienced difficulties with the way employees of the New Zealand Immigration Service treated them (e.g. unfriendly, arrogant).

Strategies to ease the visa/permit application process included preparing a folder in Germany with all important papers and documents, and giving this folder to parents; gaining a job offer via friends; and doing the requirements for recognition of professions. The family organizing and sending missing documents were vital for the application process as were support from New Zealanders and other German immigrants, potential employers going through the trouble of providing job offers, and employment agencies helping finding jobs. Support regarding finding a job provided by New Zealanders and German immigrants (see next section for details). Some participants considerably increased the distress for themselves by underestimating the duration of processing permits, the expenses involved, and the energy and time required. Thus, planning in sufficient time for the application process would greatly ease the process and counteract the negative consequences. Since all the issues we discussed in this section, could also be avoided by applying from within Germany, it would be useful to carefully assess the advantages and disadvantages of applying in Germany versus applying in New Zealand for once specific situation.

**Work Issues**

The obstacles the participants experienced with regards to work consisted mainly of:

- **Difficulties Finding an Appropriate Job**
- **Interruption of Women’s Career**
- **Low wages in Comparison to Germany & Odd Jobs**
- **Negative Work Experiences.**

**Difficulties Finding an Appropriate Job**

Many participants were confident that they would easily find a job in New Zealand because they believed that they would have a competitive edge with their high standard qualifications and work attitudes:

*I thought that New Zealanders are relaxed, and I am a lot more ambitious and hard working. I thought I would actually, because of my nature being different, I would have some advantage. I think that actually was true. I was quite successful in getting funding money here and partially that is simple things - like being a German, when there was a deadline I would put the application in by the deadline and if it said six pages, I would do it on six pages, and my stuff would be spell checked and theirs would not. Stuff like that, you know.*

*As a motor rewinder in Germany you’d probably be in a bit of a special person, in the regard that this the only trade in the electric trade, where you get an apprenticeship with knowledge and skills as an electrician, as a fitter, as a turner ... (Petra: ... just like an allrounder) Yes, because we did anything, you see. Like the electricians [in New Zealand], okay they can do the domestic stuff or maybe they can sort of do simple industrial stuff, but when it comes to sort of more complex things, quite often they don’t know how to do it.*

However, many participants had difficulties finding jobs according to their qualification. The most common barriers were insufficient language skills, long processing times by NZQA and NZIS, devalued or unrecognised qualifications, no work or residency permit, and potential employers perceiving them as overqualified and/or thinking they could not pay them enough money. The perceptions of potential employers, however, were wrong, because in the beginning most participants would have been happy to work in jobs below their qualifications and to earn less, in order to lessen financial stringency and improve their living standard, to improve their English, to get experience in the job market, or to just work:

*Es waren knapp über 30 Firmen und so. Und weit über die Hälfte davon sagten mir: “Ja, gerne, aber überqualifiziert und können wir nicht bezahlen und so.” Und ich habe denen dann versucht zu verstehen zu*
geben das ich eigentlich nicht mit einer Riesenbezahlung rechne sondern einfach nur das verdienen möchte, das es mir erlaubt, da zu bleiben in Neuseeland und ein einigermaßen gute Auskommen zu haben. Aber immer wieder, nein, überqualifiziert und so.

I remember was that I applied for some sort of bathroom appliance shop who were looking for, not an interior decorator, but somebody who helps people plan bathrooms. And I thought 'sounds interesting, I’ll do it. And they just looked at it and sent back and said: "Yes, thank you for your application, but you are very much over qualified for the job. And we were looking for, you know, some sort of high school graduate." And I thought: Well ok, if you don 't want me. ‘ It’s just, they probably thought, what was my starting salary at that time I think it was $27,000.00 as a teacher and they probably thought that’s what I would have earned. Of course, I hadn’t earned anything. I would have been happy to work for $15,000.00 or so, you know, quite happy! I mean I just wanted a job ...

Not finding a suitable job was compounded by the fact that the participants generally did not get any feedback or reply from the companies to whom they applied and thus, did not know why they did not get employed. This made it difficult to improve their job applications or to change their job searching strategies. Further, many companies awoke false hopes in participants by saying that they had good chances of employment. This issue seems to be, however, a misunderstanding in communications, because of differences between Germans and New Zealanders in social interactions (i.e. directness vs. indirectness).

Some participants called on the service provided by the employment agencies and the temping agencies to find jobs. However, they experienced the services provided as pathetic and ridiculous:

I can’t remember which [tempting agency], there are many of them, of course. But, you know, I was confronted with a 23 year old girl and she asked you questions. And after about 15 minutes I told her: „I’m not interested. “, because it was just absolutely ridiculous, you know. ... I mean you have a kid sitting there. She got no idea about anything and she wants to make a big fuss out of it asking questions she never ever would understand the answers. She got no chance of really assessing your skills or something like this.

One participant asked the regional business development officer for assistance in finding a job. At first, the officer presented the job opportunities very positively, but then could not find work for them and placed them in inappropriate jobs (e.g. placed nurse as a packer in supermarket). The participants concluded that the officer was only interested in making his work look good, but not in really helping them. As a consequence of the poor services provided by these institutions, the participants had to find their own way in an unknown job environment, could not work in their professions, and/or had to work below their qualifications or had difficulties finding a job. As a result, they had difficulties gaining a work permit or permanent residence, experienced financial stringency, stayed longer at insufficient English levels, and were frustrated and depressed. These factors contributed to their decision to their return to Germany.

Useful strategies to gain employment were asking other German immigrants for assistance, advertising; stuying job offers in news papers; registering with employment service; seeking assistance from tempting agencies and regional development officers; applying left, right and centre; borrowing book from library regarding job applications in New Zealand; getting relevant companies out of phone book, visiting companies in person and leaving CV with them; taking work samples to companies (e.g. plans, photos of work); accepting temporary work to get feet in the door; and/or offering to help out potential employers in busy times (e.g. on Christmas, Eastern) and/or substituting when permanent staff were on holiday:

Basically I opened the newspaper and if it had anything that I thought might be vaguely interesting, I applied.

Well, I drove around and visited people and gave them my CV and told them: “If you have a job, let me know!”... I didn’t ask how much they would pay, I just gave them CV and thought I still can ask how much they pay later on. ... I think I gave about 30 CV’s away in that time. ... And then eventually, my boss rang me and that was just before Christmas, and he needed someone for Christmas, because it was a busy time – he
had two people off – and he said: „Hey listen, I need someone here, but only for a couple of weeks. Would you like to come to just give us a hand?“ And I said: „Yes, of course, I’d like to. “ And that was – I had that in mind anyway – that was the company where I thought, Yes, that would be good to work for. „, because they did exactly what I wanted to do. And he offered me a reasonable wage, but on and off – like a casual worker sort of wage, was quite good actually. And I could make as many hours as I wanted. And I worked 3 weeks, 4 weeks and he let me off for a week, and rang me again and said: „You know, we need you again. Would you like to come?“ Worked quite well actually. And ... He then, all of a sudden - they had an electrician and he left – and he offered me a permanent job.

Also ich hatte meine Pläne, was ich bis dahin gezeichnet hatte, mit dabei das ich was zum vorlegen hatte. Und mein Handwerkszeug hatte ich auch mit dabei. Das hatte ich mitgenommen. Und hab dann einfach irgendwann einmal die Architekturbüros in [der Stadt wo wir in New Zealand gelebt haben] abgeklappert.

Ich bin dann halt in diesen Floristik-Laden rein, das war dann zwei Tage vor Valentinstag, weil halt dieser Laden, der war einfach schön und das ist einfach nett. Und habe die dann zwei Tage vor Valentins gefragt in meinem gebrochenen Englisch ob sie denn nicht eine Floristin aus Deutschland, ob sie nicht eine Hand bräuchten. Und die müssten wohl gedacht haben: Das kann ja nicht wahr sein, die schickt der Himmel! - so ungefähr. Haben sie wirklich gesagt nächsten Tag kann ich helfen. ... Ja, weil ich habe ja gedacht, dich so einzustellen als Floristin, ohne daß du Englisch sprichst und ohne daß sie dich kennen, ist ein bißchen schwierig. Aber ich habe gedacht zu so einem Piktag, wo sie dann halt viel zu tun haben, ist die Chance vielleicht eher, daß sie dich einstellen, als jemanden einfach zur Aushilfe brauchen. Und Valentinstag ist dort noch sehr, sehr groß, weil er ja noch nicht so gut Englisch spreche. Und da habe ich gesagt: „Das ist egal, das brauchst du auch nicht, solange du hier mit den Händen Blumenstrüssee binden kannst“ ... Und dann waren sie natürlich wahrscheinlich waren sie auch deswegen so offen, weil ich halt gesagt habe das ich aus dem elterlichen Betrieb kam und ich natürlich auch Fotos dabei hatte und so. Also deswegen waren sie also sehr wißbegierig, da mehr darüber zu erfahren. Na ja, da bin ich dahin und habe dort mit geholfen und das klappte also alles ganz, ganz toll. Und daraus ist dann halt wirklich ... Erst habe ich dann angefangen, nur montags zu arbeiten, dann so zwei Tage, drei Tage und dann halt immer mehr, bis es dann halt Vollzeit war.


Some participants, who had difficulties finding a job, became creative and tried everything to make money, even if this meant working in odd jobs (see Low wages in Comparison to Germany & Odd Jobs). If these strategies were not successful or if they anyway wanted to be their own boss, they creating their own job by founding own company.

Gaining an appropriate job was greatly facilitated when other German immigrants and/or New Zealanders assisted them by showing how to write CV’s in New Zealand, using their own connections to locate jobs, writing advertisements, selecting appropriate newspapers for advertising, driving them to job interviews, translating in job interviews, managing and negotiating job contracts, giving a job in their own business, and writing job offers for permit applications:

Ich hatte mittlerweile knapp über 30 Bewerbungen vorbereitet und hatte dieses Anschreiben, weil in Neuseeland schreibt man den Lebenslauf wie ein Buch, so hatte [mir der Geschäftsentwicklungsmanager] mir erzählt, nicht wie bei uns hier, kurz in Stichpunkten, sondern man stellt sich vor und schreibt, daß man so und so viele Jahre verheiratet ist und wenn es geht, noch glücklich verheiratet ist und ein Kind hat und man erzählt, daß man mit dem Kind, von mir aus am Wochenende noch unternimmt oder so. Und so hatte er das Anschreiben gestaltet und dann bin ich rumgefahren.
One of those [answers to my job ads] was from a German. He said he can't give me any job, but in case I would go to [his town] he would help me to find or manage certain things. And that what he actually did. So I came down and that chap said that his daughters were away for a week and so I could use their room as sort of accommodation. He managed everything including contacts with the would-be employers and that way I was really blessed, because my English was not good enough to work out all the deals or conditions.

**Interruption of Women’s Career**

While the migration, in general, did not affect the men’s careers, the careers of women were often interrupted. Usually the participant couples agreed that the women would stay at home to ease the transition for the children, to search for a house and, once they had found one, to decorate the house, to find out how things work (e.g. school system, insurance system) and to organise these things. In other cases, the women could not work or continue studying, because they were pregnant, they were not allowed to work, or they had to go through the long process of recognition or registration of their qualifications by the NZQA or professional bodies respectively, and/or their English was insufficient. However, not working in the beginning led to several women feeling frustrated and lonely, and increased their missing family and friends, and financial stringency as we have argued above.

Beliefs/attitude that helped women in these situations were that they did not wanted to work in their professions anyway anymore and that they were confident that they would find something useful to do. Strategies women used to deal with this situation included taking papers the professional bodies asked them to do, retraining to get new qualifications, having a baby, and doing something which occupied them in useful ways.

The discussed factors often worked in interconnection as the following two quotes demonstrate:

*Im Prinzip hat [mein Mann] mir dann die Entscheidung überlassen, weil ich halt gerade mit dem Studium angefangen hatte. ... Und dann habe ich halt gesagt: ‘Ja, gut jetzt haben wir die Chance. Es sieht so aus als ob wir wirklich die Chance haben auszuwandern. ’...' Da habe ich gesagt: ‘Uff, ich brauche überhaupt nicht an die Uni gehen. Ich brauche das gar nicht zu versuchen, weiter zu studieren. Ich verstehe ja die normalen Leute um mich rum schon nicht.’ Von daher war ich zu Hause erstmal. ... und wie gesagt, dann bin ich relativ bald doch auch schwanger geworden. Und dadurch das es mir in der Schwangerschaft nicht so toll ging war dann so dieser Gedanke, diese Zielvorstellung fertig zu studieren, ad acta gelegt. Der war noch nicht mal auf Eis, sondern der war einfach ad acta. Das war gegessen, weil dann war Kind angesagt und ich wollte halt kein Kind haben was von anderen Menschen gross gezogen wird, sondern das wollte ich schon selber machen. Und das ist auch eine Grundeinstellung, die man entweder so hat oder man hat eine andere.*

*I mean in Germany I worked as a lawyer and I thought already that it would be not easy for me to find a job in that area, because I thought law is very much language and I mean I didn't have the, or myself, how I see myself and my ability to express myself in English, and this finesse of as you would have as a mother tongue speaker. I was sceptical whether I would feel really confident or whether that would, yeah. And then the other things is that it's a different law system. ... I didn't clearly know what would happen careers wise for me. ... Well, I haven't really worried about it. ... Maybe when I was here in New Zealand and I found hard to find some job, I kind of thought: ‘Oh, probably had my share of luck already used in Germany, where I had found that job and worked out all well’, you know. But then, I mean when you are [in New Zealand] it takes some time orientate yourself and yeah, what would you like to do then? I'm not sure. I mean I could have probably tried harder to find some work in that area, somehow related. I mean it's not like you can not find work with an overseas qualification. And at the beginning, I mean, I tried to get the permission. I went to University for two courses and went through the whole procedure of legal education going towards my qualification. The logical step was getting recognition of my qualification from Germany here New Zealand, but deep down I wasn't too keen on working that area anymore. When I've worked in Germany in the area of law, it's, you sit in front of five cases and you work through them and there*
is a certain thrill if you find an argument that's really good, you know. And there is also a thrill if you find the opposite side can actually see this from a totally different point and then still it's, you know, logically structured, but I also found it sometimes rather hard work and trying to find elegant formulation, you know. And then I wasn't too concerned. I wasn't going to pursue it further. ... 

The last women had decided together with her husband that they wanted to use the career break as result of the migration to have a child. Thus, she was pregnant when they migrated and their child was born in New Zealand. Because of the above issues regarding the profession she had worked in in Germany, she decided to start a new career in a different profession after having had the child. Working in this new profession fulfils her and makes her happy.

**Low wages in Comparison to Germany & Odd Jobs**

Many participants were surprised and shocked at the low wages offered in New Zealand in comparison to Germany:

... the wages are shockingly low. We never thought about that. I mean I was getting a really good wage for New Zealand sort of – the average here is, in my trade, is about just under 17 dollars, you know. I get far more than that. But I mean still, this is not – if you are on one income – it’s still not that much, because we were used to having lots of money.

The low wages contributed to financial stringency and led to the issues stemming from financial stringency. For instance, for one participant couple, the men getting a job with a much lower wage than he had earned in Germany was the only time when they thought of going back, because they could not perceive how they would be able to survive on this low income:

[My partner] told me that [his employer] had offered him $18.00, $19.00, something like that. And I said: “No, terrible. How are we supposed to manage?” ... I couldn't see: how can you live on that?

However, in general, the participants accepted the low wages, because they did not know the wage structure, they needed the money to survive, and/or they needed the job to be able to apply for permanent residence. The men especially felt under pressure to accept low wages, because they felt pressure to support their families. For one participant couple, getting a job with a low wage was the only time when they thought of going back.

Beliefs/attitudes which the participants used to cope with the low wages and the financial stringency included expecting it, making favourable comparisons to Germany (e.g. earn less, but houses are much cheaper than in Germany), perceiving it as a challenge (e.g. it is possible to survive on it), making favourable comparisons to New Zealanders (e.g. New Zealanders have to cope on much less), seeing it as being only temporary, and trusting that they will earn more after they have worked in New Zealand for some time. Being confident in one’s self, and one’s training and skills helps to negotiate better wages as the example of one participant shows. He refused to work for low wages and was able to negotiate a higher hourly pay:

I said: “No! I’m not going out of bed for that money!” (Petra: Why?) Well, not after being in that trade for 25 years and being a really good tradesman - I regard myself as a good tradesman. So I know what I can deliver for the money and I’m not giving my skills away that cheap.

Several participants had to work in odd jobs, which was in strong contrast to the high skill and responsibility jobs they had worked in in Germany (e.g. nurse working as packer in supermarket, administrator delivering flowers). Other odd jobs the participants did included gardener, laundry worker, actor, and sandwich maker. Doing as often high qualified persons odd jobs, which are much less demanding, pay less, and have low status attached to them, could result in great frustration, dissatisfaction, and doubts about one’s self-worth particularly in participants with a lower inner sense of self. Participants with a stronger inner sense of self
and participants who prepared themselves by expecting that they might have to work in odd jobs in the beginning dealt better with it:

Bereit sein alles mögliche zu machen - Das mußt du in Neuseeland auf jeden Fall! Also das, denke ich mal, das ist also ganz, ganz wichtig. Wir haben auch damals mal gesagt: „Wenn es ganz eng wird, dann gehst du halt zu McDonalds und Buletten wenden. Also wenn alle Stricke reißen, kannst du das auch machen.“ Mit der Einstellung sind wir schon hingefahren. Ich denke das ist ganz, ganz wichtig. Du darfst dich also nicht ... du fällst ja nicht irgendwie ins Paradies. Du mußt dich schon darauf einstellen, daß du arbeiten mußt und auch bereit sein, was anderes zu machen. [Mein Mann] hat ja auch mal Gartenarbeit gemacht.

Likewise, participants who had worked in odd jobs before, for example during their student times and/or travels, coped better too. Perceiving working in odd jobs as only a temporary situation – as a stepping stone one needs to do only until something new and better comes along; being used to hard work; seeing promotion perspectives of the job; perceiving it as just a job which brings in money, improves English and provides opportunities for meeting people; cleaning is something one does at home too without getting paid; and one does not need to do it at all costs – if it gets too bad one can go were other beliefs/attitudes that made it easier to work in odd jobs. All these attitudes and strategies are nicely evident in the quote of one participant who had studied in Germany architecture:


Vielleicht muß man das sehen, daß es nur vorübergehend ist. Vielleicht das es einfach nur eine Notlösung ist. Das muß ja nicht bis an dein Lebensende sein - bis es halt wieder was Neues gibt. (Petra: Das man das nur als einen Stepping Stone sieht. Das man sagt: Okey für den Moment ...) Genau. Genau. Einfach um mal ... Genauso mit dem Blumen ausliefern. Ich meine, das füllt dich ja auch nicht aus. Das ist ja auch eigentlich was, was auch nur für den Übergang. Und dann hat [mein Mann] sicherlich auch mal die Schnauze voll gehabt und gesagt: „Jetzt will ich aber nicht mehr.“ Aber wie gesagt, eins kommt zum anderen und zum Schluß hat er sogar eine eigene Firma gehabt ...
and strategies for counteracting financial stringency we discussed under Drop in Living Standard & Financial Stringency and Disappointments also assist dealing with low wages and odd jobs.

**Negative Work Experiences**
While most participants had positive experiences at work, several participants had negative work experiences:

The job was an absolutely nightmare, because the boss was an always-right-person you were always wrong. Everybody was stealing off him. And you were always wrong, you always made mistakes. Pressure workwise was very hard. He never really explained things. Others in the workshop, who spoke his language, they had difficulties understanding what he really wanted too. So I was under quite a bit of pressure ... Unfortunately this company was the only black spot in our adventure here.

Several participants were treated as stupid by their colleagues because of low language skills and/or experienced sabotaging of their work, sexual harassment, snide remarks, being passed over for promotion, and rejection of suggestions regarding improvements at work:

And yeah, then [my colleagues] started to make snide remarks and so on. A few times I really told them what I thought and was then perhaps not at all that popular, because they put up a barrier. And so that started then with - you had to stick these narrow little pipes into this casing, like these air-conditioners look like, you know with all those tiny tubes. And then you had to screw them and adjust how far you push the tube in there. And if it’s incorrectly adjusted, it squeezes the whole thing to pieces. And as soon as I turned around, someone always turned this screw and every time I stuffed up two or three of these things. And then came the foreman along and screams at me along the lines of I should pull myself together and whether do I know what I’m doing and that sort of thing. And then, I’d explain to him really calmly that I had adjusted it correctly, but that one of the other workers was of the opinion that it had to be changed and so on. And then, one time it came back that I, pretty much literally, me the stupid foreigner shouldn’t make such a fuss and so on and so forth. (122)

And then things happened there at [the place where my partner worked]. The boss’s son, he started to put [my partner] under a bit of pressure, so like sexual harassment or that sort of thing. And when she said: “Hey listen, I’ll talk to my husband and then tonight you could have a bit of conversation.”, he started and tried to tell her that apparently she had taken stuff home with her. So like he was insinuating theft and that sort of story. (123)

Some companies exploited the participants by making them work extensive hours, and by requiring them to do work according to their qualifications, but paying them for positions under their qualifications:

And like I already said, she was employed as caregiver. And she got like $9, $9.50 or $10, I can’t remember exactly, but fundamentally she had to do much of the work of a nurse. (124)

Some employers made serious unjust allegations of stealing, bad craftsmanship, client complaints, and simulating sickness:

And once, after he accused me twice a day of stealing – unjust! I ended up a week in the hospital for a heart check-up.

The struggle at work was amplified for some participants by differences work values, morale, and quality (e.g., aiming at highest quality; being precise, conscientious, hard working, punctual, and sufficient; knowing boundaries and asking questions, maintaining highly professional relationships with customers),

And I also thought that there was a big difference with work ethics. We really work to achieve something, and here in New Zealand a lot of people seem only to work to maintain
the basics. They really don’t care that much to achieve anything.

The difference is maybe in the style of work and the style of how they do work. As I said, they’re not really tidy. New Zealanders are rather sort of rough, well untidy sort of people. There’s not much pride in craftsmanship really, not as much as there is in Germany. ... I can’t stand if something’s untidy - I can’t stand it. It just makes me nervous. Whatever I do, I do right or I don’t do it. If I see a problem, I know I can’t do it, then I give it away and say “No.” But then I know the place: okay these guys can do it, they’ve got the machine and skills, and I take it to them. It’s like, you know, no-one can do anything. This is impossible! It’s also important that you know your boundaries as you know yourself – what you can do and what you can’t. And Kiwis quite often, they don’t see that. They don’t even see it as a problem. They’re not capable picking up a particular sort of situation, where they should keep their hands away.

It’s a professional relationship. I don’t sort of say to [customers]: “I don’t like you” or what ever. I I serve everyone the same and if I can’t make it I ring them. [The customers] know I’m a German and that German’s are different to Kiwis. I’ve been told that many, many times. They were quite surprise that I rang and tell them that I’m not coming, because I can’t make it or something, because they’re not used to that someone tells them, you know. It’s quite seldom that people do that sort of thing. But they like it.

and in how things were done in their professions:

Getting used to certain things, like for instance, at work I had to do a lot with imperial inch measurements. I never had anything to do with it. Some people can handle imperial inch with its funny measurement easier, some don’t. (Petra: What has work pressure to do with imperial inch?) The customers come an talk with me in foot. They tell you, lets say. “Oh, make a seven sixteen.” “Oh, what’s seven sixteen?” Then I say: “Oh, foot – 30 centimetres approximately.” You have to sort of think what dimension it might be in millimetres, because you still think in millimetres. You can't just say: “Oh, that's it.” You have to sort of convert the measurement to millimetre than you can understand especially in the beginning. After a while, someone says half an inch - I know exactly its approximately 12 millimeters. It takes a while.

And [in New Zealand] is also, I think, a lot more unspoken. ... In Germany, you would have if you are supposed to do something or if you are not supposed to do something - it is all written down. Whereas [in New Zealand], there is a lot of stuff that is not written down, which is just as binding, but you sort of have to figure it out, or somebody has to tell you.

However, colleagues and/or employers were usually not aware of differences in how things are done, or assumed that Germans would know these differences and would not need assistance:

Oh gosh the first years, man the school system is so different [in New Zealand] and I had a such a moronic supervising teacher, you know. He was good in that he let me run, but he did not give me any help, you know. And I really needed somebody to say: “Well here in New Zealand this and this, and this is done like this.”, you know. I mean [New Zealanders] have a national examination system, which we don’t have in Germany. All is internally assessed. I didn’t know that until the national exams came around and then I was most surprised. ... At that time it stressed me quite a lot...

These pressures at work led to frustration and distress, and resulted in serious health problems, including depression, back problems, and, for one participant, a heart attack. Some participants stood up and quit the job. However, most struggled through it and were afraid of asking for help, because they needed the money, were grateful to be given the chance, did not want to bother other people, and thought they should be able to manage:

The thing was, I realised after a very short while that it was quite different, but because the supervising teacher never told me “Well if you’ve questions, ask me,” I never got the idea that I could ask him. ... I reckon I must have been quite insecure, you know, and didn’t want to bother him. Or maybe I felt - can’t really remember - but maybe I felt I should know, you know, or I should be able to do it all by myself, you
know, like a little toddler: Me, me! I do it all by myself! I would never do this now. I’m not afraid to ask if it don’t know.

And I wasn’t ever afraid to ask, but maybe I just felt so grateful to be given a chance that I didn’t want to bother anybody or so.

These negative work experiences contributed to the return of some participant couples.

Strategies and attitudes which helped the participants through the difficult times at work included being used to hard work and doing odd jobs; perceiving that work as just a job which brings money in, improves their level of English, and provides opportunities for meeting people; figuring the problem out and making sure that it does not happen again; perceiving it as a useful experience (e.g. steep learning curve, you live and learn); and perceiving the difficulties as only temporary. New Zealanders respecting and accepting German colleagues, becoming aware that their might be differences, offering assistance, and being empathetic and compassionate would greatly reduce distress.

**Discontentment with Some Characteristics of New Zealanders**

Although the participants held in high regard the fact that New Zealanders are very friendly, relaxed, and ready to help, some participants realised that the longer they lived in New Zealand – the more they lived a normal life and obtained deeper and deeper insights into what normal life in New Zealand is like – the more they became discontented with some characteristics of New Zealanders and New Zealand society, which were not obvious to them at first sight. They acknowledged that their statements regarding things they did not like in New Zealand are generalisations. They believe that New Zealanders are neither better nor worse than other people; that they have simply some specific characteristics, which clashed with the participants liking.

Firstly, they perceived that New Zealanders have, in general, an island mentality that leads to feelings of inferiority and identification problems, which, in turn, leads to ignorance and arrogance. As result, many New Zealanders believe New Zealand is the centre of the world and overemphasise their importance; are provincial and not alive; narrow-minded and disinterested in people from other countries. Many participants did not like these characteristics:

Well, you can of course, they’re not bad people, or they’re not people who are worth any less. You find friends everywhere, but just the way - this whole atmosphere. [In New Zealand] we said: “It’s so narrow-minded. No, not narrow-minded, that is so fuggy. It’s simply such an island mentality - not so open.” You noticed when you went to parties. You went in: the Kiwis weren’t the ones who came up to me. I was the new one, they could have said: “Hi, how’s it going and how do you like it here?” I was the one who had to go up to them and say: “Hi, I’m so and so. I’m new here and what do you do?” And then came the answers. They always responded, but do you think, someone would have been just once interested to ask: “So where do you come from? And what did you do before? And what’s it like there” They weren’t interested in that at all! (116)

But this is typical Kiwi. I would say. (Petra: What is typical Kiwi?) Eh, often ignorant but thinking very highly of themselves. (Petra: What do you mean by ignorant?) Having not much knowledge.

I found the same thing a bit too in the TV news. After a while I couldn’t watch the news any more. The news in New Zealand were a bit for me like: We are the most important ones, we’re at the centre of the world and apart from that, yeah … So first up someone let of wind here and by the way there’s a war in Bosnia. So like Bosnia came last of all. Or our great captain has got red socks on here or the sails didn’t catch the wind too well, but then five minutes later they caught the wind again. And after that the foreign politics. I said: “That can’t be the way it is, you can’t put a sporting event in the spotlight or in the first place. You’ve got to put the whole world first and set your priorities, for God’s sake”. (117)
Maybe connected to the relaxed lifestyle and attitude are other characteristic, which the participants did not like. The first one is that New Zealanders generally shy away from conflicts and do not stand up:

... for example, that they’re afraid of confrontation. They can’t stand it, when you’ve got problems. And I’m someone who likes to tell it the way it is when I got problems. I lay them out on the table, talk about them, find a solution, something where you can take a stand and then it’s settled and forgotten. But there when you touch on a problem, for example in school, it didn’t exist: “Ah come on, it’s not that bad.”, and: “No, we see that differently.” (114)

But there you don’t touch on problems – it’s taboo. You do this ‘outdoor living’ thing and everything’s great. And you do barbecues and like the Rugby went well again, but you don’t mention anything personal or conflicts or anything. (115)

Because of this not discussing and dealing with difficult issues, one participant called New Zealand a lid society. Another characteristic which some participants did not like is that New Zealanders seem not alive; they seem without enthusiasm, charm, and fun:

And by the time we arrived I had the feeling - [the city where we lived] is a university city and, you know, university cities are full of life and very a live and students are just freshing the air in the city, intellectual and cultural and what ever. So we came to [the city were we lived] and I thought – I couldn’t believe it – I was really laughing: it was so, it was so, the houses are so - how you would say? – spießig [petty bourgeois, square] and so small everything and so quiet and so, no culture life, no street cafe - nothing I expected in a city. And also the young people, people I saw on street, I had a feeling they are very tired or they are just without fun or whatever. I haven’t had the feeling they feel good here.

I was only surprised by their lack of interest. Like I just said, I reckon the antennas were retracted. Perhaps they’re even outside when they do something in their family circle. Maybe. But not on the street and not on the life on the streets. And even the students, they seem to me that they already now - there’s no more life in them, they don’t sparkle ... (113)

Further, the participants did not like that New Zealanders generally are shallow and superficial in social interactions and have a different friendship concept to Germans. Since the latter two characteristics are complex and have far reaching consequences, we will discuss them separately in the next section Culture Shock late: Differences.

Secondly, although they found the relaxed lifestyle and attitude very attractive in the beginning, they discovered that this attitude also leads to New Zealanders generally taking a long time to organise and finish something, having a low specialised knowledge, having poor craftsmanship, and providing slow and unprofessional service:

Timetable, yes. I mean just how things are done here. (Petra: ... with the speed?) Yes, that is right: shopping speed and shopkeepers. They are all so slow here and the shopkeepers don’t know what they are doing - just sales people. You can’t trust anyone here, because anybody seems to know everything or thinks to know everything if they want to sell you something, but they don’t know anything about what they are actually selling.

The discussed general characteristics of New Zealanders annoyed and frustrated many participants, because they were in a very strong contrast to their characteristics and values. For those participants several things in New Zealand’s society did not feel right, which strengthened their desire to return. In addition, some participants became aware that German immigrants who had already lived in New Zealand for many years had adopted many characteristics. As a consequence, they were concerned that they would become like New Zealanders and would live like New Zealanders if they stayed longer. Because they did not want to become and/or to live like New Zealanders in these respects, they decided to return:
I couldn’t really make head nor tail of this Kiwi-mentality. (118)

You don’t want to end up that way. When you feel that way, then you’ve got to get out of the country. (119)

Not perceiving these characteristics as an issue, not judging and accepting them, and/or not interacting much with New Zealanders were attitudes and strategies that increased the likelihood to stay.

**Culture Shock’late: Difficulties Interacting & Bulding Up Friendships**

The migration literature usually uses the term culture shock to describe the feelings people experience when they migrate to another country and experience the cultural differences. For the participants, it was more a ‘culture shock’late’, as one participant called her culture shock in New Zealand, because the differences between the German and the New Zealand culture are so subtle:

It was much more subtle culture shock, you know. A culture shock that you didn’t recognise as a culture shock - it was more a culture shock’late. ... I mean that’s a different culture shock travelling to an Asian country where culture shock just screams: “Hello, different!!!!”

One of the reasons that the participants came to New Zealand was that they perceived New Zealand as similar to the European culture. Therefore, most participants did not expect cultural differences in the way people behave and interact in New Zealand when they came. Instead, they assumed and expected that things would be rather similar to the way things are done in Germany. However, many soon felt:

... sort of a vague feeling, that something is not quite right. Like when you sing, you sing slightly off, and people look at you, but you are not exactly sure whether it is you singing slightly off or the person next to you singing slightly off. ... It is all these things that you are not in sinc with ...

Because the participants did not expect differences and the differences were very subtle, the participants did not actively search for them. Therefore, many participants found it difficult to figure out that there are differences and it took them a long time to find them out what the differences was. Accordingly, for a long time they were socially blind and behaved as they were used to behaving in Germany, which resulted in their making many social blunders with which they unintentionally offended New Zealanders:

... things that you do, because you are used to it from your own culture, but sometimes it can be incredibly rude without you being aware of the fact ...

This issue was compounded by the fact that New Zealanders are usually too polite to point out social blunders that Germans made unintentionally:

... and of course most people are very polite and they won’t say: “Hey girl, what you are doing is incredibly rude. Don’t do it!” They just politely oversee it and so you just keep on doing it until one day you cotton on to the fact that for the last five years you have offended people every day about doing this.

Commonly New Zealanders were not aware of culture differences, because they generally assume Germans to be similar to them, because they look like them and they come from a Western culture. Thus, they typically expect German immigrants to behave ‘correctly’, are not allowing of social blunders and felt offended by them, are not careful in social interactions with German immigrants, and do not try to come a bit towards Germans by trying to adjust their behaviour a bit to the German culture.

Contrary to common belief, overcoming cultural differences might be, at least in the beginning, impeded if the differences are more subtle. Several participants believe that it would have been easier to figure out cultural difference in a country that is very dissimilar:
We probably would have had a lot less difficulties in fitting into a country where we expected everything to be very different.

If they would have migrated to countries with very different cultures, such as Japan or India, the participants would have expected differences and thus would have searched for them and more actively tried to figure them out, whereas in New Zealand they did not expect differences and thus did not search for them or actively try to figure them out. Likewise, when New Zealanders interact with Japanese or Indians, who already look differently and come from a none-Western country, they usually do not expect that they behave ‘correctly’ and are more forgiving of social blunders for Japanese or Indians could not necessarily know. Not figuring out the differences for a long time contributed to the participants’ experiencing difficulties making friends among New Zealanders.

Two central differences emerged:

– Differences in Social Interaction
– Different Friendship Concepts

Differences in Social Interaction
The greatest difference between Germans and New Zealanders is that Germans are generally very direct, outspoken, straight forward, and open-minded, whereas New Zealanders are generally indirect, do not speak about issues, and narrow-minded. As a result, the participants perceive New Zealanders as friendly, but also shallow, superficial, and dishonest, and many participants have difficulties interpreting their indirect messages and adjusting the way they organise their lives to it:

I just remember how often we thought ‘Ah bloody hell, why didn't they just tell us?', because they don't. We thought, they do not like to give you bad news, so they kind of [makes gesture of going around in circles] around, you know. You don't get a clear answer and you're left in a grey area. You start planning with [the information they gave you] and suddenly it's not working out, because they don't have the guts to tell you.

... in Germany it was clearer what's happening, because people are more blunt about what is, you know. They don't worry too much about offending or crushing your feelings or something.

Equally, the participants believe that New Zealanders perceive them as rather rude, harsh, blunt, critical, and demanding, and that they feel often offended by Germans as a result of the latter’s directness.

The second difference is that Germans generally turn up when invited, whereas New Zealanders often do not come. Thus, when the participants invited New Zealanders, the New Zealanders often did not turn up. This behaviour stems from differences in the development of friendships (see below). Those participants who were not aware of these differences misinterpreted this behaviour and were confused. They thought that the New Zealanders did not like them or that they are generally unreliable.

The third difference in social interactions between Germans and New Zealanders is that they have different perceptions of host and guest roles. In Germany, hosts serve their guests and serve their food, whereas, in New Zealand, the host role is shared by everybody and guests bring their own food. Although some participants grew to like the New Zealand way, other participants found it difficult to accept this behaviour:

When I invite someone to my place, then I’m the host and I want to provide my guests also with my food and drinks. But when it’s their culture that they bring their own stuff with them, in other countries that can be an insult. And that’s the way it might have come across to me. (125)

Given these differences, it is obvious that if German immigrants and New Zealanders are not aware of these cultural differences, disappointment and frustration may result on both sides.
Different Friendship Concepts

According to the participants, the difference in the friendship concept starts with the development of friendships. Germans commonly are at first cautious and test people. Then, when they like another person, they slowly grow closer to that person. New Zealanders, on the contrary, usually are first very friendly and close, but become distant again when problems arise or the friendship becomes too intimate for them:

*I mean they define friendship in a different way. I think sometimes the New Zealand friends that we have still have the feelings that we sometimes come a bit too close. It gets a bit too intimate and personal.*

As a result of this difference, participants thought that New Zealanders liked them, because they were so friendly and close immediately. Thus, they invited the New Zealanders and then were very surprised and disappointed when they did not come.

In addition to differences in the development of friendships, Germans and New Zealanders also have different ideas of what constitutes a friendship. Whereas Germans commonly and the participants in particular value deep, intense, and intimate friendships, New Zealanders are content with ‘mateships’. Germans typically love to think and discuss personal things like emotions, problems and conflicts with their friends and love to help friends sort out problems, whereas New Zealanders seem to have less intimate conversations with their friends and do not like speaking about personal/emotional issues:

*In Germany if you have good friends you really talk about your problems and if you have a problem you are honest about it. Whereas here in New Zealand, I find, even though people call you a friend, there are still a lot of things they wouldn’t tell you. That they would keep it for themselves; they wouldn’t talk about. And this is different to my mind. I mean when we invite people, for example, and things we tell them or we show them or we do with them or we share with them – we share everything that we think, that we do, or whatever, because this is just the way. But with New Zealanders - they are not like this. There is still, even though they say you are my best friend, there is still a line that they draw. And they don’t draw it in a way that they would say: “This is the line.” Whereas from Germany I would probably expect them to say: “This is how far you go, not more.” But New Zealanders just sort of draw it, but don’t tell you, and you all of a sudden come up against it and think: ‘Oh, I have done something now that they don’t like.’ But you don’t know, they don’t tell you - you just feel it. And this is something that is very different to a German friendship.*

Germans, they sort of, they like to think or discuss things. They are, you know, love to sort of turn themselves right into the mud and shit of other peoples problems. ... The Kiwi bloke says: “Oh yeah, can’t be bothered, you know. No problems mate! No problems!” He’s up to here in problems [takes his hand to his neck], but he would say: “No problems”, and then he jumps of the bridge and kills himself. That’s quite different to Germany really.

This difference was especially an issue for the participants, because the New Zealand friendship concept clashes with their characteristics and values particularly with their their value of intense and meaningful relationships. Accordingly, this difference made it not only difficult for Germans to build the desired deep friendships with New Zealand, but they were also often disappointed about New Zealanders they thought were their friends. For instance, one participant couple had a difference with a person in the village. To solve the issue, they wanted to take their New Zealand friend with them. When they asked the friend, he refused to come:

*... He said: “Ah, I know these people and I don’t want to fall out with them, and you are my friends.” And I said: “Well, I would, in my understanding, say you are more my friend than those people, who are just acquaintances. So I would rather stick with you than try to please them.”*

The participants maintained that it was also difficult for them to make friends with New Zealanders, because the New Zealanders were distant and reserved towards them and because they had difficulties gaining access to and getting into certain groups. They believed that this disinterest and closure happens, because New
Zealanders already have their established social networks when German immigrants arrive and thus, in contrast to the participants, do not require new friends; are afraid of Germans due to their island mentality and characteristics that come along with this mentality (i.e. inferiority complex); and/or discover soon that they have not enough in common. Another reason that emerged for experiencing difficulties making friends were that some participants were more family orientated and thus either happy to stay at home or needed to stay at home. Accordingly, they had fewer opportunities to make friends. Moreover, the older New Zealanders and Germans became, the more inflexible and intolerant they might have become, so making friends might have been more difficult. However, another participant maintained that this is a myth that one could make deep and intensive friendships only when young:

*Friendships, I knew, you can make anywhere. I had the fear only once. I mean not really fear, but the feeling I only had once, when we went to [the country where we lived for some years], when I was 32. There I said: “Now you left all your friends here, the whole family, and you don’t really make any intense friendships again for those only develop in your early years.” – and that’s a mistake! You can! And ever since I learned that, I knew I’d never have that fear again, even going to the smallest island in the world. Anywhere you find people – you simply meet them when you are open, or - I don’t know if you even have to be open at all - you come across them anyway ... you can still make friends when you are older. So I had no worries that I would feel lonely in New Zealand.* (127)

Taken together, these cultural differences made it difficult for Germans to interact with New Zealanders and to build up good friendships in New Zealand. If participants were not aware of the differences and their effects, they felt rejected and took it personally. They thought that the New Zealanders might not like them and thus, started to question their selves and to wonder whether there might be something might be wrong with them instead of attributing these difficulties to cultural differences. Especially in the beginning the participants found it depressing not to have more intimate friendships in order to be able to talk their problems over, and they were often disappointed about their New Zealand friends. For that reason, the participants often had only their partners to share the things that moved them. Over time some participants found New Zealanders who let them into their lives and were on a similar wavelength, and thus had deeper and meaningful friendships with New Zealanders. However, in general, the participants increasingly made friends with other German immigrants leading to circle of friends that consisted mainly of other Germans and other immigrants. The relationships with New Zealanders remain generally only on an acquaintance basis. Other reasons for why German immigrants made increasingly friends with other German immigrants we will discuss later in this chapter under *Support from other German Immigrants.*

As pointed out above, those participants who expected subtle differences dealt with this obstacle more successfully, because they were more aware of differences and actively tried to identify them. Especially those participants who had already lived in another country knew that there would be differences, and how to best detect these differences:

*We went to the States and we thought that they would just speak a different language ... I mean, that was why the first two years in the States were so horrible, because we pissed everybody off because we were the typical Germans. The Americans were very proud of themselves, and at that time the Germans generally were not very proud of themselves and we certainly weren’t. The [American’s] were going on and on about being fantastic theirs was, and we said the occasional things. We would make unfavourable comparisons between the US and Germany and stuff like that, which people didn’t like. (Petra: And then you came to New Zealand ...) ... Yes, we were aware that, you know, that having happened twice to us ... But after having come from the States we certainly were aware that when you are living abroad you don’t know what the story is and you have to be little bit more careful.*

Useful strategies to identify the differences included taking a backseat and observing New Zealanders, talking with their partner, other German immigrants, and/or other migrants about their experiences and feelings; and directly asking people about *the politics of the place.* Flatting with New Zealanders, who have lived overseas, can greatly assisted figuring out differences, because they have went through culture shock themselves the other way around and because through having been away from New Zealand they have an
outsider perspective of New Zealanders. Those participants who figured differences out, learned to be careful when saying things (e.g. being more circumspect in phrasing unpleasant things, trying to help save face) To avoid social blunders:

I would say, at least in my generation you can see pretty clearly from the facial impressions from somebody in Germany when you piss somebody off or not, and he will make it quite clear that you did. Whereas here, people won’t. I think you have to be more, unless you know people well, you have to be more circumspect how you phrase, how you get across that this is something that they maybe shouldn’t have done or that you didn’t like it.

You are always sort of careful with, you know, when you are dealing with people here. … I mean I have become Kiwi-ised, but I don’t think I will ever become that completely kiwi-ised that I sort of completely automatically get everything right. I constantly remind myself that I have to behave differently with Kiwis. It is always at the back of my mind.

Dealing with culture shock late, as well as with migration in general, was also facilitated by writing letters and diaries as this quote of a participant indicates:

I must have written letters every week to thousands of people. Clipped on and pasted all these things that I found interesting and funny. (Petra: That was your way of dealing with all the new?) Mhm. And again, it is something that I stopped once I felt more comfortable with my environment, you know. The letters got less frequent, the diary was sort of at an end and I didn’t buy a new one. I mean I just wrote down what I did. It was sort of a stream of consciousness. Just writing down where I was, what I saw, who I met, what I found funny and strange and all these things.

Accepting and respecting New Zealand culture; not expecting something unreasonable of New Zealanders – they are not like Germans and they do not know differently, because they were not exposed to cultural diversity as Germans were; being tolerant; being content with and accepting of their reactions; and trying to understand why New Zealanders behave and react in certain ways helped to deal with these cultural differences too. Strategies to meet people included actively seeking people of similar wavelength by being open, participating in community gatherings and activities (e.g. church, chorus, evening classes, sport groups, German clubs and playgroups), socialising with colleagues, inviting locals to one’s place, and asking locals for assistance:

I did all the classic strategies that you have when you move anywhere in the world: night classes, museums, lectures and what have you not just in the hope of meeting somebody you know. I mean it did work and it didn’t work. And I mean we had some contacts from that, yeah. And quite a lot of people I got to know, I got to know through [my husband’s] work.

And then we started to get to know people and we did this by seeing people. We knew the family we stayed with, when we stayed here in the bed and breakfast on those days before. So we invited them. Then when you come to a place like [a small village], because it is very small, everyone is most curious because you are new people. … And then, what we did, we just went on and invited people. We just tried to find out how things work in the [village], just the politics of the place. We saw people on the road who looked quite interesting so we invited them to dinner. And we had a coal range; it’s for your heating, hot water and your cooking and you just have to feed it yourself with coal and wood. And if you don’t do this you have no heating, no hot water, and you can’t cook. I mean, I had never seen such a thing before, so I didn’t know how to work it either. Someone told us that this person had the same one as we had. So we went to this person and said: “Look you have got the same one, can you actually come and show me how to work it?” These two people actually became our closest friends. So that was what we were doing - we just invited people to get to know them.
Meeting people was facilitated by being pregnant, having a child and/or a dog, because these conditions it eased getting in contact with other people since it brings one out into the community and provides topics for conversation:

*And because I was pregnant, I was obviously a main target for the local play group - a new member. They also, in turn, invited me, because they just wanted to get to know me and give me all those tips on pregnancy and child birth and all that.*

... it actually did help being pregnant, because – yes it was quite funny - I met quite a nice woman through being pregnant. I was sitting [at a table in the food court] and I was reading den Spiegel. She asked if she could share my table and then she said: “Oh, I see you are reading den Spiegel - are you German?” And I said: “Yes.”, and she said: “Oh, I used to speak a little German.” And then we got into contact, and she was pregnant too. So there we were both with our bellies sticking out, and that was really lovely. ... But that was a nice friendship, and that developed through a common big belly, basically!!

*Und ja: Wie lernt man Leute kennen? Es ist am besten du hast einen Hund oder Kinder! Das ist am einfachsten, weil du wirst immer angesprochen. Bist du Single oder „nur“ ein Pärchen, und gehst arbeiten, dann kennst du deine Kollegen, vielleicht über Barbecues von der Firma her. ... Ja und durch Play Centre - durch die Kinder habe ich dann eigentlich schnell Kontakt zu den Leuten so, zu den Müttern und den Kinder, gekriegt.*

Having a child you actually tend to ... Just imagine you wonder down the street somewhere. If you’re by yourself people don’t tend to talk to you, but if you have a little toddler people say: “How cute.” or “Oh, blah, blah, blah. Is it a boy or girl?” You know, it’s, you have more openings. You go to the playgrounds and you chat to other mothers. You meet people at school, which you probably just don’t when you’re by yourself, you know. You’re not in the habit of going to the library like you would for instance with a child - going to the children’s section and talk to other mothers. If you go to the library you pick up a book, you sit down and read and you don’t disrupt anybody. You know or stuff like that. It does tend to open channels of conversation, yeah.

*I met [a friend] at University, because she was studying at the time and because [her child] was also in the [university department] crèche.*

New Zealanders putting Germans in contact with other Germans facilitated participants getting to know other Germans:


Those participants who believed that one needs to actively and persistently work on building new friendships, and that one can build intense and deep friendships and independent of cultural back ground, were more successful in building friendships with New Zealanders.

Other helpful strategies were to be together with other German immigrants and/or immigrants once in a while to moan and to discuss experiences, and to complete a “Kiwi-Education” – to do things New Zealanders do to find out about those things (e.g. watching a rugby game). Moaning and discussing their experiences and what moves them with people who have had similar experiences, helped them to let off steam, to normalise their experiences, and to gain a better awareness and understanding of what is going on:

*I am sure that there isn’t a day go by where I don’t think “Oh these stupid New Zealanders!” or “Why isn’t this - it could be so much easier if they could do it my way!” But this is something I have learned to live with, and its this moaning - every once in a while you have to let off steam and I can do it with [my partner] and I can do it even with [my daughter], even though she is truly a Kiwi. But if you want to do it with*
friends, I would never really - maybe unless I am drunk or so – do it in a pub, for instance, just with people I just have gotten to know. But I can do it with South Africans or Indians, or Chinese people. ... I really do believe that it is more cultural than just my personality clashing with somebody else’s, or so, because I hear [similar experiences] a lot from other people from other cultures, for instance. (Petra: So does this normalises your experience for you?) Yes. I certainly don’t feel alone and I think that is why I tend to have friends with those experiences, because, yes you can sit and have a glass of wine and joke about these things without the really sad feeling that you are not offending anybody - these things usually stay within the circles.

I don’t brood over things, it is not my nature. I think a lot of the things I find annoying or so, I talk with other people about it, with [my partner] or with friends. And in talking about them I get them out of my system and that is how I deal with things.


**Issues Concerning Children**

Those participants who came to New Zealand with their children or gave birth to children in New Zealand had to deal with a host of obstacles in addition:

- **Dilemma Whether Migration is also Right for Children**
- **Missing Family and Friends**
- **Limited Contact between Children and Family & Friends**
- **Difficulties Learning and Maintaining German**
- **Conflicts Between Children and Parents**
- **Conflicts Defining and Belonging**
- **Children Beaten and Called Nazi and Hitler**
- **Quality of Education in New Zealand**
- **Social Isolation**
- **No Family Support in Child Care Duties**

It is important to keep in mind that the following issues surrounding children were told from the perspective of their parents – the participants. That so many issues surrounding children came up suggests that children play a very crucial part in the migration process of German immigrants.

**Dilemma Whether Migration is also Right for Children**

All participant couples who came with their children to New Zealand chose to come to New Zealand, because they believed that it would be beneficial for their children to grow up in New Zealand. Specifically, they believed that it would be great for their children to experience a dream country; to grow up with two languages, and to have command of both their mother tongue and English; to grow up in a safe, stress free environment with much connection to nature; and to grow up in a multicultural environment. These features were one reason for migrating to New Zealand. However, all participants made this decision for their children, because they believed that their children were not old enough to make this decision:

You think too:  Do I do something wrong? Am I being egotistical? You move overseas, because you think that’s good, because you think that’s fantastic, you can fulfil yourself, but the children are wherever, can’t actually be asked, you decide for them. (128)
The emergence of obstacles for their children increased their dilemma about whether the migration decision was right for their children too or whether living in New Zealand would obstruct their future.

In general, the migration was easiest for very young children (pre-school) and teenagers who had learnt English at school. For those children in between, however, the migration was hard, because they had the most difficulties with the language, and missed their families and friends most. To smooth the transition for the children, several participant couples decided that the women would stay at home and give the children time until they had settled in, and that they would do fun things with them.

**Missing Family and Friends**

Like the participants, the children also missed their families and friends. Similar to their parents, they also had left their family and friends behind, and had to build up a new circle of friends. This was difficult for some children:

[My son] was bored senseless at night, because in Germany there would have always been a mate around on the computer or he would have been out and about somewhere, or at sport or something. And you couldn’t get him interested in either cricket or rugby. He ought to play rugby, because he went to school and they said: “Hey, perfect physique for rugby,” and [my son]: “Ah no.” - He was always playing handball and has been playing it for a long time. He is playing it here [in Germany] again now. And it did not exist [in New Zealand], and things like that. (129)

[My daughter] said: “I miss granny and miss my auntie to go to for a holiday.”

**Limited Contact between Children and Family & Friends**

The limited contact with family and friends back home was a particular wound for all involved: children, parents, and grandparents. The participants were concerned that the limited contact between their families and their children would estranged them from each other and/or that their children would not know their family. For some participants, this concern contributed to their return.

To increase the contact, participants let their children regularly phone family and friends, tried to fly regularly home with them, and did fun things with them one can do very well in New Zealand. However, financial stringency in the beginning – when it was needed most - made it difficult to conduct these strategies. Thus, families who rang and paid for flights home greatly supported German immigrants in this respect.

**Difficulties Learning and Maintaining German**

For several reasons, the participants perceived it as very important that their children can speak, read and write German. First and foremost, their speaking German is the prerequisite for communicating with their families and for their mutual understanding. As already mentioned above, the contact between children and family is of great concern for the participants:

Secondly, because the participants are unsure whether the migration is the right step for their children too, they do not want to take away from their children the chance to be able to live in Germany if they wanted to. The participants believe that to be able to live in Germany, the children need to master German, including speaking, reading, and writing:


Thirdly, the participants think that the mastery of German is necessary to be able to feel and think the German culture. Feeling and thinking the German culture is, in turn, a prerequisite for the understanding between the participants and their children as well as the understanding between children and family.

Fourthly, the participants think that their children will have much better chances later on if they were bilingual. Lastly, the participants themselves want to speak with their children in German, because it is the participants’ mother tongue.

Because of all these reasons, the participants tried to develop and/or maintain their children’s German. They consulted special literature regarding bringing up children bilingually, consciously spoke exclusively in German with them at home, tried to teach them via German correspondence school, and went with their children to German playgroups or organised themselves German playgroups, and/or took their children for several months to Germany:

... wir haben immer Deutsch gesprochen, es sei denn wir hatten jetzt englisch sprechende Leute da, dann wird automatisch, selbst beim Essen gingen wir dann ins Englische.


Ja und dann habe ich halt irgendwann die Idee gehabt es wäre schön wenn unser Kind von anderen Erwachsenen oder auch Kindern, die deutsche Sprache hört – native speakers. Das sie eben merken das ist normal auf Deutsch zu reden. Eben nicht nur von Mama und Papa sondern eben andere Menschen können das auch. ... Na ja, die anderen zwei fanden das auch eine super Idee eben eine deutsche Spielgruppe zu machen. Und dann haben wir zu dritt angefangen. ... Im ganz kleinen Rahmen angefangen und dann kamen irgendwie Leute dazu, die entweder beide Deutsche waren oder wo ein Partner Deutsch war und die eben auch die deutsche Sprache mit den Kinder aufrechterhalten wollten und die Idee ganz gut fanden. ... Ja, da waren es zum Schluss – ich weiss es nicht mehr genau – aber irgendwas so 12 bis 15 Familien, die mehr oder weniger regelmässig da waren.

However, the participants found it difficult to learn and maintain German, and were only partly successful. The older the children became, the more contact they had with English speaking children, the more they
refused to speak German and spoke only English. Even within the German playgroup, they started to speak more and more English:

*And the kids, they actually at the beginning talked pretty much exclusively German. But the older they got and started going to kindergarten or play centre of school, the more English started taking over. (130)*

Hence, many participants gave up:

*I decided: stuff that, if she wants to speak in English, then I am going to speak in English. And that was the end of the German language thing.*

As a teenager, one child discovered that it is actually cool and of advantage to speak another language. That discovery motivated her and she started speaking German again. In general, the children of the participants could speak and understand German fairly well, but they often switched codes, their pronunciation and grammar was not that good, and they have trouble writing and reading German. Since the participants assigned so much importance to their children speaking German, this was dissatisfying and frustrating for them. Consequently, this difficulty was among the reasons why German immigrants returned.

Unfortunately, the participants were left much on their own in their efforts to develop and/or maintain their children’s German. The German playgroups were all private initiatives. They are, in general, financed privately and run by enthusiastic volunteers. To my knowledge, only one German playgroup receives financial assistance and this assistance comes from the New Zealand Ministry of Education, Child Development Unit. This assistance greatly helps German immigrants in their efforts to learn and maintain German in their children. Interestingly, while the German government, German Embassy, and the Goethe Institute greatly support German language teaching at New Zealand schools, they do not specifically support the learning and maintenance of German for German immigrant children. In the case of the Goethe Institute, this is particularly incomprehensible, since their task is the promotion of German language and culture by introducing “German language and culture into the cultural life of the host country” (Goethe Institute Information Letter, p.1). However, unfortunately, in their efforts to achieve their task, the Goethe Institute focus solely on New Zealanders and teach German languages courses, conduct internationally recognised examinations, and offer a high-quality, extensive teacher support service throughout New Zealand to “support the teaching and learning of German at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels” (Goethe Institute German Language Department Leaflet, p.1). While these activities are remarkable and useful, they do not help German immigrants in their efforts to keep German and the German culture available to their children. Since the German immigrants and their children are highly motivated to learn the German language and culture, and actually would use German in communicating with their families, it would seem that the Goethe Institute could fulfil their task of promoting the German language and culture much better by also assisting German immigrant families.

While German being taught as a second language at schools is wonderful, it is, unfortunately, not of much assistance either for three reasons. Firstly, German as a second language is commonly only taught in New Zealand at secondary school. This means that there is a gap in English teaching of several years between German play groups and German being taught at secondary school. This gap exactly coincides with children speaking more English due to more contact with English speaking children. Secondly, the English taught in German as a second language classes is commonly too easy for children of German immigrants. While not excellent speakers of German, because their parents conducted the various strategies listed above, children of German immigrants are more advanced in speaking German than New Zealanders who are just starting. Thirdly, not all schools in New Zealand teach German as a second language. That means that predominantly for children of German immigrants living in rural areas do not have this option.

While not leading to 100% success, all the strategies mentioned in the beginning of this section were nevertheless very useful for children’s learning and maintaining German. The financial assistance of the Ministry of Education, Child Development Unit, greatly assists this one play group. However, that not more German play and language groups know about and receive the assistance suggest that the availability of this
assistance needs to be better promoted. The Goethe Institute could tremendously support the efforts of German immigrants by extending their programmes specifically to children of German immigrants and by supporting initiatives aimed at learning and maintaining German.

**Conflicts Between Children and Parents**

Another issue was that the growing up of participants’ children in New Zealand led to conflicts between parents and children. Because the participants are German and because they perceive their children as German, they expected them to know the German culture and to behave accordingly. However, because the children grew up in New Zealand, they do not know the German culture well. Thus they have difficulties understanding the expectations of their parents. Moreover, they behave less in German ways and more in New Zealand ways. This clash of expectations and behaviour often leads to conflicts between the participants and their children. The problem was compounded by the fact that the participants did not grow up in New Zealand and thus, lack knowledge of parts of New Zealand culture. Because of this lack, they have difficulties in relating to their children. Conflicts arose also as result of the children blaming their parents that they are not seen as New Zealanders, and that they are experiencing conflicts in defining themselves and working out where they belong.

**Conflicts Defining and Belonging**

One participant believed that the children of German immigrants often experience conflicts in defining themselves and sorting out where they belong, because they are exposed to two cultures. On the one hand, the children are German by birth, yet they do not know the German part of their lives very well because they grew up in New Zealand. However, the German side plays an important part in their lives. Their German parents expect them to think and behave like Germans, and transmit much of the German culture on to them. Further, their extended family and friends live in Germany, and they visit Germany. However because the children did not actually live in Germany, they do not feel German, and do not feel at home in Germany. On the other hand, the children grow up in New Zealand and spent the majority of their time in New Zealand. Hence, they feel more like New Zealanders. However, because their parents are German, New Zealanders do not regard them as New Zealanders, but as German or somebody different. Therefore, the children have problems in feeling like New Zealanders and, hence, do not feel at home in New Zealand either:

... he is trying to define himself in what he is and he gets mixed messages: he knows what he thinks he is and what other people see him as, and what other people see his parents as. Then he sees us being [in New Zealand]... Therefore, he has this conflict.

Consequently, the children have the difficult task of transcending the German - New Zealander distinction when defining themselves and figuring out where they belong:

*It’s probably just the feeling of belonging. That they don’t feel they belong to just one thing.*

This difficulty seems to have been especially present for the children of the participants who went back and forth between Germany and New Zealand several times a year. This link is, as one participant argued, the reason:

... why a lot of people who normally emigrate cut their ties with the place they come from and start somewhere completely new. And so this way they don’t have the conflict as such, because they really or tried to make the decision just to be in this one place.

For this reason, this particular participant couple decided to try to limit their travelling to once a year so that children will feel more at home in New Zealand.
Conflicts Between Children and Parents and Conflicts Defining and Belonging led to the participants being concerned and feeling anxious that their children experience identity problems. New Zealanders not perceiving children of German immigrants born in New Zealand as New Zealanders and/or not accepting them as unique individuals independent of where they come from and where their parents come from greatly contributed to the prevalence of the two issues.

*Children Beaten and Called Nazi and Hitler*

Surprisingly and unfortunately, a typical issue proved to be that the children of several participants were frequently called Nazi and Hitler, and were beaten because of their German heritage at school:

*And of course it was pretty alarming how often the kids came home and said: "Mum, they asked me again, whether Adolf Hitler was my uncle." ... Yeah, that was that with Hitler. That was very often - they were fairly often harassed with that sort of thing.* (131)

*... and then there was the one who went after him with a hatchet, ... but he dodged out of the way, and he just hit his head and then kept on shouting stuff about 'Nazi-kid'.* (132)

*Our son was tied to a fireguard, called Nazi and Hitler, and beaten and kicked at school, because of his German descent.*

Across all reported cases, the school and the teachers did not take action against this behaviour of their pupils and did not protect the German children:

*I say: "What did your teacher do about it?", "He just smiled and took him to the side a bit, or something".* (133)

It is understandable that the children were scared to go to school and the participants took their children out of school, because they were concerned for their safety. To remedy this issue, some participants talked with the school principals. However, the principals tried to cover up the issues by either turning the issue into a joke, denying that something like this could have happened at their school, or putting the teasing and bullying down to being a normal part of growing up. Even at the specific request of the participants, the principals did not put sufficient procedures in place for dealing with the situation and for protecting German immigrants’ children. This neglect forced the participants to take their children out of school, because they were concerned for their safety. One participant couple believed that only more drastic actions could deal with this situation. They contacted a national television programme and complained to the Ministry of Education. The programme achieved a very high response rate and they received many letters from New Zealanders apologising for their fellow countrymen, and from other German immigrants who told them about similar things that had happened to them or to their children. These reactions further suggest that, unfortunately, the teasing and bullying of children of German immigrants because of their German descent is widespread in New Zealand.

The concerned participants did not perceive their children’s classmates as being responsible for these incidents. Rather, they believe that the school curriculum about German history must have been scanty and one-sided. They also think that the school, if the principals/teachers do not take action against the bullying, support this behaviour. Further, this behaviour might be the result of the parents and grandparents’ transmitting their hostile attitudes, which they had formed during the World Wars, towards German immigrants to their children and grandchildren. The negative attitudes resulting from the war events are kept alive through the frequent screening of war movies and documentaries produced by allies presenting the perspectives of the allies. This state of affairs implies that the ‘shadow of the war’, unfortunately, not only still prevails in the attitudes of New Zealanders today, but is even kept alive. Sadly, the shadow finds most expressions in negative behaviour against children of German immigrants who are most vulnerable and have nothing to do with these past events. Further, principals and teachers not acknowledging that there was an issue and not dealing with it confirmed to the participants that New Zealand is a *lid society*, in which people
shy away from conflict and do not deal with difficult situations. Because the schools & society did not deal with this issue in a manner that would have protected the children sufficiently, the participants and their children felt unsupported and discriminated against, and were concerned about the childrens’ well-being.

Strategies participants used to deal with this obstacle were speaking with the school principal and demanding actions to remedy the situation, offering school to give talk about Germany to show the other pupils that there exists another side to Germany, and going public with the issue if the school does not respond:


Principals and teachers could counteract racism at their schools by revising their history curriculum with regard to the representation of German history in particular and of the happenings during both world wars specifically. The new curriculum could include a fair presentation of the war events: information/stories about the anti-fascist movement within German to show that many Germans also actively fought against fascism, and that many million ordinary citizens were killed or suffered on both sides, and that German refugees suffered greatly. War veterans could be invited to speak about their experiences. The new curriculum could also include a representation of the positive aspects of German history: that Germany is also the country of great poets and thinkers:

gut gepflegt worden im deutschen Krankenhaus und er wollte eigentlich, wollte nach Deutschland nach dem Krieg immer mal wieder zurück gehen, aber irgendwie hat er wohl so starke Verletzungen, daß er das nicht packt hat. Aber er hat gesagt dass das ja wohl total hinter dem Jungen liegt, daß er dafür nichts kann und daß es eben solche und solche gibt. Und ich meine, wenn man das natürlich den Kindern erzählt, wäre die Reaktion sicherlich ganz anders. ... Ich habe den Direktor auch gefragt ob er überhaupt weiß, was in den Klassen da erzählt wird über diesen Teil und ob er für sich in Anspruch nehmen kann, diese deutsche Geschichte so perfekt zu kennen, daß man das da so ohne weiteres unterrichten kann. Man sieht ja, was man damit für Schaden anrichten kann. Ja, da hat er mir im Prinzip ausweichend geantwortet, im Prinzip gar nicht darauf geantwortet. Und das ist für mich eindeutig eine Sache, wie ich das verkaufe. Und wenn da jemand Schaden von nimmt,dann habe ich es schlecht verkauft, dann habe ich es irgendwo einfach schlecht verkauft, denke ich.

Further, when World War I and II are taught, schools could encourage German immigrant children and/or their parents to give a talk about Germany and Germans in order to ensure that a balanced view of Germany and Germans is given. Schools in which German is taught as a second language, the German teachers could support the German immigrants and their children in preparing this talk. The German Embassy, the Goethe Institute, and/or the Migration Resource Centres could provide material on a lending basis for these talks.

**Quality of Education in New Zealand**

As discussed under *Developing the Dream*, the participants highly value knowledge. Thus, it is important for them that their children receive a high quality education. This desire was amplified by concerns that the migration might obstruct their children negatively, in particular that the children might not be able to return to Germany if they wanted to:

... [my son] got his whole life in front of him and if I mess something up for him, then for my life I’ll never forgive myself. (134)

The perceptions of the quality of the New Zealand education system varied widely. Primary schools were perceived as very good, whereas secondary schools were perceived as inadequate. Participants were enthusiastic about primary schools, because the children are treated as unique individuals and the teachers are very professional:

Und das finde ich zum Beispiel an Neuseeland unheimlich toll und davon schwärme ich, daß ich gesehen habe, daß die Kinder als Individualisten irgendwo gesehen wurden. Ich weiß nicht, warum das nachher nicht fortgeführt wird oder was da nachher schief läuft in Neuseeland oder ich weiß es nicht. Das war so daß [unser Sohn] nach Hause kam irgendwann mit einem Blatt, was er selber geschrieben hat und da stand drauf: I’m unique, because ... Und das finde ich so toll! Ich finde einfach sagenhaft! Jeder ist einmalig und nicht die Klasse hat entschieden, jeder konnte was er da rauf schreiben wollte für sich selber entscheiden. Und ich finde das so enorm das du das Bewußtsein stärkst bei so jungen Menschen schon. Das finde ich so toll, weil besseres kannst du nicht tun als ihnen die Basis zu geben später einmal darauf was zu bauen. Türme zu bauen oder irgendwas zu bauen, was immer sie wollen. Und ich finde das deshalb so toll, weil es wahrscheinlich vorher für mich fremd war, daß in Schulen sowas gemacht wird. Und die zweite Sache war, das habe ich durch den Großen erfahren, ein ganz junger Lehrer, der war wirklich frisch. Der war ganz jung von der Uni, vielleicht zwei, drei Jahre. ... Und er findet das eben toll, daß jeder was sagt, egal ob es richtig ist oder falsch. Das man sich traut und daß man eben Fehler macht und daß man sagt: Ja, gut gedacht, aber ... - und dann kannst du mit denen nämlich entwickeln: Hast du schon daran gedacht und daran, daran? Und deshalb wird die Antwort sich dann verändern. Das heisst die werden zur richtigen Lösung kommen. Und das fand ich toll das ere s eben sehr hoch bewertet wenn die Leute sich trauen auch Fehler zu machen. Und das ist ein ganz wichtiges Kriterium.

Other participants thought that the education their children receive is rather narrow, but believed that the New Zealand Bursary is equivalent to German Abitur or American NCA Level B. Thus, if their children want to study somewhere else, they could do so. In addition, if the children have the ability and desire to
learn, they could choose academic subjects and learn things they are interested in later in their own time. The participants also maintained that schools are only conductors of knowledge and that it is at home where children receive their real education - where the foundations are laid for the desire for learning, and how to achieve it:

*I do believe that the education system here is in my opinion quite too narrow. In a comprehensive school system, you can opt out of so called academic subjects quite early and choose to take typing and sewing basically. But if you choose, if you have got the brains, the inclination, the desire to do so, you can choose academic subjects. It doesn’t really cover humanistic basis, but you can learn that later at your own time or so. It is not easy to do that, but if you really want to learn something there are places here in New Zealand to do it. But from what I read about the German education system, it is also becoming much much more job oriented. I mean here it is a comprehensive school system, like Gesamtschule, and you have to cater for a much broader base of students, whereas in Germany you have got the three different school systems, plus Sonderschule. And here for instance, all the special needs kids are integrated.*

Yet other participants held the opinion that the New Zealand education system is not good enough and not of international standard. Hence, they were concerned that receiving their education in New Zealand limits the opportunities for their children, and they were anxious that their children would be disadvantaged if they decided to leave New Zealand. Consequently, for some participants this concern contributed to their return to Germany. To ensure that their children receive a good education, one participant considered sending them to a private school and to Germany for about a year. The latter would not only ensure a wider education, but also more immersion with German language and culture:

*No I have no future concerns as such. The only thing that I just think is this thing about, obviously, our children. If we make sure they spend some schooling time in Germany, even if it would be only just for a year or so. Just to give them more of an immersion with the language and the culture and so on.*

*I find [the education system] not satisfactory. I think you have to be careful what school you are choosing, because the quality is different. I think in Germany you don’t have that difference in quality between different schools so much. Whereas here, I really think you have to really know what you want and you have to choose a school, because you can’t rely on every school being the same. And because it’s the Anglo-Saxon system, you have got this difference. It depends on what you want to do, you have to have been at a certain school to get into another one. So in this respect, I think you have to think about that more. [Petra: Is that a concern for you?] A little bit, because I really think that it limits a bit your chances here in New Zealand and this is why I want to make sure that the children really have a good education and have a wide education. And that is why I think it is important for them to go to Germany for a year or so, just to see that side as well and have a wider variety. Because I don’t think the New Zealand education system quite enough. (Petra: Do you think you will consider sending them to a private schools?] Yes. (Petra: Why is that? Because you think that there are these differences in the quality of schools?] Yes and it is also because ... if I would lived in Auckland or in Christchurch, I wouldn’t have to send them to a private school, because there is a big variety and there are some very good public schools. But here in [in the town] which is the nearest, I have no real choice. So I would have to send them away anyway. And if I send them away I can send them to a private school, because most of the public schools haven’t got boarding facilities. So this limits the choice as such. But it is not because I think private schools are best, but it is just from where we are here the choice is just not that great.*

Those participants who perceived the New Zealand education system as not good enough, too limited, and not of international standard, where more likely to return, because they were concerned that receiving their education in New Zealand might limit the opportunities for their children if they decide to leave New Zealand. As an illustration, one couple was concerned that the education would not be recognised outside New Zealand and that their child might, therefore, have had problems getting proper professional education somewhere else.
On the contrary, those participants who perceived the quality more favourably, were more likely to stay. Favourable beliefs included that in primary schools children are treated as unique individuals and teachers are very professional; that the education is rather narrow, but that it would allow their children to study in another country; and that if the children have the ability and desire to learn, they could choose academic subjects and learn things they are interested in later in their own time. Those participants who believed that schools are only conductors of knowledge and that it is at home where children receive their real education - where the foundations are laid for the desire for learning, and how to achieve it – did not assign so much importance to the quality of the quality of the education system. Strategies that were useful included educating children at home in addition to the normal schooling, sending them to a private school, and/or sending them to a German school for a longer time.

**Social Isolation**

Because of the discussed language issues, unfavourable attitudes of other children and New Zealanders to children of German immigrants, some children experienced isolation. This issue was compounded by differences in preference for sporting activities between New Zealand and German children and by the lack of opportunities for interacting (lack of cultural life). For example, one couple, who lived in the rural area, reported that there were not many opportunities for their child for interacting with other children, and that the few opportunities which existed their child did not like to pursue (e.g. rugby vs. soccer, handball). As a result, their child, who has had many social contacts in Germany, spent most of his leisure time playing computer games in New Zealand. Hence, this couple was concerned that their child might not develop sufficiently socially.

**No Family Support in Child Care Duties**

Women reported that they had to take care of their children around the clock, because they have no relatives to share the daily childcare duties and to send the children for holidays. This issue was amplified by their social network consisting mainly of other German immigrants in similar situations, childcare centres being too expensive due to financial stringency in the beginning and/or the opening times were too limited, and babysitters being not trusted, because of the many scandals regarding babysitters in New Zealand. Consequently, women felt often distressed and left alone, in addition to feeling lonely and isolated. Useful strategies and attitudes to ease this issue included asking older German immigrants to help and become ‘grandparents’; using babysitters and childcare; believing that they would not have somebody to help in Germany either, if they lived away from home; and women regularly taking some time off for themselves. Partners relieving the women regularly so that they could taking time off and older German immigrants becoming grannies were very useful.

To summarize issues related to children, beliefs/attitude that made the migration with children harder included being concerned that the migration would limit the opportunities for their children, and that their children do not know their families, do not have a home and become unsettled. Concerns regarding the learning and maintaining German, identity issues, the well-being of their children, the quality of education contributed to returning. Social isolation made the participants also anxious that the migration might affect their children negatively. In addition, no family support in child care duties contributed to women with children being distressed and feeling left alone. When these beliefs/attitudes got the upper hand, they contributed to the return of some German immigrants.

**Leisure Issues**

With regards to their leisure, the participants experienced two obstacles:

- **Lack of Cultural Stimulation**
- **Not Experiencing Nature Much**
Lack of Cultural Stimulation
Although several participants came to New Zealand to get away from the stressful life in Germany, discovering that there was only little cultural life in New Zealand (e.g. theatre, concerts, cafes, and museums), even in cities like Wellington, was disappointing and frustrating. In addition, as discussed above, New Zealanders do not speak about their issues and shy away from conflict; the society was not alive and behind in various ways; and there were no energy fields or friction fields ('Spannungsfelder') to grow on. For those reasons, it was difficult for participants to have stimulating discussions with New Zealanders. Because the participants are characterised by a thirst for knowledge and experiences, and love energy/friction fields ('Spannungsfelder'), challenges, and excitement, they started to miss a varied cultural life and intellectual stimulation.

Lack of cultural life and intellectual stimulation seemed to be a function of age, the degree of love of nature, the need for cultural stimulation, and the living place (rural vs. urban). Older German immigrants might not miss cultural life as much as younger ones. A high degree of love of nature might substitute for the lack of cultural life. Likewise, people with a low need for cultural stimulation do not perceive low cultural life as an issue. The cultural life in urban areas is much higher than in rural areas. Consequently, moving at an older age with a high degree of love of nature and a lower need for cultural life close to an urban area would increase the likelihood for staying.

Hence, it is important to honestly assess ones’ personal characteristics before migration and to choose ones’ place in accordance with ones’ personal characteristics. Other strategies to counteract this issue included often going back and fourth between New Zealand and Germany, and travelling. However, these strategies were only options for participants with sufficient financial means.

Not Experiencing Nature Much
One of the major reasons why the participants came to New Zealand was the beautiful landscape where one can experience nature and live connected to nature. However, some participants soon realised that they do not have the money, time, and/or energy to experience nature. To start with, some participants had to move to cities, because they needed to work and there are more jobs in the bigger cities. Further, when they did not work in the beginning, they could not afford going to beautiful spots due to financial stringency. As soon as they started working, they did not have the time and/or were too exhausted, because of the various issues related to work and language issues:

... you will be surprised how less time you will have to do all these [nature] things, because you’re working days, 15 days a year on holiday and that’s not enough to do what you want to do.

Furthermore, typically the participants did not even have the time during their holidays, because the holidays in New Zealand are commonly only 15 days long and they often used their holidays to fly home for the above discussed reasons. Moreover, because the participants either bought or rented a house with a garden, they put much time into improving their house and garden. Having children seem to have amplified this issue by increasing financial stringency and by not being able to walk longer distances when they are little.

Being able to afford to not work or to work less, consciously making time for going to the beach or tramping, and/or living close to nature were strategies which remedied this issue. In contrast, for those participants who did not manage to experience nature much, the realisation that when one lives in one’s dream country but that does not actually have the time or leisure to do things in the beautiful environment, canceled one important reason why they had come to New Zealand in the first place. Thus, New Zealand was for them a less desirable as a place to live permanently. Accordingly, not experiencing nature as much as they had hoped, desired, and expected contributed to the return.

In sum, this section introduced and discussed the major obstacles related to things left behind in Germany and related to their new life in New Zealand. We also presented specific attitudes/beliefs and strategies that participants used to overcome these obstacles. Further, we suggested how family members and friends, New
Zealanders, German immigrants, and New Zealand’s and German’s societies can support German immigrants in dealing with each specific obstacle.

GENERAL INFLUENCES ON ESTABLISHMENT

How the participants were able to manage the obstacle they were presented in the course of their establishment was influenced by:

- Pre-migration factors and conditions
- Specific Beliefs/Attitudes and Strategies
- General Beliefs/Attitudes and Strategies that Increased the Likelihood of Staying
- Social Support
- Experience with Service Providing Institutions
- Conditions in Germany, New Zealand, and England

All of these factors and conditions interacted with each other in various combinations. In the previous two chapters (Development of Dream and Enlivening of Dream) we introduced the various pre-migration factors and conditions and talked about how these factors and conditions individually and interaction with other factors and conditions influence the subsequent migration experience. To refresh your memory you might want to revisit the graphical overviews at the beginning of each chapter. The influence of specific individual beliefs/attitudes and strategies as well as the specific aspects of all other influences, we discussed in relation to the individual obstacles that arose during establishment under Obstacles in this chapter. The current as well as historical conditions in Germany, New Zealand, and England, and how the conditions in these three countries interacted and interact, influence all other factors and conditions. The **General Individual Beliefs/Attitudes and Strategies that Increased the Likelihood of Staying**, Social Support, and **Experiences with Service Providing Institutions** need some further elaboration. It is to a more detailed discussion of these three factors and conditions that we turn now.

General Beliefs/Attitudes and Strategies That Increased the Likelihood of Staying

To overcome the obstacles presented by the migration process, the participants employed many different strategies. However, the beliefs and attitudes the participants had were also critical for they influenced whether the participants perceived something as an issue in the first place and had an impact on the strategies the participants chose. The importance of beliefs/attitudes is summed up in the quote of one participant, who had to overcome many obstacles and experienced the migration as a very hard time:

*In the end everything worked out. Maybe it's a matter of attitude. You can't prepare for every eventualities if you don't know.*

Some of the beliefs/attitudes and strategies increased the likelihood to stay, whereas other beliefs/attitudes and strategies increased the likelihood to return. This chapter concentrates only on the former. The latter we will discuss in detail in Chapter Seven.

It is important to note that returners also held many of the beliefs/attitudes and used many of the strategies which increased the likelihood of staying. Moreover, as became apparent in the previous chapters, many of the beliefs/attitudes the participants had **before** their migration contributed to their likelihood of staying or returning. These beliefs/attitudes affected, for example, the occurrence of challenges during the establishment (e.g. consciously lowering the expectations led to less disappointments; having been concerned about financial matters led to consciously taking care to get together sufficient starting capital
together which prevented financial stringency). This chapter concentrates only on those beliefs/attitudes and strategies which played a role during the establishment in New Zealand.

As with the characteristics and values we discussed under Developing the Dream & Readiness, it was very difficult to discern from the narratives of the participants whether they held these general beliefs/attitudes before the migration or developed them through experiencing the migration. We argue that, similar to characteristics and values, these general beliefs/attitudes existed more or less already before the migration and evolved while living the migration. In any case, these general beliefs/attitudes had an impact on how the participants interpreted the obstacles and dealt with them. In the same way as the characteristics and values were intertwined, so were the general attitudes. As will become obvious, these general beliefs/attitudes also lent further support to the interpretation that the participants live their dreams and for that matter, are quite advanced on the spiritual path.

Nine major general beliefs/attitudes were identified through the analysis as facilitating the migration process:

- Migration is an Adventure & Problems are Challenges/Opportunities
- Following Feelings: Emotional Decision Making
- Accepting Responsibility
- Not making Concrete Plans
- Important to Seize Opportunities & Things Happen for a Reason
- Being Open for Clues/Signs
- Following the Flow & Being Flexible
- Being Flexible yet Persistent is Crucial
- Staying Positive & Enjoying the Little Things in Life

Migration is an Adventure & Problems are Challenges/Opportunities
The most crucial attitude that influenced the migration process was perceiving migration as an adventure and problems as challenges which provide opportunities for growth. When participants were presented with obstacles, many participants perceived the obstacles as challenges or opportunities that they needed for evolving and that they were ready to deal with them, because otherwise they would not have been presented with them for things happen for a reason. The participants believed that when they are presented with challenges (e.g. migration and the challenges which come with migrating) then one can do two things: one can either give up or one can deal with the challenges. If one decides to give up and not to deal with an issue, the issue will not go away. One will get into basically the same route and will get presented with the challenge again in a different form wherever one is in order to have the opportunity to learn something which was important for the evolution of one’s self. If one decides to deal with the issue presented, then one needs to decide how important it was for one - whether it is an issue which does not affect one and will peter out over time or whether it is an issue which affects one. If it is not important, one should not dwell on it and should let it go and forget about it. However, if it is something important, since it affects one significantly, then one should deal with it. Interpreting migration as an adventure with challenges/opportunities for growth facilitated the migration process, because the perceived the obstacles as something positive rather than negative. In addition, trusting that they only get challenges presented when they are ready for it increased the participants’ confidence that they could deal with the obstacles.

Following Feelings: Emotional Decision Making
As mentioned several times, the participants maintain that only oneself knows what is going on inside one, who one is and what one wants. Therefore, everyone has to make up one’s own mind, and find out what one wants in life and where one wants to live, and to go along one’s own unique path by listening to one’s self, what one’s feelings say and by going along with what crosses one’s mind:

So as a result, you do things, because you feel like it, or because you think that it’s good ... (135)
For this reason, the participants were very conscious of their feelings and listened to them when they made decisions. For instance, several participants stated that they migrated to New Zealand, selected their place to stay, or returned to Germany, because they had a strong feeling:

... it just felt like the right thing to do.

Yes, it was just this feeling. There was, just nowhere else felt the same as we felt [at this specific place in New Zealand]. And so then on the 12 of February we moved into the house

... there was perhaps always something in the back of our minds in New Zealand - which we never talked about, which we were also not aware of – that perhaps something was missing. ... You know, when you’ve the feeling, simply a feeling - you just feel better [in Germany] than in New Zealand - than it’s hard to put it into words. It’s simply, because I have more fun [in Germany]. (136)

The participants valued their feelings. They just accepted and trusted them; they did not question them. In fact, they argued against rationalising their feelings und putting them into words as it is also demonstrated in the following two quotes:

I had a very strong feeling that Scotland was more at home for me than Germany. ... And I don’t think that you should rationalise feelings, because they always lie. A feeling is a feeling, and a feeling has nothing to do with rationale – it is opposite. You feel something and that is it! And if you ask yourself why, then you are betraying yourself, because your feeling has no why.

... it’s hard to put it into words. ... I mean, how can you explain a feeling? Try to explain love! Poets and philosophers have already spoken about it. How should you explain a feeling? Everyone feels different. It’s simply that, perhaps: “You know, we’d come to an end in New Zealand. It was finished, because you noticed somehow: it’d be nice [in Germany] again and after all you’ve had a good experience [migrating and living in New Zealand]. That’s enough actually and it’s okay. Why’s there got to be this deep reason for it? ... you want to explain it rationally perhaps and you can’t, because if you wanted to explain it rationally, then you can ask yourself: why do you go [to New Zealand] at all when you’ve got such a great job [in Germany]? (137)

Consequently, the majority of participants made their decisions throughout the migration process based on their feelings – they continued to follow their heart. Following one’s heart eased the migration process, because decisions based on feelings commonly were right for the particular participant. On the contrary, not following one’s heart when making decisions made the migration process more difficult and contributed to returning. For example, one participant couple who did not listen and follow their feelings stated that this was one of the greatest mistakes they made during their migration process, which had negative consequences. They ignored several warning signs regarding their migration agency, and they listened to and trusted other German immigrants and the migration agency more than their own feelings. As a result, all the establishment plans of this couple fell apart and they put themselves into a difficult position: they had no proper employment when they arrived, did not go to the place which felt right for them, might have missed good opportunities for employment, and moved to a rural area with virtually no cultural life. Not listening to their feelings in the first place set a downward spiral in motion. This included financial stringency and missing out on cultural life. Both conditions were the main contributors to their return.

Accepting Responsibility
The participants accepted that they are responsible for their lives - that they are the creators of their lives - and thus, determine whether they felt bad or well and joyful. The acceptance of responsibility is reflected in several participants’ mentioning or having pictures on their wall with an old German saying: ‘Everybody is the blacksmith of his or her own happiness’ (‘You are the maker of your good fortune’), and by the way they live their lives. Accepting responsibility for their lives facilitated the migration process, because it means that they proactively worked towards creating a fulfilling and joyful life instead of waiting for things to happen
(e.g. proactively doing things to meet other people or to get a job instead of sitting and waiting for it to happen). Further, this proactive attitude not only prevents negative things developing (e.g. not proactively doing things to meet other people or to get a job creates loneliness and financial stringency), but also means they become active and do something when negative things do happen to them instead of pitying themselves (e.g. when not getting a job they try to figure out why they do not get a job, what they can do differently, and do it differently).

Not making Concrete Plans

When following their feelings, some participants did not think much of the consequences:

*What the consequences are, we’ll see. I sort of cope with the consequences when they come. I don’t know what I’m doing tomorrow – I wouldn’t have a clue.*

and did not make concrete plans for the future, because they believe life can not be planned, since things usually come differently anyway and one does not know what opportunities might come along:

*I take things as they come up. ... I haven't got any concrete plans.*

(138)

Yeah, because you can’t plan the life! ... Yeah, because you never know what’s going to happen next week! (139)

Working towards creating a fulfilling and joyful life yet not making concrete plans eased the migration process, because it allowed participants to be flexible and open, to adjust their behaviour to new developments, and to size opportunities when they come along. Because new development and opportunities are things which happen often when life is uncertain, these attitudes and strategies are very valuable.

Important to Seize Opportunities & Things Happen for a Reason

In following their dreams, seizing opportunities was also very important for some participants, because they believe that things happen for a reason and that things are interconnected. Thus, they trusted the process and believed that everything happened as it was meant to be. That is, when something should be, then it would happen like it was supposed to happen – it would work out. In contrast, when something did not happen – when things did not come together, when they did not fit - then it was not meant to happen:

*I think that if it’s meant to be that way, then it is that way and you do it that way. Then nothing gets in the way either. But when something’s not right somewhere – isn’t right – and then there is something which, for you, ... Yeah, then it’s not meant to be, even when you thought ten times that it should be.* (140)

In other words, the participants believed that if works then it works and, if not, then it does not matter either, because then it was not meant to be. The belief that things happen for a reason and are interconnected also assisted decision making. When they had a strong positive feeling and/or things were coming together in a way that made it look like a good opportunity to do something, the participant believed that it was meant to happen and they seized the opportunity, because they trusted that things would work out:
I think things fall into place if you are in the right place. And because we knew that we were in the right place, just because our feeling that was so strong, we just came [to this particular place in New Zealand] and thought something will come up. We were just trusting that.

This belief directly influenced the decision of one participant couple to migrate to New Zealand and the decision of another participant couple to return to Germany:

Yeah that it’s simply meant to be like this: that these job offers came along, that this flat turned up and that we came in October and in no other month. It’s meant to be like this. I’m convinced of it. No one can make me change my mind. (141)

As a result of the belief that things happen for a reason, the participants believe that it is not possible to fail, because even if something did not happen as one had imagined it, there was a reason for why it happened in a particular way and thus, one always wins something out of it:

In a sense one cannot fail, because you always win something out of it. You always have got an experience more, which nobody can take from you. You always have a life experience more! ... One always can still something useful extract from the experience.

Consequently, even when one returns one has not failed, because in that case one might have nevertheless done something important for one’s self. Hence, the participants who returned did not regret having migrated to New Zealand:

That’s everything, it’s all got its reason. It’s all like a chapter, like you’ve got in your life, it’s all a part of it: you learn something, you experience stuff. ... No that’s all experience that you have. And it was a good experience. (144)

This belief reduced pressure on making the migration work, increased trust in decisions, reduced doubts, and protected against disappointment if things did not work.

**Being Open for Clues/Signs**

Those participants were aware that things happen for a reason paid also more attention to what happened around them, in order to pick up clues/signs, or asked for clues/signs. They tried to figure out these clues/signs, and let themselves be guided by these clues/signs. As an illustration, as discussed in detail under *Enlivening the Dream*, one participant couple was unsure whether to migrate or not. They asked God to sent them signs and believe that God did sent them several important clues/signs that they should go. These clues/signs strengthened their decision to migrate and suggested to them that some higher being would look after them. Following clues/sings made participants more confident in their decisions and increased their trust that things would work out.

**Following the Flow & Being Flexible**

Participants also had made good experiences with going along with something – with following the flow. They believe that if they follow their feelings, what crosses their minds, and clues/signs or opportunities, then things would work out, lending support to the belief that in this case a higher being is looking after them. The next quote by a participant who followed the flow when returning to Germany and now live happily in Germany demonstrates the value of following the flow:

I reckon that if we’d intended to go back to Germany and had started up [in New Zealand] in October with the intention of going back, it’d never have worked. ... with the thought: We’ve got to pack it in; we want to go back – its more difficult. But if you just let it all happen as it comes, it works. (142)
Thus, the participants were open to what happened around them, to see opportunities, and to seize the opportunities when they arose. To be able to do so, they knew that it was important to stay flexible – to not see decisions and attitudes as fixed, but to change them according to new information or change in circumstances:

The experience taught me never again to see things as fixed. We feel at home [in New Zealand] and I could say now: ‘I never want to leave again.’ But I don’t, because who knows I might change my mind again.

One participant argued that it is of great importance to do a reality check of your dreams as often as possible, because things constantly change and one has to readapt and redefine in order to live a happy and fulfilled life:

What is today good for you and what you think is the ultimate fulfilling of your dreams, is tomorrow definitely not. You have to be able to change and live and readapt and redefine. If you don’t do that, you are dead.

Being Flexible yet Persistent is Crucial

While it is important to be flexible, participants believe it is crucial to be both flexible/ unreliable and persistent, and to redefine problems into solutions, because they believe that out of disasters come good opportunities:

Perseverance. I think perseverance is the most important thing – never to give up. Never take a no for a no. Always find a new solution, a new angle, a new thing. Look hard. Don’t get discouraged - persevere. If you really want to do it - you can do it, whatever you do. ... Perseverance is a little bit like a bulldog: when you close your jaws you can’t let go. You are that much involved and you don’t have that much choice - you rather would die holding onto, than letting go. A part of perseverance has that. A part of perseverance is not just a mental decision, it is a state of mind. And it can also lead you definitely into strife if you are not being able to make a choice any more. I found out that it is important that you wouldn’t persevere in the wrong direction. That means, when you get a feeling something doesn’t work that you are open enough to find other solutions, which you try out and reapply or newly apply. The ultimate aim still stays the same, but you find out different ways. You can’t just persevere blindly in one path. Perseverance is ultimately to get to your goal, but you must be incredibly un-persevering and flexible and creative if you want to get there.

... If you are too reliable, if you really think you can rely on what you have marked out and not on anything else, then that is stupidity. For example, when we did the [product] thing [they own a company which exports products to Germany], and when we actually started in Germany with the [one product], this [product] was a total disaster. This [product] cost us more money and made us a huge loss of several hundred thousands in the first few months, because everything went wrong: the logistics went wrong, and the plane went wrong, and the insurance didn’t pay, and every single thing. And in the end, it even didn’t work out number wise, because the cost was not economically to the return we got afterwards. But then, by chance, we sent a shipment that was originally destined for Japan to Germany, because it missed the flight to Japan. So the [producer] said: “Okay, you have so many Japanese people in Germany, there is this big colony of Japanese in Düsseldorf, why don’t you try to sell the [product] there?” And that became the core business. And that is another thing that you all of a sudden let up an opportunity and don’t reject, and are able to redirect and refocus, and see all of a sudden something else. (Petra: So out of a disaster can come a good opportunity?) I think always out of disaster comes good opportunities.

However, at the same time it is also necessary to redefine apparent opportunities into disasters in order to find out whether the dream or idea you pursue makes you really happy:

You could find out that all those things that you believe you want to come true might be the wrong things to happen. You have an idea and you have a longing and you have a love, and you have this incredible belief
about what will make you happy and you strive for it. And the more you strive for it, the more it becomes a disaster. There is a saying in Germany: “Please God prevent my prayers to become true”, because there is often times in what you really think your sake lies in is just the hell you make for yourself. (Petra: And that is why you always say: “Do a reality check!”?) Very, very often - very much.

Not persisting in realizing their dream and not being flexible enough made the migration more difficult. For example, one returner couple believed that they actually did not realize their dream - they forgotten why they actually left Germany and came to New Zealand. When they realized that they did not like the place where they lived in New Zealand, they were not courageous and flexible enough to move to a place which seemed to represent everything they had imagined for themselves. They were afraid that he would not find work there and that it would not be good for the children to move again. Hence, they became more and more dissatisfied with the place they lived and this contributed to their return.

**Staying Positive & Enjoying the Little Things in Life**

Another general attitude that assisted the participants overcoming the migration obstacles was to be positive and to consciously focus on and enjoy the little things in life - to enjoy each day:

... that’s also probably pretty important too – to enjoy the little things. To make a big event out of the little things. And even if it just means at night the evening meal: to sit together and just to chat and to do stuff. Or just to see that in a positive light. Simply to enjoy each day – that’s what you should do. (145)

A positive general outlook lifted participants up and attracted positive experiences setting in motion an upward spiral. In contrast, a negative basic attitude towards leads to migrants noticing more, or concentrated more on, negative things. Once they were on this negative path, many little things bothered them, setting in motion a negative spiral which dragged them even more into a depressive state. Comparisons to Germany seem, in particular, detrimental, because the increasingly resulted in perceiving the life in New Zealand negatively, and becoming dissatisfied and depressed.

**Social Support**

Social support emanated from Germany and New Zealand. Both sources can be further divided into individual and institutional support:

- **Support from New Zealanders**
- **Support from Other German Immigrants: Ethnic Support**
- **Support from New Zealand**
- **Support from Germany**

**Support from New Zealanders**
The hard beginning was sweetened for many participants by a honeymoon period with New Zealanders. Especially in the beginning, there was much interest and effort on both sides to get to know one another. As a result, there was lively interaction between the participants and New Zealanders:

The first year was sort of the honeymoon. People were curious about us: asked about the house, asked what we were doing, and how we were doing things, and everybody wanted to know us.

Particularly in the beginning, the participants received much support from New Zealanders. New Zealanders let them stay in their houses until they found their own accommodation, lent them furniture until containers arrived, and helped unload containers. New Zealanders also helped with learning English by willingly taking time until the participants found the right words, correcting them, giving them private lessons, and not laughing at them when they made mistakes. Further, New Zealanders also assisted some participants finding
jobs by showing the participants how to write Curriculum Vitae in New Zealand and using their personal connections to locate jobs. Furthermore, New Zealanders facilitated the building up of social networks by putting participants in contact with other Germans. For some participants, especially women, New Zealanders became a substitute for the family they had left behind:

So the women in [this breastfeeding mums group] became like a part of my family – surrogate family. There was no granny, no aunt, no brother, no relatives at all [in New Zealand], only new friends and acquaintances - all new people in my life, who didn’t know me very long and whom I didn’t know very long. (148)

The participants greatly appreciated these various modes of support because, as the above quote also shows, in the beginning, they did not know anybody and receiving this support eased the early phases of establishment.

Although the lively interaction with New Zealanders in the beginning, the participants’ intention to integrate themselves into New Zealand society by interacting with New Zealanders, and great efforts into establishing friendships with New Zealanders, the interactions between the participants and New Zealanders unfortunately petered out over time. Main reasons were a interaction of factors related to New Zealanders and other German immigrants. On the one hand Differences in Social Interactions, Different Friendship Concepts, and Discontent with Some Characteristics of New Zealanders made it difficult for participants to get in contact with and build up deeper friendships with New Zealanders. On the other hand, the participants automatically developed friendships with other German immigrants for various reasons, which we will discuss in the next section.

**Support from Other German Immigrants: Ethnic Support**

In the beginning, the participants also received much help from other German immigrants: their friends and/or German immigrants who had attracted them to New Zealand in the first place. The help these German immigrants offered was similar to the help New Zealanders provided in the beginning. However, other German immigrants could provide additional support because they share a similar background - they speak German and went through the migration process too. Other German immigrants helped by providing accommodation until the participants found their own accommodation or arranging accommodation for them, lending them household goods and furniture until the container arrived, arranging school for children, and giving advice and support in formal issues (e.g. buying a house, medical insurance, etc.). They also supported the participants in their job finding activities with insider knowledge and English skills. Their assistance included writing advertisements and selecting appropriate newspapers; driving them to potential employers; and translating in job interviews and managing and negotiating contracts with potential employers; giving them a job in their own business; and writing job offers for permanent residence applications. This assistance was especially valuable since, in the beginning, most participants did not have a car, their English was not good enough to work out the details and conditions of contracts, and they did not have the knowledge of how employment works in New Zealand (e.g., employment laws, contracts, wage structure).

On top of this practical help, German immigrants could also provide much valuable ethnic support, because the have a similar cultural background, went through or go through the trials and tribulations of the migration process themselves, and speak German. Ethnic support greatly eased the migration process in severable ways. Speaking German too allowed other German immigrants to speak with the participants in their native tongue. Conversing in German increased the well-being particularly of those participants who migrated with only little English for it allowed them to express their feelings and issues in their own language to somebody who could very well relate to their experiences. The participants felt safe to moan about things they do not like in New Zealand and to criticise things with other German immigrants. Other German immigrants could empathise well with these issues and could pass on solutions for they usually encountered similar issues themselves. Additionally, other German immigrants were able to assist them dealing with specific German issues. For example, one participant founded together with other German immigrants a German playgroup in order for their children to develop and maintain their children’s German.
Although other German immigrants could provide highly valuable support, especially in the beginning – when they needed most support - most Germans were not eager to associate with other German immigrants for several interconnected reasons. Firstly, German history still casts its shadows over Germans. On the one hand, even though the participants experienced World War II only as children or were born after World War II, guilt and shame feelings are still part of their consciousness. However, because they belong to the post-war generation, they feel not responsible for what happened. On the other hand, when foreigners meet Germans, they often comment negatively, because they hold the image that Germany is a Nazi country and put all Germans into this box. To avoid these reactions, some participants do not dare to say that they are Germans in foreign countries and do not desire to associate with other Germans:

*And that’s this old burden that still hangs around our neck and is even now still connected to our children. And I don’t know how many hundred years that’ll go on for. It’s just this old burden which we carry around with us. Everyone, I reckon.* (149)

Consequently, some participants were concerned that, if they would associate with other German immigrants and formed German communities, they would attract attention and evoke negative war related comments. Further, although not directly stated as a reason for leaving Germany, the analysis suggests that some participants wanted also to migrate because they wanted to escape this negative part of their past. However, associating with other German immigrants would have reminded them of this negative past.

*The second reason participants gave for not wanting to associate with other German immigrant is:*

*If I wanted to be together with lots of Germans, I might as well have stayed in Germany.*

According to Petra, this explanation is very often given as an answer when one asks German immigrants why they are not eager to associate with other Germans. It might be that this reason is connected to their dislike of some German characteristics, which was one of the reasons why participants wanted to leave Germany (see Chapter Three). It seem that they attribute the characteristics they do not like in Germans to other German immigrants, but not considering that other German immigrants might be more similar to them than to the Germans living in Germany.

The third reason is that they do not want to be a German - they desire to transcend cultural boundaries. This desire is in harmony with their desire to be themselves:

*I have no interest, for instance, to maintain my German culture or whatever. I like New Zealand, because it is multi-cultural. I don’t want to be a German, I want to put my cultural background into the mix.*

The fourth reason why participants are not eager to associate with other German immigrants is that the participants wanted to integrate themselves into the New Zealand culture:

*I mean, we wanted to fit in there and I suppose didn’t even want to particularly keep up the German customs or to found a German colony or anything.* (150)

It is very likely that the desire to not be a German and to integrate themselves into New Zealand’s society results from the ‘shadow of the wars’ and is a means of leaving the negative past behind and to create something new for their and their childrens’ future.

The desire to integrate themselves was also one reason for the participants not to join German Clubs:

*That would have been too dumb for us, because I feel that is always connected with home: Daddle a da and hoist the flag and so on. Yeah I don’t really go in for that sort of thing - for me that’s got a bit of a conservative sort of a character, I reckon.* (Petra: *Why?*) I don’t know, yeah, because it’s mostly somehow
these old bags, who try to retain the good old days. And that’s not it of course. And we want to fit in of course somewhere, even when we were only ever together with Germans. (151)

This quote suggests also that there are generational differences in the German immigrant population. Whereas the older generation, which arrived during or shortly after the world wars, seem generally more to cling onto their German culture, which is evident in the German Clubs which they formed and where they cultivate German traditions, more recent generations of German immigrants wish to integrate themselves and to transcend the cultural boundaries. Despite not being eager to associate with other Germans and intending to integrate themselves, the participants reported that they seemed to automatically develop friendships with other German immigrants, resulting in a circle of friends that consisted mainly of Germans:

So we went [to the German playgroup], met Germans and sort of seemed to make automatic friends with different people. It went relatively quick that we had all sorts of German friends. I mean 90% of the people we know here are German.

Automatically! We almost had the feeling that you can’t help it. (152)

The reasons for Germans ending up with a circle of friends consisting mainly of Germans are manifold. Firstly, the participants find it, in contrast to conversing with New Zealanders, easy to communicate with other Germans and love to have conversations in German:

You don’t have to think so much about all the subtleties of interaction, because you can expect that, they send and receive sort of the same.

Yeah, at a party, where they all talk German together and you could talk at length without having to think how to talk. (153)

Secondly, the participants feel safe to moan about things they do not like in New Zealand and to criticise things with other German immigrants. Moaning and discussing their experiences and what moves them with people who have had similar experiences, helps them to let off steam, to normalise their experiences, and to gain a better awareness and understanding of what is going on (e.g. figuring out the differences outlined in Culture Shock’late: Difficulties Interacting & Building Up Friendships):

I really do believe that it is more cultural than just my personality clashing with somebody else’s or so, because I hear it a lot from other people from other cultures, for instance. ... I certainly don’t feel alone and I think that is why I tend to have friends with those experiences, because, yes you can sit and have a glass of wine and joke about these things without the really sad feeling that you are not offending anybody - these things usually stay within the circles.

Thirdly, the participants tend to get in contact with other German immigrants because of similar needs they have. For example, one participant founded a German playgroup in order for their children to learn and maintain German. Through this private initiative, the couple met many other German immigrants. Other participant couples, in turn, heard of a German playgroup in their area, liked the idea, and met many other German immigrants there. German playgroups provide important social support, particularly for women:

I went once a week to the German playgroup and that’s how we built up our social contacts. We pretty much live in the German community. Our main contacts, our main support network – also with [my daughter], which is really important - is pretty much what came from this German playgroup, friends. So that was really good for me at that time, that, to be able to have Kaffeeklatsch [chats over coffee] with the women there, you know?

Other needs include speaking German, interacting in German with Germans, moaning, and ethnic social support.
In short, the participants like to associate with other like-minded German immigrants, because with other like-minded German immigrants they can be themselves:

... that it is one of the lessons I have learned: that you can be yourself with people who are like you. Not necessarily from Germany or so, but who have an appreciation of ... yes, basically of the alienation that you have as an immigrant.

They can learn from one another, and can provide mutual support for one another. As a consequence of the desire to be with other German immigrants, informal groups or social networks formed, which included German Playgroups, Strickgruppe (knitting group) and German Women’s Clubs formed by women for women, Skatrunden (scat circle) and beer evenings consisting mainly of men, and/or they just met every Wednesday for their German ‘Abendbrot-Kult’ (German Dinner Cult: eating German food and speaking German).

However, getting to know other Germans was often difficult, because there are no obvious German communities due to the reasons discussed above and Germans do not have, in contrast to other immigrant groups like Asians, Greek, or Italians, special body features that assist in identifying others of one’s kind. Typically, Germans only recognise each other on their German accent. For these reasons, New Zealanders who knew Germans, putting them into contact with other German immigrants was a great help.

While other German immigrants could provide tremendous support, they could also impede establishment, as the experience of one participant couple shows. They paid a migration agency run by a German immigrant a huge sum of money, but found out that the practices of this agency were illegal and dishonest, and that much of the information they provided was wrong and outdated (see Experience with Service Providing Institutions for more details). In addition, the participants found out that other German immigrants lured them into a rural town, because they felt lonely there:

... we were still in the motel and [my partner] told me: “I’ve met a few [German] people, who are kind of nice. And they also said one can live pretty well in [this town]. “, and all that sort of thing. Yeah, pretty obvious, because sometime later then, when we were living in [that town] and I was sitting there having a beer with [one of these people my partner had met and who became a friend of ours], [this friend] said to me kind of matter of fact: “Yeah why do you think we were so keen that you move here?”. They just didn’t want to be alone there. [The partner of this friend] had been alone there all those years and probably suffered a fair bit, and then was pretty happy that she had found someone like [my partner], the chemistry was right and so on. And he said that so coldly … and then something dropped on me like a penny …

(155)

Because of these negative experiences with other German immigrants, this couple concluded that:

The worst thing that can happen to you, when you go overseas as a German is meeting a German, who seems to want to help you, but in reality he only sees the chance with someone who is new and inexperienced, so to make a bit out of it - he tries to reorganise himself at your cost. That’s actually the problem. (156)

Moreover, having a social support network that consists mainly of other German immigrants may impede learning English and figuring out social differences. Both make it more difficult to deal with obstacles and to function well in the wider New Zealand society. A more balanced social network consisting of German immigrants, immigrants from other countries, and New Zealanders would facilitate the establishment in many respects.

Support from New Zealand
Notably, no statements, except one, emerged in the accounts of the participants regarding the social support provided by New Zealand society and the comment we found suggests that New Zealand does not support immigrants once they are in New Zealand:
And then you get no support whatsoever from the New Zealand government when you are an immigrant. The only thing that they are interested in is getting money out of you. And, yeah, you have to help yourself really. There is not much going on – well, not when I came here and not that I’m aware of. But anyway, if you are an immigrant here, you have to find your way through – there is not much help.

This statement clearly expresses disappointment and anger that he did not get support after he arrived in New Zealand. Petra’s personal experience supports this statement; many German immigrants feel left alone in the beginning. This state of affairs suggests either that there is no support available or that the support available is not appropriate. To our knowledge there existed only three organisations in New Zealand that provide potential support for German immigrants at the time of the study. One is the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils, which we introduced in Chapter Two. This nationwide organisation could provide potential useful assistance in representing the interests of German immigrants. However, the participants did not know of this organisation. The other two organisations are Migrant Resource Centres. One is the Ethnic Centre (formerly Migrant Resource Centre) in Palmerston North. The Ethnic Centre is a very remarkable voluntary initiative run by migrants and refugees, which provides practical help to new immigrants that exactly meet the needs of new migrants (please refer to Appendix H for details). At the time of the study, the Palmerston North Ethnic Centre was only a local initiative and did not exist nationwide. The other organisation is the Auckland Regional Migrant Service, which was established at the end of this study in March 2003. This centre is the culmination of a three year project between the New Zealand Immigration Service, the Auckland City and Manukau City Councils, Housing NZ, Ministry of Education, Citizens Advice Bureaux Auckland City, and Work & Income NZ. The initiative also involved extensive support from a range of ethnic and new migrant community organisations, and social service providers. (http://www.arms-mrc.org.nz/OurOrigins.html).

**Support from Germany**

The only German institution providing support to German immigrants in New Zealand is the German Embassy in Wellington, which we discussed in Chapter Four. Similar to the support from New Zealand, there were not many statements about this institution in the narratives of the participants and those provided were not favourable:

Yeah, so then there’s the embassy. I went there once for some reason. Yeah, you can forget the embassy. Air raid shelter! When you want some information about the actual technicalities of life: Where can I get fresh yeast? Or where can I get German bread? They’ve got no idea. (158)

[The German Embassy building] is like an air raid shelter: bullet proof glass, barbed wire - not particularly inviting, not open for much. They’ve got these limited opening hours where you’ve got to make an appointment first and a button outside on the front gate. (157)

These statements suggest that the participants did not perceive the embassy as inviting communication with German immigrants and that the embassy does not provide the kind of support the participants expect from them and need.

**Experience with Service Providing Institutions**

The participants sought service or received service provided by the NZIS, NZQA, professional bodies, a migration agency, employment service, temping offices, and regional development officers. The experiences and their influence with all these institutions except the migration agency we have discussed earlier. As mentioned, one participant couple employed a migration agency run by other German immigrants to ensure that they receive the permanent residence. However, the practice employed by this particular agency was
dishonest and illegal. For example, they told the participants that they had found a job for him in New Zealand for a year. Thus, the participant couple trusted expected that the man had a job to go to for at least a year. Based on this knowledge, they quit their jobs in Germany and migrated. However, when they arrived and he went to the employer, the employer told him that the job offer was a fake and that he gave him the job offer only to help him getting permanent residence. As the participant questioned the migration agency, they told him that:

*No, this whole 'job offer' is really only useful so that I can get my points up.* (159)

In addition, much of the information the migration agency gave was wrong or out-dated, and they withheld important information. For instance, when the participant couple was angry about the job falling through, the migration agent said that, to survive in New Zealand, he would need to open his own business, which is wrong. Likewise, when the participants rang the agents and told them that they would like to establish themselves in Wanganui and Auckland, the agents told them that they should not go to Wanganui, because this town is very dangerous on account of the Maori revolts, and that they should not go to Auckland, because the unemployment rate in Auckland is very high. The agency told them that they should come to the particular place they had suggested, which was a rural town with little job and cultural possibilities. The participants became confused and were unsure, but believed them because:

*And yeah, then you're not sure, but you're saying: “He’s been here for ever and must know what’s what.”* (160)

Before the couple migrated, the agency had also told them that she would have good opportunities in her profession as a nurse, but did not tell them that she needed to apply for professional recognition and sit the exams again in order to get her qualifications recognised. As a result of these incidents, the participant couple had no proper job when they arrived, did not go to the place which felt right to them, missed good opportunities for employment, and moved to a rural area with virtually no cultural life. These consequence contributed in major ways to their return.

In sum, as a consequence of the poor services provided by German and New Zealand these institutions, it was more difficult for participants to establish themselves. They had to find their own way in an unknown job environment, could not work in their professions, and had to work below their qualifications. This led to financial stringency and contributed to their decision to their return to Germany.

**SUMMARY**

Altogether, the beginning of their new lives in New Zealand was very hard for the participants, because they were busy, and were confronted with high uncertainty and many obstacles during their establishment. The first year was the hardest. After that, living in New Zealand became increasingly easier. Particularly in the beginning, the participants were challenged by a great variety of issues relating to things they left behind in Germany as well as issues relating to their new life in New Zealand, which suggests that realising the dream did not only entail starting a new life where many things were different, but also experiencing the loss of those things left behind. Obstacles relating to things left behind included issues concerning their family and friends (e.g. missing family and friends, guilt feelings of leaving them behind, fear of something bad happening to family and friends) and cultural things left behind (e.g. food, traditions). Obstacles relating to new life in New Zealand included drop in living standard and financial stringency, disappointments, discontent with some characteristics of New Zealanders, language issues, practical issues, visa/permit application issues, work issues, culture shock’late: difficulties interacting and building up friendships, several issues concerning children, and leisure issues. Language crystallised as the central barrier, because insufficient language skills negatively affected all other areas of life.
The establishment of the participants – what obstacles they experienced and how they dealt with them - was influenced by pre-migration factors and conditions, specific and general individual attitudes/beliefs and strategies, social support in New Zealand, and experience with service providing institutions. The historical and cultural conditions in Germany, New Zealand, and England affected all other influences. To manage the various obstacles they were presented with throughout the establishment, the participants used many different strategies. However, the beliefs/attitudes the participants held were very important too, for they influenced, firstly, whether the participants perceived something as an issue of concern in the first place, and, secondly, they had an impact on the strategies the participants chose.
REAPING THE FRUITS OF LIVING THE DREAM

Whatever you do - even if you go back - you have done something, which might be quite important for you.

(Participant)

... you can't fail in a sense - unless you break your back or something. But you don't ever fail, because you always gain something from it! You always have an experience, which no one can take away from you! You always have a life experience more!

(Participant)
Living one’s dream was always a success. Although all participants experienced difficulties during their establishment and while living in New Zealand, they agreed that it was impossible to fail, because irrespective of the level of distress the participants experienced during migration or whether they stayed or returned, through experiencing and dealing with the migration challenges they gained important new experiences and knowledge about themselves and the world around them. Because this was true for stayers and returners, one cannot speak of ‘successful’ migration when migrants stayed in the country they migrated to and ‘failed’ migration when they return to their home country. These conclusions are evident in that the narratives of both stayers and returners contain accounts regarding their evolvement towards a more transcendent inner sense of self/identity; their further evolvement of their characteristics and values, and beliefs and attitudes; them gaining of many new abilities; and them becoming stronger and more confident persons. These evolvements go hand in hand with a better understanding of how the world works. Consequently, the participants achieved what they desired to achieve at the outset of their migration and they broke into new dimensions.

This chapter is designed to provide some insights into the ways in which the participants evolved and the personal outcomes of this process. It presents the findings of the selective code, *Reaping the Fruits of Living the Dream*. This selective code is divided into four axial codes:

- **Evolvement Towards Transcendent Inner Sense of Self**
- **Positive Attitude Change and Valuable Insights**
- **Stayers: Outcomes**
- **Returners: Outcomes**

The first two axial codes represent a summary of the outcomes, which apply to all participants. However, each participant spoke of and/or displayed various parts of the presented outcomes in different combinations and to differing degrees. The last two codes provide an overview of the outcomes that emerged from the analysis as being specific for stayers and returners.

**Evolvement Towards Transcendent Inner Sense of Self**

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, when migrating to New Zealand, participants not only started a new life; but migration also presented them with many challenges, which provided opportunities for gaining new experiences that facilitated their gaining a deeper understanding of their selves. This, in turn, facilitated the further evolvement of an inner sense of self/identity (i.e. identity from within as opposed to being identified by outside things). The two most crucial processes that underlied the evolvement process were consciously choosing what to let go of and what to incorporate from the German heritage and from the New Zealand culture and detachment of sense of self from a particular place. These two processes occurred simultaneously and interacted, resulting in a spiral-like growth process in which they gradually unfolded their potential and adapted. The conditions in New Zealand supported the evolvement in vital ways. The degree of evolvement at the time of migration contributed in crucial ways to staying and returning. Four codes crystallised:

- **Process One: Letting go and/or Incorporating?**
- **Process Two: Detachment of Sense of Self from Particular Place**
- **Degree of Evolvement Contributed to Staying or Returning**
- **Conditions in New Zealand Facilitated Personal Growth**

**Process One: Letting go and/or Incorporating?**

Leaving their country of birth – leaving their own culture and history behind – *and* living in New Zealand as a foreigner made it easier for the participants to deepen their understanding of themselves and to evolve their unique self for three interrelated reasons. Firstly, they could break free from being a known id/entity.
Leaving Germany meant that the participants were not reminded and did not need to adhere to the traditional ‘appropriate’ German way of doing things; they became free from cultural norms; family history; prejudice; clichés; stressful, everyday routine life; and identification through material things:

I believe that [leaving your own culture and history] can make it easier, because you leave behind certain things: certain stereotypes, certain prejudices. (161)

I reckon it’s easier, if you are not stuck in the daily routine, where everybody says: “Being German is …,” - yeah whatever – “is discipline or driving a mercedes or whatever.” … And that starts already there. I mean the worth of something is defined by its external appearance. And when you take it further the “I drive a big car, so I am big” - this identifying with the object and not with yourself. (162)

Secondly, when the participants arrived in New Zealand, they did not need to identify with their new culture straight away, providing space to experiment with their selves. As foreigners in another country, it was as if they were in a no man’s land: nobody knew them and, in the beginning, nobody expected them to behave in certain appropriate ways as a foreigner. Therefore, they could break away from being a known id/entity and experiment with themselves:

And even just for the reason that you don’t need that – you don’t have to identify ... (163)

Thirdly, the confrontation with a new cultural environment, and the necessity to find their way in this new cultural environment, facilitated a deeper awareness and understanding of their own culture heritage and presented alternative perspectives allowing conscious integration of things from their German heritage and their new environment. The combination of the freedom to break away from their German heritage and being a known identity, and needing to survive in a new environment made the participants greatly open and attentive to the ways of living in New Zealand. The participants felt like small children or beginners who need to be open for and attentive to every thing new, because they need to learn many new things to be able to function in their environment. Thus, like a sponge, they eagerly absorbed new information, and learnt by trial and error as they went along.

However, the participants were discerning in the process of absorbing new information and learning ways of living. The interaction with a new cultural environment with a different language and history, and with different ways of living, attitudes, beliefs, and traditions, increased the participants’ consciousness of their German culture and history, which they had taken for granted when they lived in Germany and thus were not consciously of. Through interacting with their new environment, they were forced to deal with and question their selves, and their German history and culture.

So then you’re a stranger in a strange land and, therefore, you deal with things in a completely different way, also with yourself - with your own identity: What actually am I? Am I German?

With respect to history, the participants themselves believe that Germans have a disturbed national consciousness as a consequence of the two world wars (see Chapter 5 under Social Support). With respect to culture, the participants stated that, when they lived in Germany, they saw the German culture negatively and critically. However, through living in New Zealand, they increasingly became aware of their cultural heritage and started to appreciate parts of it. The positive perception might also be the result of their sorting out the desirable and the less desirable things in their German heritage, which meant that they could choose what aspects of their German heritage they wanted to keep and integrate into their selves. Hence, although the participants had already lived for a number of years in New Zealand (5 to 17 years), they feel and perceive themselves culturally as Germans and that they will always have some ‘Germanness’ in them:

I culturally see myself as a German. That’s my heritage, that’s my background, my upbringing. Yeah, that’s my cultural background and I don’t think I’ll ever lose that ...
I have my upbringing - my cultural heritage comes from Germany ... It is my language. It is probably my way of thinking. To a certain degree it’s my traditions.

Being more conscious of their cultural heritage made it possible for the participants to sort out the desirable and the less desirable aspects in their heritage, to choose what they wanted to keep, and to integrate these aspects into their new selves.

At the same time, through interacting with New Zealanders and other immigrants the participants experienced and became aware of different ways of living and different attitudes, beliefs, and traditions, which altered and added to their self/identity. The experience and awareness of different perspectives put them into a position in which they could figure out the aspects they liked and the aspects they did not like in New Zealand, and choose what they wanted to integrate into their selves. One stayer called this process ‘becoming a bit kiwianised’. For example, over time he has become less punctual, less precise, and more relaxed about deadlines. Punctuality, precision, and respect for authorities are perceived as typical German traits. He liked that change in his attitudes, because it made him more flexible and contributed to his well-being. He does not feel bad every time he is late, forgets something, or misses a deadline. Another stayer feels that New Zealanders had changed him. However, he does not see that as something negative either, because he could choose – he could decide in which ways he changed.

As result of these restructuring processes, the participants, on the one hand, kept aspects from Germany, but also transcending their German ‘national identity’ towards their very own, unique inner sense of self/identity:

I’m still German, but; a but! And then with this everyone can bring his or her ‘buts’ into it: What am I really? Or who am I really? (164)

On the other hand, the participants also incorporate those aspects from New Zealand, or other countries they have lived in, which they felt or thought served them best – they try to find their own unique way of living: by incorporating what feels right to them from different countries:

I’m not trying to be, to do, well to be like a New Zealand place or whatever. ... I just do things how I think that they should be done. If they are by chance New Zealand, or German or God knows, I don’t really mind. But I am definitely not trying to adjust to New Zealand standards and I am not wanting to either.

For example, they created their own unique tradition by incorporating different traditions they like from different countries:

Summer Christmas – I still can’t get used to it. You know, things like that. But summer Christmas is actually – I’m not Christian, but of course, you know, having grown up in a Christian society, I observed festivals like that. And I love Christmas actually, but I don’t really celebrate it here. ... I miss those traditions a bit, but on the other hand I celebrate Guy Fawkes - with a bad conscience I have to say, but I love fireworks. Maybe that’s the Germanness in me that I miss fireworks and so I happily latch onto customs like Guy Fawkes. A little bit of a hodgepodge ... We also do Halloween. Halloween was always my favourite American festival – love it! Absolutely adore Halloween! I mean I always think it’s odd, here you live in New Zealand and you celebrate – as a German – you celebrate an American festival, you know. It’s just odd. It really is!

However, at the time, and also as a result of their evolvement towards a transcendent inner sense of self, they are able to accept, respect, and tolerate aspects of the New Zealand way of living, which they do not like so much:

There is always some differences in things you are not used to - certain habits people have. Because you have to adapt - you can’t force New Zealanders to the German way of life, you know. You can sort of preserve your tradition, but when you come together with New Zealanders, you can’t force them to accept your way of life, because even in Germany, the Bavarian react different than the people from Hamburg

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Ultimately, the participants transcended the national boundaries and evolved into:

... something that goes beyond your cultural heritage and what the life here is, you know.

... I think I’ve transcended that in the person that I am is a German-New Zealander.

In other words, transcending national identities seems to be a result of the evolvement towards an inner sense of self. Therefore, the transcendent sense of self is a component of inner sense of self.

Process Two: Detachment of Sense of Self from Particular Place

Through being more conscious of their cultural heritage, some participants realised that they had much of their cultural heritage within them. This realisation allowed them to detach the connection between their cultural heritage as a place and their self, and to simultaneously internalise the parts of their cultural heritage they liked into their sense of self, which contributed to the further evolvement of their inner sense of self. One stayer used the metaphor of being ‘de-rooted’ to refer to the process of becoming detached and letting go of the connection between his cultural heritage as place and his self, and simultaneously internalising his cultural heritage:

I am de-rooted. I have my upbringing - my cultural heritage comes from Germany, but I have that mostly in me. ... those roots are probably within me and they are not dependent on the place where I live. (Petra: What do you mean then by roots?) Heritage! I said cultural heritage, upbringing. It is my language. It is probably my way of thinking. To a certain degree it’s my traditions, and so on. And I don’t need to live in Germany to have them, even that I’m more German now than probably when I was a younger man. ...

In other words, through living away from Germany and living in another country, the ‘Germanness’ of participants has become independent of the place where they live. Those participants who transcended national identity have their cultural heritage, which was transmitted to them during their upbringing by their family and the people around them, within them and can carry it with them. Thus, they do not need Germany as a place, or their family to feel their connection with their German heritage, to feel complete and thus, well. As a consequence, they have become very settled in their selves. Being settled within their selves has given them the confidence to open up to new cultural influences from New Zealand, since they were confident that these new influences would not shake their selves. This openness, in turn, facilitates the processes of letting go and/or internalising and thus, the evolvement towards a transcendent inner sense of self.

Degree of Evolvement Contributed to Staying or Returning

When the participants migrated, they varied in how far they had already evolved towards an inner sense of self and an identity that transcends national boundaries. Those participants who had proceeded through much of the maturation/preparation process (see Chapter Three) and thus, had experienced and dealt with many challenges, had already an advanced sense of self/identity (i.e. good knowledge of their selves and settled in their own selves) and had many useful abilities/strategies when they migrated. Hence, the migration challenges did not disturb their sense of themselves:

... I was already beginning, mid-thirty, pretty much settled. ... I knew myself much better. It wasn’t, the whole experience of coming here didn’t really shake my inner core or so.

Accordingly, they were able to better manage the challenges of the migration process and learn from them. Also, they had confidence that new influences would not shake their selves. Hence, they were able to stay open to new cultural influences in New Zealand. That meant, on the one hand, that they could easier and quicker figure out the subtle cultural differences between Germany and New Zealand meaning they made less social blunders and behaved more appropriately in social situations, which eased their migration.
other hand, their greater awareness of social differences meant they were in a better position to consciously choose what to let go and what to incorporate. Consequently, they evolved more easily further towards a transcendent inner sense of self. Both processes increased the likelihood of staying. In contrast, when the participants were not ready for the migration, when they did not go at all or to a lesser extent go through the maturation/preparation process, they did not have the experiences and thus, did not know their selves well enough when they migrated. The unsettling and demanding migration experiences shattered and disturbed their sense of herself. As a result, they questioned their selves, became very depressed, and greatly suffered emotionally. In order to manage, they needed to protect their selves from further disturbing outside influences by closing themselves off. This meant they could no longer be open to their new environment and thus, they could not figure out and cope with their new environment, contributing further to their distress. These processes aggregated their migration and they could not transcend as much towards an inner sense of self/identity. This downward spiral contributed to their return to Germany.

However, although the migration was very disturbing for these participants, they nevertheless gained valuable knowledge about their selves. This process suggests that leaving their country of birth and living in another country facilitated the participants’ quest of finding their own true selves, if they were ready for this challenge. The degree to which the participants were able to evolve towards an inner sense of self was one factor contributing to staying or returning.

**Conditions in New Zealand Facilitated Personal Growth**

The above outlined evolvement processes were greatly supported by the conditions in New Zealand. Several participants stated that the conditions in New Zealand were conducive for being themselves, finding their selves, and growing into new things. In New Zealand they feel freer and they do not feel oppressed as they had felt in Germany. The facilitating conditions appear to result from the low population density, the young history of New Zealand, and the fact that New Zealand is at the beginning of its developmental cycle and thus provides many opportunities.

Firstly, the participants felt that New Zealand gave them abundant space to be themselves, because the New Zealand society is more flexible and more accepting of differences than German society. As a result, they feel that they have more breathing and living space, and that they can do things more the way they want to do them. For instance, because there are often no formal qualifications required for working in particular jobs (i.e. instead personal characteristics and talent are more decisive) and professional detours are ‘normal’, the participants could try things out and gain many experiences, which enabled them to gain more knowledge about themselves. Because the quest for self-knowledge and thirst for experiences and for learning new things are central characteristics of the participants, they feel more alive, freer, less burdened, and can see a more exciting future ahead of them in New Zealand. The statement of feeling freer is well reflected in the data: I found it across all narratives. One participant summarised well this feeling of being alive and the outcomes the participants experienced when living in New Zealand as compared to Germany:

>You don’t take yourself so seriously anymore. You don’t take the country seriously anymore. You have other horizons. You get other priorities. You are more open. You live much more intensively than when you are run off your feet, like [in Germany] where you’re up to your neck in work. ... Then there’s this bureaucracy that you just can’t get away from. (165)

That the participants indeed acquired a deeper knowledge and understanding of their selves in New Zealand is well reflected in the changes of their attitudes. This is particularly well demonstrated in the experience of one participant couple:

>**We had a lot of time to find out about ourselves, what we really wanted, because [the place where we live in New Zealand] is a place, I mean, there is no, you have got no movie theatre, you have got no restaurants, they have got no shops here. So you are very much really relying. And because it is very much such a small place, everybody knows what you are doing; you are always in the spotlight somehow. You are very much relying on yourself. ... But we found out that you actually don’t need all these outside things to stimulate**
yourselves. That you can be very happy just with yourselves and what is around you. ... I mean you just find out about yourself, I guess, that you are actually able to spend time with yourself. I mean, it might sound silly, but a lot of people can’t spend time with themselves.

Secondly, New Zealand society facilitated growth in the participants by valuing and trusting people and their abilities, and by giving them more opportunities to contribute to the community. This point is well demonstrated in the example of the experience of one participant couple. New Zealanders trusted the couple to set up a marketing company for the former’s products without the couple having the formal qualifications to do something like this. The New Zealanders trusted the couple solely based on the couple’s characteristics. This trust greatly enhanced the participants’ trust in their selves and their self-confidence. After some initial disasters, which they turned into opportunities, the participant couple successfully marketed the products and established a good track record for themselves. As a result, their trust in their selves grew and they became confident to try new ventures. These new ventures worked out and, hence, their trust in their selves and their self-confidence grew again. Moreover, because of their growing trust in their selves, they were less dependent on others for trust; they could give the trust to themselves. The participants used a nice analogy to explain this evolvement spiral towards an inner sense of identity:

So it is like a seed which grows into a full-grown plant, and the seed has the hope and the expectation, but the plant shows that it is not only hope and expectations but there is also some sort of substance, what you couldn’t see and perceive before.

The contribution of New Zealand to the personal growth of the participants is particularly well reflected in the following quote:

I think that I would never have been as successful and as much myself in Europe as I have been able to develop myself here in New Zealand. (Petra: What contributed to your development here?) I think I felt freer. I felt less burdened, less competition, less anything. [The New Zealanders] value people and what people can do. And what people can contribute, also from a community point of view, is far greater. I feel in one way also more appreciated here and I appreciate myself even more here than, for example, in Germany or, in that respect, in all of Europe.

(Petra: Did you ever regret it to have come to New Zealand?) No, never, because I don’t think that we would be where we are now without having come here. Not at all! I think New Zealand made so many things possible for us, gave us so many opportunities - it is obviously also our part having taken those opportunities and making the best out of it – but I don’t think that we would have had those if we hadn’t have come here. That is solely New Zealand’s responsibility - New Zealand’s contribution to what we have. And it is a very, very, very valuable contribution, which we can’t underestimate. I think we have to - we can be very grateful and thankful for the opportunities that we did get here.

**POSITIVE ATTITUDE CHANGES AND VALUABLE INSIGHTS**

This section provides an overview of the attitude changes and insights that the participants clearly identified as outcomes of their migration. As a result of experiencing the migration to New Zealand and their living in New Zealand, both stayers and returners gained greater understanding of how the world works; some of their existing beliefs/attitudes became more pronounced and/or changed; and they learnt new things (insights). In particular, the beliefs/attitudes we discussed under General Beliefs/Attitudes in the previous chapter became more pronounced. In this section, we will focus on those beliefs/attitudes which changed and the insights the participants gained. These changes and insights are the direct result of living or experiencing, as in contrast to theoretically learning, as these quotes reflect:

I think that [other people thinking differently] is something that you probably learn more living abroad.
It probably all comes with time. Because you’re simply there and just live [in New Zealand]. I don’t know, it happens automatically. It’s not really anything that you can learn. It just happens. (167)

The central attitude change was the change from black and white thinking to grey thinking, because this attitude change facilitated the evolvement of the other five attitude changes and insights, which are all interrelated in some way:

- Grey Thinking
- Basic Human Desires are Fundamentally the Same Worldwide
- Impossible to Run Away from Problems
- Higher Conscious Awareness & Appreciation of German Heritage
- More Accepting and Respecting
- Awareness of Higher Power & Universal Perspective

Thinking in grey terms also eased the migration process.

**Grey Thinking**

Before their migration, some participants thought in black and white terms – they defined life narrowly (see *Chapter Four* under *Reasons and Conditions*). They thought, for instance, that everything in Germany is bad and everything in New Zealand is better. Thus, they were highly critical of Germany, left Germany, and migrated to New Zealand. However, while living in New Zealand, they increasingly started thinking in ‘grey’ terms. They discovered that every place has many facets – that every place has both positive and negative sides. Hence, they realised that there is no such thing as a paradise or better place; that the grass is not greener on the other side of the fence. As a consequence, they started to differentiate more and they developed a more inclusive and balanced view of Germany and New Zealand, assigning less importance to the country:

Yeah, and so what I gotten out of these years of experience going back and forth is that: I don’t see it so black and white anymore. I mean black-white in the sense: that it’s all shitty [in Germany] and in New Zealand or Australia it was all good. ... I see the good things about [Germany] and I see the good things in New Zealand. ... - so Germany’s not all bad and New Zealand’s not all good. (168)

Look it’s like this: as longer as you live in a place, the more you see. ... After being here for six years, I know quite a few things I don’t like. I don’t like doesn’t mean I don’t like the place as such. ... If someone asks me “How do you think is New Zealand?” I say: “It’s a nice place.”, and I mean it. I like the people. I like the place. Doesn’t mean it is, you know, there’s lots of things I don’t like.

Accordingly, they assigned less importance to the country as such, but more importance to choosing a place that corresponds best with their personal characteristics and values (person-environment fit):

And so I’d say that there’s no such thing as a paradise on earth anymore. And you can only choose where the best place for you to live is. And with hindsight, the nature freak is in good hands in New Zealand. (169)

Moreover, they believed that it is crucial what one makes of a place - how one handles difficulties/obstacles:

And it’s really what you make of [the place]. I mean, yeah, of course there can be situations where, you know, you really are in a corner and where probably cutting your losses is the best way to do it. If it’s just sort of normal run of the mill problem, you know, not really problems, then you might as well brazen them out here, I think.
Basic Human Desires Fundamentally the Same Worldwide

The participants are very interested to find out about other people and cultures. One deep insight the participants had is linked to this interest. They found out that the basic desires people have are fundamentally the same worldwide:

... that’s I think the greatest insight how – you know we were talking earlier about when [my partner] and I travelled, you know, how we are curious about how other people live - but the fact is that it might have different shapes, but all is just so fundamentally the same. People around the world just simply want a good life for themselves and their kids; they want a home, security, a job, and friends.

Impossible to Run Away from Problems

Some participants migration was also motivated by problems they had experienced in Germany (see Chapter Four und Reasons and Conditions). But through the migration experience, these participants became aware that one cannot run away from problems and that migrating to fix problems will lead to more obstacles and, thus, make the migration even harder:

And that really you can’t run away from your problems. If people want to migrate because of problems, I think that’s the worst that can happen. It’s bound to go wrong.

In particular, one participant who fled Germany to get away from his problems thought, before the migration, that the distance would be the solution to his problems. However, he realised that the migration only helped to fix the problems he and his partner had in the short run and that, to really overcome their problems in the long run, a change in the external environment in itself does not work:

... we actually didn't do much else besides changing our environment. We did not in any way manage to get to the causes of these problems. And life in New Zealand followed very, very quickly the same patterns as here in Germany too. In that regard, nothing, in my view, was apt to change. (171)

He understands now that he needs to face problems by looking at the reasons for their problems, working together through them with his partner, and changing the relevant things in their life accordingly.

Higher Conscious Awareness & Appreciation of German Heritage

The participants stated that, when they lived in Germany, they were not consciously aware of the German culture, and saw the German culture negatively and critically. However, through living in New Zealand, they increasingly became aware of their cultural heritage and started to appreciate some parts of it:

That is totally funny, because you don't see it like that while you are living in Germany. You don't look at German culture as something positive, or you don't acknowledge it in any way. ... Meanwhile, we see [German culture] positive. ... Yes, because it is so wonderful and because it is befitting and because it is something good.

Ah well, there we go again with the orderliness and with the cleanliness and with the exactness, which are German virtues and which one takes for granted. However, once you have lived in another country, where you don't find them, you then really appreciate them more - that they are really positive, because you also will get on in life more easily with orderliness and exactness. Formerly, however, we would have said: “Ah well, orderliness, cleanliness and discipline that's pretty old-fashioned stuff – we couldn't care less.” (172)

That was something I also took from New Zealand. ... I was very impressed by these Asian people there. ... And many of them celebrate Buddhism and practise it. I found it very interesting. ... This has personally just
strengthened the idea about where are our roots. Our roots are Christianity. And somehow I am thankful for 
that [insight], because I think our churches and religion are very important, although I am not a believer. I
do not believe in God. I think probably it is more cultural. ... It is Christmas. It is Easter. It is celebrating
death and life, and all those procedures. It is all so important – it is our culture.

As discussed at different places, the participants incorporated into their selves the aspects which they 
appreciated and to pass these aspects on to their children.

More Accepting and Respecting

Through experiencing another culture, the participants became also more accepting and respecting of other 
ways of seeing and doing things. They became less judgmental. Because their behaviour in New Zealand 
was based on what they had learned in Germany – what was appropriate or acceptable in Germany – they 
often violated the New Zealand social rules. On the negative side, with these violations, the participants often 
offended New Zealanders (see Culture Shock’late). However, on the positive side, these violations made the 
participants realise, over time, that New Zealanders see things differently and behave differently. As a result, 
the participants became increasingly conscious that everybody has their own unique views as the result of 
her or his unique experiences and culture. This realisation process is well explained by the following quotes:

But I think my horizons became a bit wider ... it took me a long time to comprehend that other people see 
things different from the way I see them. My assessment of what was okay to do and what was not okay to do 
was very much based on what I thought was okay and sort of other people did to me. I think that is 
something that you probably learn more living abroad. You get more of the feel that you have to step back 
every once in a while and try to imagine how what you were doing might be viewed from the kind of 
background that the other person has. ... it is just that my judgement as to what I should consider be 
acceptable has become better, because it used to be pretty narrow judgement just based on what I thought 
was acceptable. And now I make more allowances to what I think other people might find acceptable.

... yes, I am rather prepared to say: “Okay, it's all right.” That is, when someone held a different view from 
mine, then that's okay too. In former times I would not have done that. (173)

Well, for that reason one should always be most careful with voicing opinions as long as one had not gone 
through the same experience oneself... Take the people who say: “How could you pack up [in New 
Zealand] and leave? I wouldn't have done that.” But he doesn’t know about it at all! One can only say that 
when you have experienced it and when you have taken such steps yourself. And I find that it is quite an 
experience to refrain then from such utterances. One should think twice before judging others. (174)

As a consequence of these insights, the participants became more respectful of the New Zealand culture, 
more careful in interacting with New Zealanders, and giving recommendations to other people:

I think we should respect the culture we found and not trying to be too smart.

Even if I disagree or don’t like it at work or so, I’m been much more careful in what I’m saying.

I didn't load up on heaps of wisdom just because I've been living in New Zealand for six years. For that 
reason I take great care not to pass any recommendations and to say: “Look here now, you can't live like 
that.,” or: “You have got to do things in this or that way.” There is no formula for a partnership. Everyone 
has to work it out for him/herself. Likewise, there is no prescription for living - you have to find your own 
way. (175)

A similar process seems at work with regard to the weather. One reason why the participants left Germany 
was that the long grey winters made them feel depressed. As one result of the life experiences they have 
gained, they accept the weather as it comes and adjust to it:
Yes, I believe [the weather] was just as important for myself as for others too. But today I don’t read the weather report any more. I don’t give a stuff for the weather. In the morning, I take the dog for a walk and I look at the weather. If it’s raining, then it is raining and if the sun is shining, then the sun is shining. ... Yes, meanwhile my attitude has become that the weather does not adjust to me, but I have to adjust to the weather. (176)

Awareness of Higher Power & Universal Perspective

Because of many coincidences and/or because of humbling out-of-control experiences, the participants who did not believe in God before their migration also became increasingly aware of something higher or more powerful:

I am not religious, but somehow things come together. It all fits together somehow - a great jigsaw puzzle where things come together. ... If I had been religious I would say: “The good Lord had determined it.” (Petra: But you are not religious?) No, I believe that perhaps there is something, but I am not inclined to say: he or she or it is the determiner/authority. In the end, you determine things yourself, but this coincidence is beyond description. (177)

I don’t believe in God, but there might be some other force ... I know it sounds stupid, but I suppose there is still always something more. If you look into the sky and you realise what a little, tiny piece of shit you are. There is the universe and these unexplainable things around me. Then there is something more than just you and reality. So after all I can’t explain it. I think if you have dreams you also think about things that you can’t explain. ... you can do many things, but still we will all end up in Mother Earth. And I’m sure with more and more scientific research, you find out about where you come from and where you go. And it is this idea of being tiny in the universe is something very strong in myself ... Mother Nature is a term, which I would take every year more seriously as something so wise, so great, so much like a mother. Which is something which takes me, hugs me ... I have a deep respect.

Moreover, they recognised that while they are actually quite insignificant in the greater scheme of things, they are a unique part of a greater whole (universal perspective):

... you don't take yourself so seriously. You don't take your country too seriously. You have different horizons. You get other priorities. You are more open. You live more intensely. (182)

... you see, I am only a cog in the wheel. But it's not like a dead cogwheel in the machine, no that not either. (178)

As the above quotes show, these insights are not necessarily linked with a belief in God, but a belief in some higher force or being. Some of them, like the participant above, could not yet articulate what exactly it is they believe in, whereas other participants were highly aware of the existence of spiritual matters and try to live spiritually:

That, I mean, simply developed for me over the years with all the experiences I have made. It's like a road. We talked about it yesterday too. I always take many, many detours, but these detours seem to all go into the one direction. So I do believe that, somehow, I will arrive in the right direction. (179)

To summarize, these changes in beliefs/attitudes and insights, combined with the general beliefs/attitudes that facilitating the migration process (see Chapter Five under General Individual Beliefs/Attitudes and Strategies) and the evolvement towards a transcendent inner sense of self indicate that the participants define life much more broadly, further unfolded the potential capacities of their selves, and moved towards living a spiritual way of life. They advanced in their spiritual development and broke into new dimensions of life, advancing to another level in the evolvemental growth spiral (see Figure 6.1.).
Figure 6.1. Evolvemental Spiral Towards Higher Levels of Awareness/Consciousness
SPECIFIC OUTCOMES OF STAYERS

Although they experienced hard times in the beginning too, the stayers dramatically improved their situation and are now truly settled in New Zealand. At the time of the research, they have lived in New Zealand between five and seventeen years, and intended to stay in New Zealand. The following section outlines where they are standing now in terms of their overall life and their personal evolvement.

Two central codes emerged out of the analysis:

- I am Happy, Content, Proud, Stronger, and More Myself
- Transcendent Inner Sense of Self: I am Me & I am a German New Zealander
- Way of Living: Close to Self
- Sense of Belonging: Sense of Love
- Citizenship: Wouldn’t Give up German Citizenship

I am Happy, Proud, Stronger, and More Myself

When the stayers looked back and summarised their experiences, they stated that they are happy with living in New Zealand, feel freer, are not in any way depressed anymore, and are quite satisfied with what they have achieved since coming to New Zealand. They are proud to have successfully managed to establish themselves and settle in New Zealand:

*I feel happy here. I’m really happy. I’m free, you know. I had always pressure from Germany. Now, I’m free.*

*Okay, I had my weak moments, but I sort of made it after six years. We’ve been through all that. We’ve settled for ourselves here in a way that I’m quite happy with.*

With regard to material things, the stayers believe that they are exceptionally well off. They all own their own homes, and three of the four couples own them mortgage free. All participants, except the one who is retired, are working. Two stayers own their own company. Of those who work for an employer, all but two work in the professions for which they were trained. Of those two, one works below her qualification, whereas the other retrained in New Zealand and is now very satisfied with her new career. Their overall material status is reflected in the following quote:

*I’m quite happy with that house. We bought that house. And it made me feel quite good actually, when we bought that house. I got a secure job and [my partner] has a good income … I mean we are well off now. We are making both sort of – you know, we are certainly among the best paid 15% of the population, I would think. So sort of the situation has improved quite dramatically.*

One stayer who owns his own business feels that he has fulfilled his dream:

*You can say in 17 years, I have fulfilled my dream: I have my own house with a large property. I got my own workshop and my own business.*

The stayers also believe that they are much better off in New Zealand than they would have been in Germany. With respect to their personal evolvement, the stayers feel more themselves and that they have become stronger people:

*I think that I would never have been as successful and as much myself in Europe as I have been able to develop myself here in New Zealand.*
... yeah coming out of it as a stronger person as I went into it and that is certainly, absolutely true. Yeah 100% right!

That the stayers feel they are stronger persons is also demonstrated in that they are confident about migrating again:

I sort of feel I wouldn’t have a problem to go away from New Zealand and try something else in a different place, for example. It wouldn’t be as difficult as it was for me to come here. ... If we would decide, you know: “Oh yeah, we might go to Canada.” – it wouldn’t make me nervous at all, because I done that once and I know how it feels. I know it takes time to settle down and to find a job, but you don’t have to panic, because somehow it all will eventually sort it out. So if you don’t find a job, you will! ... That takes time to get the ideas.

In other words, one outcome of migrating seems to be that the participants are confident to migrate again, because they feel stronger as people, as a result of the experience of migration. This outcome has made them more flexible and their increased independence, because it means that they are able to go where they want to go.

One stayer said that he grew in his spiritual/Christian beliefs. Although the other stayers did not mention it, their attitude changes and identity changes, which I have discussed above, suggest that they, like the returners have advanced considerably along their spiritual paths as well.

Overall, the stayers feel that they have settled in New Zealand and are satisfied with the way in which they have settled:

... everything is quite settled now. We are not anymore in the position where you have to find out things, you know.

We’ve settled for ourselves here in a way that I’m quite happy with.

None of the stayers regretted migrating to New Zealand, because of the above outcomes. Indeed, they are very grateful that New Zealand gave them so many opportunities for their personal evolvement.

**Transcendent Inner Sense of Self: I am Me & I am a German New Zealander**

The stayers went very well through the above discussed crucial processes that underlied the evolvement process (i.e. consciously choosing what to let go of and what to incorporate from the German heritage and from the New Zealand culture, detachment of sense of self from a particular place). Four stayers transcended the New Zealander-German distinction and were settled in themselves:

... something that goes beyond your cultural heritage and what the life here is, you know.

... I think I’ve transcended that in the person that I am is a German-New Zealander.

The other four stayers did not mention their sense of identity. However, one of them lives according to Christian beliefs as they understand them themselves (independent from the religious Christian belief systems), which suggests that they are moving towards a transcendent inner sense of self as well. The remaining two participants displayed a high inner sense of self during the participant observation.

Remarkably, although the stayers had already lived for a number of years in New Zealand, some stayers stated that they most probably never will become New Zealanders, because they still feel German and perceive themselves culturally as Germans:
I culturally I see myself as a German. ... Yeah, that’s my cultural background and I don’t think I’ll ever lose that ...

Further, the stayers are proud of their German heritage, and preserve and transmit many German things to their children (e.g. language, customs).

Interestingly, there seems to exist a paradox regarding age and sense of belonging. With increasing age, the more they feel German, but the more they feel connected to the place they live in New Zealand:

And the older I become, the more I feel that I am German in language and culture background. But also the older I become, the more I feel that I belong here and not into this country Germany for the place I stay.

One stayer explained that she does not feel like a New Zealander, because in Germany she still finds things familiar and she can understand them, whereas in New Zealand she still finds many things strange, does not understand many things, and still does not like many things.

Way of Living: Close to Self

Connected to the transcending and more inner sense of self is that stayers try to find and to live their own unique way of living - a way of living which feels right to them and is in harmony with their selves. They do so by incorporating what feels right to them from different countries:

I’m not trying to be like a New Zealand place or whatever. ... I just do things how I think that they should be done. If they are by chance New Zealand, or German or God knows, I don’t really mind.

For example, the stayers created their own unique tradition by incorporating different traditions they like from different countries.

Sense of Belonging: Sense of Love

The stayers’ stories also included statements of where they feel at home – their sense of belonging. The stayers perceived their home in New Zealand as their chosen home for the decisions to migrate to and live in New Zealand were conscious. The concept of home does not only refer the country New Zealand, but more specifically to a place or house, and expands to social aspects connected to the place like family and friends, jobs and interests, and the good things New Zealand offers. The participants feel deeply connected to or belonging to New Zealand. For some participants, this deep feeling of belonging was there before they migrated or was there right from the start, whereas others developed that feeling while living in New Zealand. One participant referred to this deep feeling as a ‘sense of love’:

... now it's more like our sense of love is in New Zealand. I mean our jobs, interests and friends.

The home in New Zealand has nothing to do with their cultural heritage, but has been chosen and created by the participants themselves:

... It is my home, because I have chosen to make it my home. It is where my house is, where my husband and my daughter live, and where I have my friends.

And the place, which has nothing to do with my cultural heritage, where I live and expand and I have cut it out for me, is [in the particular place in New Zealand]. That is now [the place where we live in New Zealand]. Even better that this is part of New Zealand, but even those two parts of being in [the place where we live in New Zealand] and being in New Zealand are sometimes more accidental and don’t really matter
that much. It is just this place. I wouldn’t call New Zealand my home, only in a reflective term, but I would call this place my home.

Because the participants have chosen and created their place, they feel a deep emotional connection to the place where they live. The deep connection is also evident in the account of another participant couple. They thought about leaving New Zealand when his company went through repositioning. Although it might have been better for his career to leave, they nevertheless decided to stay in New Zealand, because they realised how much they love living in the particular city where they live:

(Petra: And with the repositioning, did you look at other countries?) Yes, we looked, but mainly we looked at other jobs and the second question was: Where is this job? And we said: “No. It isn’t as nice as [the city in New Zealand where we live]. [This city] is too important to us.” I was actually quite surprised, because [the city] doesn’t really have such a fantastic reputation, but I was surprised with myself to see that it was so important for me to live here. I didn’t send out a single job application, because I just couldn’t imagine living in any of these other places, compared to living here.

One participant feels a sense of belonging to New Zealand and Germany, and feels at home in both worlds, because she knows both and is capable of living in both. She draws a distinction between the two homes. Home as such is New Zealand for her, whereas home in Germany refers to home in the sense of family and familiar things. As a result of not feeling like a New Zealander, but living in New Zealand, she experiences difficulties committing to just one place. Thus, she travels constantly back and forth between New Zealand and Germany, and enjoys the good things each country has to offer:

So this is would be a not subscribing to just one place. But we take out of the two worlds what we like.

This ‘sense of love’ is also demonstrated in their appreciation for, and value of, the good things New Zealand offers – the things which pulled them to New Zealand in the first place and which did hold true:

But New Zealand is a nice place! It is rather green. It's rather lot of space. It's rather nice to live in New Zealand.

Citizenship: Wouldn’t Give up German Citizenship

The sense of identity and belonging also influenced the stayers’ decision whether or not to gain New Zealand citizenship. In order to become a New Zealand citizen, the participants would have to give up their German citizenship, because Germany does not allow dual citizenship. However, the majority of the participants would not give up their German citizenship for several linked reasons. Firstly, they still feel connected to Germany as talked about above. Secondly, handing in their German passport would close their door not only to Germany, but to the whole European community. Closing the door would greatly reduce their and their children’s future opportunities and flexibility. Keeping their options open is very important. For example, as will become evident in the next chapter, being well and happy now in New Zealand does not necessarily mean that the participants wanted to continue their journey forever in New Zealand. If the conditions in New Zealand and/or in Germany change, and/or they do not feel well anymore in New Zealand, the participants will move again. The interaction between the last two factors is evident in the following quote:

So I could actually say that there was an initial phase where we had a very positive view. I was actually thinking really hard, at this stage, whether I really wanted to make this commitment to be a New Zealander and hand in my German passport, you know, and to become a New Zealander and stuff like that. And then we really thought if this country really, you know, if something was going to happen to the sheep then we would all go down under. So we have actually not made any move, since then to get a New Zealand passport, and stuff like that. We just want to stick with the German ones.
Likewise, keeping the German passport also allows the participants to send their children to Germany for education purposes and the children to go back to Germany if they chose too. Hence, keeping the German citizenship assists dealing with some issues related to children (see Chapter Five). Similarly, keeping the door open to Europe makes it also much easier for the participants to travel within Europe. Given that they love travelling, being able to easily travel within Europe is important to the participants. Lastly, New Zealand citizenship would not give the participants any more rights than they already have with being permanent residents.

The only reason why German immigrants gave up their German citizenship in the past was that handing in the German passport was the only way to get their German retirement fund paid out and they needed that money to buy their house. This was the case for one stayer couple. They applied for and were approved to have New Zealand citizenship. Giving up their German citizenship was not an issue for them, because, in contrast to the other couples, they were sure that they did not want to return to Germany. However, that means that if the conditions change or if they change their mind, the option to return will be seriously compromised and they are less flexible.

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES OF RETURNERS

Despite deciding to return, most returners perceived their time in New Zealand as balanced, and they experienced many positive things in New Zealand too. Most of all, they lived a very intense life, had many valuable experiences, and enjoyed nature. They found New Zealand’s nature a dream: magnificent, breathtaking, and unbelievably beautiful. They enjoyed living near the ocean, doing things in nature, and the quietness and tranquillity provided by nature. In addition to above discussed in Evolvement Towards Transcendent, Inner Sense of Self/Identity: Attitude Changes & Insights; and General Attitudes, the returners expressed specific outcomes. Three outcomes crystallised as:

- **It was Worth it: I am a Richer Person**
- **Transcendent Inner Sense of Self: I am Me & I am Different**
- **I do not Feel like a Failure**

**It was Worth it: I am a Richer Person**

The returners stated that they gained many important experiences because they lived their dream. Seven major outcomes emerged from the analysis:

- **Proud to Have Had Courage**
- **Gained Many Valuable Experiences**
- **Realisation: New Zealand doesn’t Fit**
- **Gained much Confidence**
- **More Relaxed: Stand Above Things**

**Proud to Have Had Courage**

All returners are proud that they dared to live their dream of migrating from Germany to New Zealand: that they were so courageous to do something many Germans dream of, but do not manage to live:

*And it is also, yes, it is just experiences and I think having the guts – it is also having the guts to [migrating to different countries].*
And in retrospect, let me say it again and again, it was great and we did actually do it. Today I am proud that we went that way. How can you heighten that? We have been in New Zealand for six years – that is something others only dream about of having done. (187)

I believe that we did achieve something in New Zealand; we did accomplish something that most people wouldn’t even have dared. And we did not fail, but we had reached the point – basically – where everything would have been possible. (188)

These quotes clearly express that having lived one’s dream results in feeling good about one’s self. The feeling of being proud to have migrated, is strengthened for most returners by the knowledge that they were able to face and deal with very difficult obstacles, which would have been invincible hurdles for most other people:

I mean, for us - and for you I think - it is something normal. Alone opening and maintaining a bank account and managing a flat, and buying stuff, and ... It is all something: it is different languages, it is all different prices, it is different environment. It is all something great to manage and for us something normal now, but it is absolutely not normal.

It was very important for the returners to have at least tried migrating to New Zealand, because it is important for them to have lived their lives to the full and to have lived their dreams for the reasons we have discussed under Realising the Dream:

And for us that was really quite important at the time: we did try it and we don’t need to reproach for. Just imagine we would be sitting here and we hadn’t done it! Does one know what you missed out on? Do you know, when you didn’t try it, what might have been? (189)

Gained Many Valuable Experiences & Evolved
All returners agreed that their migration to New Zealand was well worth it, because they gained many exceptional and valuable experiences: they gained deep insights into another culture, found out much about themselves and the world, grew personally, and further advanced on their spiritual path, as the following quote demonstrates:

Yes, I find that it is something very special that we have been abroad for so long. And that is meaningful in so many ways and on various levels. And these experiences that we have made are truly special. One is a richer person for it - that’s my feeling. I have become much richer in experiences, much more evolved - without wanting to elevate myself - compared to someone who is trapped in all the trivial matters and is stuck with them. I have much more tolerance or more, not indifference, but a calm way of saying: “Good Lord, this is actually so trivial.” Therefore, it is a privilege that one has been overseas, in [the other country in which we have lived for some years] or in New Zealand, and have made the further education. (180)

The returners are very grateful for these experiences and treasure them. Another important line of evidence that supports the view that the returners gained much through migrating is that they do not regret having migrated to New Zealand and that they encouraged people who have the opportunity to migrate to go and experience another country:

Regrets? No, I did not regret it. It was a great experience in New Zealand. … everything has got a meaning. It’s like a chapter in your life, what you have in life. It is simply a part of it: you are learning something, you gained experiences.

And then I did say to so many - regardless where they are headed to New Zealand or somewhere else – I said: “It doesn’t matter. Just try it! And even if you returned after half a year - at least you have tried.” … if you have the opportunity and you want to do it, then go through with it, no matter where you go; if it’s not New Zealand, then maybe Italy will do. (199)
**Realisation: New Zealand does Fit**

One of the most important insights was that for the returners there was no such thing as a paradise anymore and New Zealand is not a paradise either (grey thinking). The returners, in contrast to the stayers, also realised that New Zealand is not the country for them – that it is not the country they want to live in, because it does not fit with their characteristics and values. Moreover, they realised that Germany actually meets their needs better and/or that they prefer living in their hometown:

*I would say, there isn't a paradise on earth any more.* (184)

*No, I don’t regret it. It was a great experience [in New Zealand]. I know now that it is not the paradise for me there. I would say there is probably a country, which is like paradise, but for me New Zealand it was not for me. It may be so for others, for me it is not.* (185)

*I am now back [in Germany] again and I find that things aren't so bad after all where I am. After all, it took us six years to become aware of it.* (186)

**Gained Much Confidence**

Similarly to the stayers, the returners gained much confidence through their experiences of migrating – they know what to expect and they now that they can deal with many things. In particular, they are confident working in multicultural projects:

*I believe because of my experiences abroad and my engagement in multinational projects, I can very well imagine [working for companies abroad on multicultural projects]. It’s the experiences I am taking with me that I can do that. It is nothing which frightens me - quite on the contrary. I simply know what might come my way and how I can deal with it.* (190)

Like the stayers, some returns are confident to migrate again and would like to migrate if the opportunity arose:

*If [my partner] would now receive an offer to go wherever, we would think about it and we would say: “Yes, we’ll do it.” Put it the other way: I would not have a problem - say next year - to pack up again. You have done it once, you can do it again.* (191)

**More Relaxed: Stand Above Things**

Because the returners are more confident and because their horizons are so much wider than before, they are more relaxed about things. They know that they can cope with most things and perceive the relative importance of things much more clearly through having a universal perspective:

*But now it is simply a pleasant feeling, knowing that one has been overseas for six years. One has made this enormous experience and is now back again and one has gained a certain distance/stands above things, but not in any sense of being superior, you know.* (192)

*I am more relaxed about certain issues. Why are they doing always, you know, things which are absolutely not important?*

**Transcendent Inner Sense of Self: I am Me & I am Different**

Interestingly, the majority of returners did not speak directly about their sense of identity. However, that the returners also found much out about themselves and the world, grew personally, and further advanced on their spiritual path suggests that they also moved towards an inner sense of self. In addition, Petra had the
impression during the participant observations that the returners displayed a strong inner sense of self. Other evidence that the majority of returners moved towards a transcendent inner sense of self is that they feel different to the majority of Germans since they returned and that they have the feeling that Germans no longer understand them, because their horizons are so much wider:

*I am different I think as a man who travelled a bit and came back ... And I think it is all these experiences – I’m not talking only about [the country in which we have lived for some years], but I also talk about New Zealand, because you had again to deal with a completely different culture environment. All the things are sharpening you or the form you - they make you different, they make you a different man or woman. ... you come with strange habits/behaviour, strange answers, strange questions ...

**I do not Feel like a Failure**

As discussed in the *Method Chapter*, when we had difficulties recruiting returners, Petra contacted those German immigrants and some stayers, and asked them why they thought we were having these difficulties. They suggested, among other things, that the returners might not have responded, because they feel as if they had failed. When Petra visited the returners, she followed this issue up and asked the returners whether they feel like failures. The analysis of their accounts regarding this issue showed, across all returners’ accounts, that the returners themselves do not feel like failures, because they had gained many valuable experiences and insights:

... *you can’t fail in the sense - unless you break your back or something. But you don’t ever fail, because you always gain something from it! You always have an experience, which no one can take away from you! You always have a life experience more! From that standpoint, I would not see it as a failure, even if we had failed.* (195)

... *I say I wouldn’t be ashamed for it, because [migrating to New Zealand] - no one can take away from you the memories and all the things which you have experienced. Yes, it has cost us lots of nerves and lots of money, for sure, but that was a great experience, which no one can take away from us.* (181)

The returners also do not feel as if they had failed, because their return was voluntary: nobody forced them out of New Zealand. They had had the choice between the two countries and they had chose the one which they felt made them happier:

*We simply said to ourselves: “Okay, it really is not what we wanted and it does not proceed in the form how we want it, and it moves a bit aslant from what we would have liked.” And we said: “Fair enough, let’s face up to it, and say that is not for us, and we’ll go back, before we waste all our money down there and can’t afford the return flight.”* (196)

This quote, together with the statements of the stayers which mentioned that it is also difficult to return, indicates that returning actually shows a lot of strength.

The accounts of returners suggest that ‘failure thinking’ is not something German immigrants feel or think. Rather, it is constructed by the people around them who hold the green and clean paradise image, and lack the experience of living outside Germany, in general, and living in New Zealand, in particular. The returners receive the ‘failure stamp’ from their environment, because some returners reported that some of their family and friends perceived them as having failed. Family and friends had difficulties understanding the participants’ decision to return. As one returner explained, because New Zealand is the dream destination of most Germans, they could not understand why one would come back from a paradise, and believe that, if one returns voluntarily from paradise, one must have failed in some way:

*Alas, he went to New Zealand – great stuff, interesting! And came back again? Ah well, he didn't hack it or didn't make it or simply failed.* (197)
Other returners reported feeling that most of their family and friends did not perceive them as failures, because they had a deeper understanding of how it was to live away from Germany in New Zealand because of communication with the participants. However, some family and friends seem to have been negatively influenced by thinking that others might see their children or their friends (the returners) as having failed in New Zealand. This behaviour shows that the ‘failure thinking’ can be very persuasive.

The ‘failure thinking’ created some issues with family and friends upon return. The danger of being seen as failures forced the returners to explain in more detail their reasons for their return. Some returners quickly emphasised that they had not failed, but that they had came back for such and such rational reasons. Another returner did not tell people about his migration, if he thought that they would not understand it anyway, or replied to failure allegations by suggesting that the other persons try it and experience themselves how it is.

SUMMARY

On the whole, living their dream of migrating to New Zealand presented the participants with challenges that provided them with many opportunities for gaining new experiences. These experiences facilitated the participants’ further evolvement towards a transcendent inner sense of self, as well as enhancing their understanding of life in many important ways. Both stayers and returners gained a deeper understanding of their selves and further evolved their unique self, by choosing what to let go of and what to incorporate from the German heritage and from the New Zealand culture and detachment of sense of self from a particular place. The conditions in New Zealand facilitated this evolvement. Through experiencing migration, the participants also achieved deeper insights into how life works. As a result, some of their attitudes became more pronounced, whereas others changed. Importantly, the participants changed from black-and-white thinking to grey thinking, which led to the awareness that there is no such thing as a paradise anymore. They also realised that the basic desires are the same worldwide and that it is impossible to run away from problems. Further, they became more aware of their German heritage and appreciated it more; they became more accepting and less judgmental; and became conscious of the universal perspective.

In addition to these general outcomes, stayers and returners gained particular benefits through living their dream. The stayers stated that they are settled in New Zealand. They are happy to live in New Zealand, because they feel freer and more themselves in New Zealand. They are proud to have lived their dream. Materially, the stayers are well situated. With respect to their personal evolvement, they feel that their migration and living in New Zealand contributed tremendously to their personal growth and made them stronger. While the stayers will always feel German, they also feel that they have transcended into something beyond their German heritage. The returners felt that it has been worth migrating to New Zealand, because they feel much richer as a person: they had gained many valuable experiences and also evolved towards a transcendent unique inner sense of self. In particular, they had gained confidence and are more relaxed about things. Importantly, the returners also realised that New Zealand is not the country they wanted to live in. Like the stayers, they are proud to have had the courage to migrate and believe that it was important to have tried it. For these reasons, the returners feel, that they have not failed.
CHAPTER 7

WEIGHING UP: CHOOSING THE PATH
MOST CONDUCIVE FOR FULFILMENT OF
FUTURE DREAMS

... we didn’t go abroad in order to return from there. We are actually just continuing our journey.

(Participant)
The participants reaping so many fruits from living their dream, did not necessarily mean that the participants wanted to continue their journey forever in New Zealand. In accordance with their characteristic and values, stayers and returners constantly carefully weighed up which place was more conducive for their own, as well as for their children’s, further personal evolvement, well-being, fulfilment, and happiness. This chapter discusses the factors that played a role for the stayers and returners in their weighing up process under the selective code, Weighing Up: Choosing the Path Most Conducive for Fulfilment of Future Dreams. This code yields insights into why the stayers chose to stay in New Zealand and why the returners chose to return to Germany. This selective code embraces four axial codes:

- **STAYERS: REASONS AND CONDITIONS FOR STAYING**
- **RETURNERS: REASONS AND CONDITIONS FOR RETURNING**
- **NEW DREAMS**
- **FUTURE CONCERNS**

As will become apparent, some of the factors that played a role in the weighing up process are at the same time outcomes also, because they reflect the participants’ realisations about their selves and their new knowledge about how the world works.

**STAYERS: REASONS AND CONDITIONS FOR STAYING**

Remarkably, all but one stayer couple thought about returning to Germany at various stages, mostly in the beginning when things were rather tight financially. It was predominantly the women stayers who thought about returning. For the one couple that never thought about returning, the break away from Germany was final and they would have not returned under any circumstances. In contrast, one of the women thought of going back in the beginning when her partner was offered a permanent job for much less money than in Germany and when she felt lonely at home. Her partner described this situation as follows:

> [My boss] offered me a permanent job – for less money. ... We were quite shocked. [My partner] thought we had to pay 33% tax and she thought we are not going to make it, you know. That was a stage where she wanted to go back. Oh, yeah, she felt probably quite lonely as well, I think. (Petra: And that was during her pregnancy?) Yeah, she had to stay at home while I went to work.

For this particular woman, it was very important that she found a satisfying job to feel happy in New Zealand and to want to stay:

> But since I've started, you know, my new career, it's different, because now I'm quite happy with what I am doing.

Another woman thought about returning when she was back in Germany and was enjoying being in Germany very much. However, after an initial time of enjoyment, she came to the point where she wanted to go back to New Zealand. When she was back in New Zealand, she never wanted to return to Germany again:

> Normally what happens is: you go to Germany and you feel the first days a bit tired. And then there is a buzz, because you have all the new things and you go around visiting and all this. And then there comes a time when you get really used to it [in Germany] again and it is really great. And then it comes a time, when we think: ‘Ah, when you think of [the place where we live in New Zealand], you think it is probably nicer here in Germany with all the things that you are doing.’ But it doesn’t last long - then you just hang out to come back [to New Zealand]. And [in New Zealand] I never had this really as such. Whenever we came back [to New Zealand] that was fine. I never had the thing that I thought: ‘It would be nice to go back.’
One female stayer thought about living in Germany again for a while, but she knew that she would always come back to New Zealand, because the place where they live in New Zealand and their house is her home now:

*I had for a long time the idea that I might be living in Germany again for a certain amount of time, probably even one or two years to work or whatever, but I always know that we will come back, we will always be here in [the place where we live in New Zealand].* I think even if we shift within New Zealand, I know that we will always keep this house and that we will always come back to [the place where we live in New Zealand], because this is really where we started off and where we know that is what we chose and we know the reason why we chose it. And we want to maintain it and keep it. (Petra: So it will become like a base in the future?) Yes, it is the home. It is also the home for the children. And I think this is probably very German ...

However, despite thinking of returning, the stayer couples stayed in New Zealand.

The reasons and conditions for staying varied, were complex, and intertwined. Some of these reasons and conditions referred to New Zealand and Germany, whereas other reasons and conditions concerned either New Zealand or Germany. For these reasons, we decided not to separate them into different codes, but to discuss them together and to point out, as we discuss them, to which country they refer. That some reasons and conditions embrace reasons and conditions concerning both countries implies that the stayers stay as a result of a combination of factors that hold them in New Zealand (hold factors) and factors that deter them from returning to Germany (deterrent factors). Seven reasons and conditions for staying emerged:

- **Difficult to Find Point to Return**
- **Invested too Much into Migration to New Zealand**
- **Feel Happier in New Zealand**
- **‘Sense of Love’ in New Zealand**
- **Increasingly Difficult to Return after about Three Years**
- **Could not Afford Similar Living Standard in Germany Now**
- **Germany Remains Unattractive**

**Difficult to Find Point to Return**

As mentioned above, especially in the beginning when their life was hard, all but one couple thought about returning. One reason why they did not return was that it was actually difficult to find the point where their life was so bad that they would decide to return:

... it would be really hard to find the point and to say: "Now it’s enough and I go back", you know.

Because it was so hard to find this point, the stayers just simply hung in there and went through the hard times in the hope that their situation would improve. As long as their threshold for *now it’s enough* was not reached, they stayed. This interpretation is supported by the accounts of another stayer who told me that there was actually no decision to return. This couple has had a very hard time. They thought about returning and considered it as an option, but they delayed the actual decision to return. They gave themselves some more time, and remained optimistic that their situation would improve:

*We didn’t decide not to go back - we just didn’t go. There was not such a thing as a decision. ... We just probably delayed the decision until sort of: ‘Yeah, I’m alright. It was a feeling sort of yeah, you know, you coming to the point: ‘I got the guts full. We are going back. No, it doesn’t work.’ – but that doesn’t mean that you just go and ring the airport. We had the feeling for a while: ‘No, no, no.’ Certainly [my partner] more than I had. ... But I sort of – even when I was sad: ‘Oh, yeah, come on!’ We simply didn’t go. I don’t know. Probably we just said: “We see. We see. We see.”, or so.*
... for me it was the only time, as I said, after six months, when I thought of maybe going back. Sort of gave me couple of more months and said: “If it doesn’t changed dramatically here, then we are going back. There is no future.” So it did change. And I must say from then on, I never thought about going back again.

It was more [returning] was always an option, but no, no! We still were optimistic even though it was sometimes hard, but improve the – it couldn’t get worse kind of thing, so ... No!

**Invested too Much into Migration to New Zealand**

The other reason why some stayers stayed in New Zealand despite hard times is that they had put so much time, effort, and money into migrating to New Zealand in the first place, and that they would have to start all over again in Germany, which would require more time, effort, and money again. For instance, the one participant woman who would have liked to return at the beginning when they experienced financial stringency, did not because they had invested so much time and money into the migration, which would have been lost if they returned. She had no job to go to in Germany and believed that finding a job there would be difficult:

And then another point would be like; [in New Zealand] we invested time and money, you know? And then to go back would ... I didn't have a job to go to. I mean, at that time I would not have had a job there. I don't know, I would probably liked to go back, but because the situation was like that going back to Germany, we didn't even know what to expect and finding a job in Germany isn't that easy either.

**Feel Happier in New Zealand**

After living several years in New Zealand, those who decided to stay stayed because they feel happy and satisfied living in New Zealand, as discussed under *Outcomes: Stayers*. However, feeling happy in New Zealand seems insufficient for staying in itself. Instead, in order to stay, the stayers need to feel happier than they think they would feel if they would live in Germany:

*I'm substantially happier here than I would be if I were back, I think.*

This implies that the stayers compared at some point, or continuously, whether they would have felt happier in Germany or whether they feel happier now in New Zealand. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the reasons and conditions the stayers offered to explain why they stay in New Zealand concern both countries: New Zealand and Germany.

**‘Sense of Love’ in New Zealand**

Given that the participants value their feelings, one of the central reasons that hold stayers in New Zealand is the deep feeling of connectedness to or belongingness to New Zealand, which we talked about in the previous chapter under Sense of Belonging: Sense of Love. The following quote sums up nicely:

*I stay here, because I really feel that I have cut out myself a patch, where I belong to – what is home to me. ... It would be for me definitely inconceivable that I would leave here and go back to Germany.*

All the beautiful things, which attracted the participants to New Zealand and which got confirmed, also contribute to the sense of love and hold the stayers in New Zealand:

*So, even, I don't know, maybe when you get older and older you kind of think: 'I'll prefer the lifestyle', you know. That is one thing that I really like that we are on an island here and you can sort of go to the sea. ... [the institution I work for] went through this repositioning and everyone was looking for jobs and I was*
looking for jobs too. ... And we found some jobs that we liked, and I might have actually had a chance to get them, but the final thing was always that New Zealand is an island and you can have, there are so many different things that you can do. Even now, I even wouldn’t go to Australia anymore, because you have to drive long distances for the landscape to change, and here you just have to drive for two hours and the landscape changes. I think that is very important.

**Increasingly Difficult to Return after about Three Years**

Several stayers also stay in New Zealand, because they believe that it would be a too big step to return to Germany, and that, after about three to five years of living outside Germany, it would be too difficult to readjust to Germany. On the one hand, they believe that they would feel like a foreigner in your own country because they would have lost touch with many things that were happening in Germany while they lived in New Zealand due things changing. One stayer described this belief very clearly:

*You feel like being in jail for 10 years and not knowing what is going on. ... So many things have changed, you know. I’m pretty sure you sort of find lots of things strange. It feels strange. ... You are a foreigner in your own country.*

This belief was often strengthened when stayers went back to Germany for a holiday. Several stayers felt strange when they went back to Germany, because many things were unfamiliar. In addition, because of their living away from Germany and in New Zealand for a while, they noticed many things they did not like in Germany, but had not been aware of before their migration:

*... and it was at our second visit back to Germany, in year three and a half or so, that I started to realise that I found going back to Germany really strange and it didn’t feel like home any more. I mean, it did feel like home, but more things were strange than were familiar. Well, not really, I can’t really say that, but it was really quite clear to me that I noticed things that I didn’t like about Germany. The very fast way of living, that people were incredibly unfriendly. I had really become accustomed to the fact that you could go to the supermarket, and people would pack your groceries with a smile, and you could chat with the checkout girls, and they would small talk to you.*

Losing touch with Germany seems to happen even when the stayers tried to keep in contact with what was going on in Germany through their family, friends, and/or media. The longer they live in New Zealand, the more they become detached from Germany:

*Reading the ‘Spiegel’ is sort of quite distant. ... Like reading about a different country or so – a strange country or so, but knowing I lived there for a long time. It is sort of not touching me really. So my interest in what is going on is really quite limited. I don’t care anymore.*

In particular, as one stayer believes, one looses touch with one’s professional life. She believes that living in another country for a while has the same negative effect on careers as having a baby:

*I do believe you have huge gaps and it will be hard to pick up things. (Petra: What kinds of gaps are you thinking off?) Oh, just time gaps. I mean, you know, technology goes on, what have you. I know that is for women, you know, the baby break you do. I mean every child you have sets you – even if you only stop for a year - it sets you back tremendously in your career.*

Further, some participants believe that the longer one stays in New Zealand, the more one looses touch with friends in Germany:

*I was in contact, for instance, with quite a number of my friends throughout, I think, that time. And after that time it started to peter out and I basically only have three friends still left from Germany – or four and then some on [my partner’s] side. But I mean altogether or so, [my partner] and I have a hard core of six friends*
in Germany or from Germany still left, out of a fairly large circle of friends, you know. I think they started to fall off pretty much after that time as well, you know. You can sustain a long term, long distance friendship or so, I think, only for so long. And after that it really, it either drops off, or it is really a very important friendship and it sustains.

On the other hand it would be difficult to adjust to Germany, because through living in New Zealand, one has been exposed to much influence from the New Zealand culture. As a consequence, one would notice many more things which one does not like in Germany.

Taking these two central reasons together, some stayers believe that, if they would have returned to Germany, they would have felt alienated and would have been sitting between all the chairs, they would have had to put up with setbacks in their careers, and would not have had many friends. Individually or combined, these reasons contributed to their staying in New Zealand.

**Could not Afford Similar Living Standard in Germany now**

Some stayers think one reason which contributes to their staying in New Zealand is that they believe that they are financially better off in New Zealand and could not afford the standard of living they have in New Zealand if they would have returned to Germany:

*I mean the thing is that to live in the standard that I, you know, live in here now; I would have to work much harder in Germany I think. ... I couldn’t imagine owning a house like this so close to the city for that little money basically, you know. To make the transfer, for instance, I mean all the money that we have now and all our assets, if we sell it, in Germany we would be at the bottom of the heap basically. We couldn’t put the money together to buy anything or to live in any which way that is close to how we live here.*

**Germany Remains Unattractive**

Some stayers also stay in New Zealand because Germany remains unattractive to them for exactly the same reasons and conditions they had left Germany, and of which they became increasingly aware the longer they lived outside Germany.

**RETURNERS: REASONS AND CONDITIONS FOR RETURNING**

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the factors influencing the return decision were the direct result of living away from Germany and living in New Zealand. Some factors emerged very soon during the establishment phase, whereas others emerged years later. This is reflected in that the time of the actual decision to return varied greatly from eight months up to eight years. This variation suggests also that the weighing up process was ongoing. That is, the participants constantly considered and reconsidered, more or less consciously, whether the conditions in New Zealand were conducive for their well-being and happiness. When they felt that they were not attractive and supportive anymore and/or that the conditions in Germany were more conducive for their well-being again, they moved again. This attitude stems from their characteristics and values, in particular from their accepting responsibility for their own happiness and actively ensuring their own well-being and happiness.

As with the reasons and conditions for migrating to New Zealand, the reasons and conditions for returning to Germany were diverse, complex, and interrelated. It was never a factor alone, but a combination of various factors that led the participants to decide to return. Further, returning was commonly the result of a combination of insufficient strength of factors holding them in New Zealand (hold factors), sufficient strength of factors pushing them away from New Zealand (push factors), sufficient strength of factors pulling
them back to Germany (pull factors) and insufficient strength of factors discouraging them to return to Germany (deterring factors).

That the hold factors were too weak for holding the returners in New Zealand is demonstrated by the fact that the returners wanted to return to Germany despite their positive experiences in New Zealand and outcomes:

There are so many things that are simply absolutely beautiful and other things where I can only say: “I nevertheless don't want to live in New Zealand.” I would travel there again for a holiday, flying there, but to live there and to have the chance to return to there or to live there for evermore: no thanks, I wouldn't want that. I don't see any point in it. (200)

An extreme case presents one returner couple who had had a wonderful life in New Zealand. They were very happy living in New Zealand, had established themselves, and felt very well:

“For the moment, everything is just wonderful,” I told everybody, “We bought a house, we have jobs, we have our own company, we are doing fine. We’ll try to go back to [our hometown] every other year.” (201)

... we basically had reached the high point of our existence. Naturally, things could have become even better, but certainly not worse. Our livelihood was relatively secure and we had a circle of friends. We did lots of things. The circle of friends grew larger and larger - we made more and more contacts to New Zealanders as well as Germans. We went mountain-biking regularly. We had joined the tennis club in September and fine and dandy. ... And all’s well. (202)

However, the couple nevertheless returned, because he had a very strong feeling that he wanted to return when they arrived in their hometown. Moreover, several opportunities presented themselves in Germany and they felt the desire or thrill to start something new again:

And I realized, already at the moment we left the airplane, something happened. (Petra: What?) That's hard to say, ... my brother met us, we got into the car and we drove and came through [our hometown]. And basically it dawned on me and became clear in my head: We will come back! (203)

While the hold factors were insufficient for all returner couples, there were great variations with regard to whether they were more pushed away from New Zealand or more pulled to Germany. For some couples, the push factors prevailed, whereas for other couples, the pull factors were dominant.

The decision to return was, for some returners, very simple, whereas for other returners, the decision was very difficult. The decision was easiest for one couple who followed the flow and another couple where both felt that they did not want to live in New Zealand. For one couple, the decision was easy, as the woman had the strong feeling that she did not want to live in New Zealand and strongly desired to return. However, the decision was complicated by the fact that her partner wanted to stay in order to give them more time for establishing themselves. The decision was most difficult for one couple who was very undecided whether or not to return, because the hold factors and push/pull factors were relatively balanced.

For the couple who went with the flow, things came together well – many opportunities arose for them in Germany. They returned because they believe, similar to the couple who believe to have received clues/signs from God, that if at least three opportunities come together and you feel well on top of it, then one really should follow these opportunities, for it was meant to be. Thus, the couple decided to seize these opportunities. However, they were also ready to leave New Zealand. Several push and pull factors strengthened their decision to follow the flow. In retrospect, they believe that because they went with the flow – because they grabbed the opportunities – it was easier for them to return than if they desperately had wanted to return:

I believe that if we had intended to return to Germany and had come [to Germany] in October with our return in mind, it would not have worked. For whatever reason - I wouldn't have a clue! ... [Returning] with
having the idea in mind: 'We need to knock it down, we want to go back.' - that is difficult. But if you let things come to you ... it works. (204)

That their decision to return was right for them is evident in that they are absolutely happy in Germany again, greatly enjoy their lives in Germany, and both have good jobs.

In contrast, for the couples at the difficult end of the decision-making spectrum, the actual decision to return was preceded by a predominantly unconscious process, which dragged on over a long period of time and which resulted in the development of a feeling of discontent and many fundamental questions:

That dragged out .... that are simply processes, which drag out, and you don't gain clarity from one day to the next to know what's happening – that you say: “Looks like as if I had reached some turning point in my life.” – you do not know that you are – perhaps. ... Well, this indisposition there. So I had to confront some questions: “Where am I now, where am I going? What do I actually want here? What am I doing here? Why am I here at the other end of the world?” (205)

The feelings of indisposition/discontent arose as the result of several factors related to their life in New Zealand (push factors). As a consequence of those feelings of indisposition/discontent as well as of those questions, the couples started to draw balances of what they perceived to be the positive and negative sides of living in New Zealand, and they went on scouting holidays to Germany to gather information about Germany and to check out their options in Germany. For one couple, this holiday strengthened the woman’s decision to return and, thus, the couple decided to return. The other couple carefully compared various things in Germany and New Zealand and, over a long period of time, they did not know what to do; it was a constant to and fro. This constant to and fro generated much uncertainty and led to much distress. In the end, they decided to return to Germany for a combination of different factors.

One couple reported that it was good to have made the decision while they were still in Germany, and that they decided to stick to their decision and to look forward to new things again, because otherwise they might have started to vacillate between Germany and New Zealand:

Had we possibly gone back now in order to make up our minds there in New Zealand on the spot, it would have been more difficult, because you get used to life there again and you see it as it is: summer will come, November and December, the ocean, etc., and you'll see all your friends again. But given that we made the cut right [in Germany] and decided: no matter now, don't look back, go ahead, and let's go! ... No, because we knew there was something new waiting for us here. (206)

Again as with the migration decision, it was of crucial importance for the return decision that the couples made the decision jointly yet independently, since this mode of decision making gave them confidence in their decision:

But both of us actually agreed, so that we said: “No, it's just right, and that's what we will do.” (207)

As with the decision to migrate to New Zealand, the decision to return to Germany is typically not final. Rather, the returners wanted to give it a try and see how they like it in Germany and how they feel in Germany:

Let's see. And naturally, perhaps quite positively too, even though it will probably not happen, but theoretically we could go back [to New Zealand]! (208)

Four codes emerged that influenced the decision to return, which interacted in various ways:
Decisive Experiences

Some returners had negative experiences that contributed in decisive ways to their desire to return, because very often these decisive points were the starting point for downward spirals (see also *Comparing to Germany & Focusing on the Negative*). As an illustration, one returner was held responsible by a New Zealand mother for an accident involving both their sons. As a consequence, she did not understand the people and the world around her anymore, wondered what she was doing in New Zealand, and felt depressed. This state of mind led to her noticing more negative things in New Zealand, which she had not previously recognised:

*But that was the crucial point where, yeah I was really pretty down. Where I said: “What am I doing here?” That was also the point in time, a time, where I didn’t really understand the world anymore and the life around me either and the people, who I had dealings with. Just the way it is.* (Petra: *Was that just that one mother or were there others?*) *No it was really actually just the one, but then on top of that, when you’re down anyway, then you notice things that wouldn’t normally have occurred to you before. ... And then I fell in a hole pretty much, I’d have to say. I mean on an emotional level. At that time there was no one really there for me who could have supported me. (Petra: *What do you mean by falling in a hole?*) Yeah, like kind of emotionally and psychologically, somehow. There the question came up: “What am I doing here? Why am I at the other end of the world? I want my mummy!”* (209)

Similarly, another returner was falsely accused of theft. According to her partner, she never recovered from this false allegation:

*I reckon that the most extreme situation was that thing where she was accused of taking that stuff home or whatever, that she was so down and so rock bottom, that she ... So after that I reckon she never really got a grip on herself again. And that was the beginning of something – little things were there. So then she started going with [a friend’s] daughter to this fitness centre. But then she was already at the point where you’d say nothing will come of it. So they went in and it didn’t match the most modern German standards, rather it was this old store hall and then all this equipment were in there. Actually they served the purpose, since you’re not just there to look at the beautiful walls, rather you want to have all the equipment there and those were all there. But that was then the point where you say: “For God’s sake, what on earth is this? You would never do this in Germany!” And when you get to that point ‘You’d never have done that in Germany’, or ‘You’d never do that in Germany’ then you’re as good as back, I reckon. Yeah, because then you don’t identify with the stuff and so on. Then it’s really kind of are done with it and start thinking: ‘Let them all here, I’m going back!’* (210)

Push Factors: Reasons and Conditions Pushing them Away from New Zealand

The returners were pushed away from New Zealand, because several conditions in New Zealand led to an overall discontent with their life situations. In discussing these reasons and conditions, it will become apparent that many of the issues that we have already discussed under *Obstacles in Chapter Five* re-emerge in this section. This re-emergence shows that stayers also experienced many of these reasons and conditions, but they either did not perceive them as important issues that affected their well-being negatively, or they found ways to deal with them. In order to avoid much repetition, we only discuss here those issues that the
returners themselves pointed out as having contributed to their return. However, ALL the issues mentioned under **Obstacles** represent potential factors that can contribute to the return of German immigrants. Thus, the following reasons and conditions should be considered as the main factors that contributed to the return of the returners who participated in this study. 14 main reasons and conditions crystallised during the analysis:

- **Financial Stringency**
- **Insufficient Cultural Life and Intellectual Stimulation**
- **Dissatisfaction Workwise**
- **Discontentment of Some Characteristics of New Zealanders**
- **Dissatisfaction with Kind of Friends**
- **Not Experiencing Nature Much**
- **Anxiety that Children would be Disadvantaged**
- **Concerns for Well-being of Children**
- **New Zealand too far Away from Germany**
- **Feeling Isolated in New Zealand**
- **Concerns About Social Coverage**
- **Opportunities for New Experiences Exhausted**
- **Fleeing Relationship Problems**

**Financial Stringency**
The returner couples, in particular, experienced financial stringency. Their financial stringency resulted from various combinations of difficulties: finding jobs; low wages; not being able to work in their professions because of problems with the recognition of qualifications; and high living costs. As a consequence, their living standard dropped, the incoming money was not sufficient for their daily living, and they could not save enough money for trips home. The financial stringency was amplified by missing out on financial assistance from the government, because of lack of knowledge and insufficient English skills. As a result of their financial stringency they felt that they had to put up with too many restrictions which they were not prepared to accept. In particular, the financial stringency lead to feelings of isolation, because they could not afford to travel regularly home or to other cultures with more cultural and intellectual stimulation which they need and highly value.

**Insufficient Cultural Life and Intellectual Stimulation**
Although several returners came to New Zealand to get away from the stressful life in Germany and love nature, they realised after a while that the relaxed lifestyle of the New Zealanders was too quiet for them and that nature alone is not enough for them over a longer time. They became aware that they also need cultural and intellectual stimulation to feel well. Some returners discovered, firstly, that there was much less cultural life in New Zealand, even in cities like Wellington, and that they are actually people who need to live close to a big city with much more cultural life. For these reasons, they started to miss a varied cultural life in New Zealand:

_I would say that, in retrospect, we are more people who appreciate the vicinity of the big city. And we did try to live it out in [the big city in New Zealand near to which we lived] and we have actually done to our best possibilities, but what is on offer is not anyway near to what is on offer in Germany._ (212)

Secondly, some returners discovered that intellectual stimulation in New Zealand is hampered because conflicts were smoothed and covered up in New Zealand; that the society was not alive, that there were no energy fields or friction fields (‘Spannungsfelder’) to grow on, and that it was difficult to have stimulating discussions with New Zealanders. Because the participants are characterised by a thirst for knowledge and experiences, and love energy/friction fields (‘Spannungsfelder’), challenges, and excitement, they especially missed the cultural life and intellectual stimulation and started to experience feelings of boredom. The insufficiency of cultural life and intellectual stimulation might be a function of age and the degree to which
German immigrants like nature. Those who like nature and older German immigrants might not miss cultural life so much:

*What you have in New Zealand – you have got more the nature. Which is just beautiful, nothing to complain about, but is perhaps this simplicity that would have gotten to us after while...* (213)

*But with [my partner] it had reached the point that even the things which kept you on a high - that for example one could hop into the car after work and be off to the beach or the like what was nearby, or to the mountains which are in back of it, then jogging a bit, or to the river with the dog - well, it was totally sufficient for me, when I could lie there, or I went swimming or the like, just simply enjoying the peace and quiet. Yeah, and [my partner] then said it was not sufficient for her, not at her age. So she said if she were 50 or 55 maybe, but at her age she felt too young for that.* (214)

One stayer couple solves this dilemma by going constantly back and forth between New Zealand and Germany:

*(Petra: So then, do you feel like you getting the best of both worlds?) Yes, I do! ... I would definitely not want to miss the life in Germany, but I also wouldn’t want to miss it [in New Zealand]. ... I think that whenever we were in Germany, I had the feeling that I really liked that life in Germany. Just to be able to sit in the car and drive 10 km to the next city or to visit someone, or to drive two hours to be in a different country. I didn’t miss it when I was here, but I really enjoyed it when I was there. ... And [being in New Zealand] was sort of more the time when you could regain energy again...* 

However, because the returners experienced much financial stringency, they were not able to afford to bring more of the cultural and intellectual stimulation into their lives that they needed in order to feel well, because of their thirst for knowledge and experiences.

**Dissatisfaction Workwise**

Several returners were dissatisfied with work, because they did not see any job prospects; could not work in their profession, since their qualifications were not recognised; and/or they had had negative work experiences. These returners did not see job prospects for themselves, because they had applied unsuccessfully to every relevant company in the area; did not get enough money to provide for their day-to-day living; were unfairly passed over in promotion; and/or there was a sufficient number of people working in their profession, except in a few very remote areas. Among them the returners experienced all the negative work experiences which we discussed under *Obstacles*. As a consequence, these returners felt depressed, were angry and frustrated, and wondered why they voluntarily put themselves in a worse situation than they had been in Germany:

*You see, and that [working not in her profession, low income, false allegations of theft, sexual harassment] were all things which totally demoralized her and then she often reached the point at night where she said: “Why do I inflict this on myself? In Germany, I’ve had a good job, I was being appreciated and all that, and here they treat me like dirt!”* (215)

For some couples, dissatisfaction with work also influenced personal relationships negatively. This contributed to feelings of dissatisfaction and reduced mutual social support among the partners.

**Discontentment with Some Characteristics of New Zealanders**

Especially for the returners the characteristics of New Zealanders, which we talked about in *Chapter Five*, did not feel right. Additionally, some returners became aware that German immigrants who had already lived in New Zealand for many years had adopted this attitude:
... a Bavarian, who has been living [in New Zealand] for ages. Well, she had already adapted totally to this style: totally relaxed, and, like, if I don't come today I may come tomorrow and if I don't finish it ... You know, she is building a sleep-out in the garden and has been going at it for over four years. (218)

As a consequence, several returners were concerned that they would adapt the characteristics they did not like if they stayed longer. Because they did not want that to happen, they decided to return:

_Frankly, I don't wish to become like that. If that's the way I really feel, I'd rather leave the country._ (219)

_Yes, and then we said often to ourselves: “That's not the way we want to live.”_ (220)

**Dissatisfaction with Kind of Friends**

Although most returners had built up a good circle of friends, they were dissatisfied with the kind of friends they had. Because of differences with New Zealanders in social interaction and friendship concepts, and because of ethnic support German immigrants can provide, the circle of friends of returners consisted mainly of other German immigrants. This seems to have led to two kinds of issues. Firstly, the circle of friends of some returners was restricted to other German immigrants whom they had found through the German playgroup. Although these friends provided support in many different respects (e.g. maintaining and learning German for children, moaning), they could often not help with relieving returners from their child caring responsibilities, because they usually had to care for their children on their own too. In addition, because they all did not have anybody to share in the bringing up of the children, they did not have much time for developing more intimate, deep friendships beyond things to do with the children. An illustration of this is that one returner wondered why her friends did not simply come along for a coffee and were not there for her when she went through difficult times. As a result, she started questioning the quality of her friendships:

_There I thought: ‘Oh man, that are actually my friends. Why doesn't actually anyone come? What's so terrible about it now?’ ... At the time I was rather ill, high fever and all that, no one was there. ... the people who I called my friends - well, where were they? Everyone was so busy with themselves and with their families._ (221)

Secondly, because the participants experienced difficulties building friendships with New Zealanders and because there are not so many other German immigrants living in New Zealand, they had only a limited pool from whom they could choose their friends. This might reduce the likelihood of finding really good friends. This interpretation is evident in the experience of one returner couple, who had a great circle of friends mostly consisting of other German immigrants. However, they told Petra that these friends were not the kind of friends they would have wished to have around when they were dying. Accordingly, because some returners did not have the right kind of friends in New Zealand, the thought of growing old in New Zealand and dying there was frightful for them. They were afraid that they would be lonely when their partner died and/or would die lonely. This concern was strengthened by their belief that the more friends one has, the more comfortable life will be, when one is old, because then one would have more social support:

_To die in New Zealand was a terrible thought, to be just alone. You don’t know what’s going to happen. ... And it was very important for me – that it’s clear: I didn’t want to die there. For me that was a terrible thought._ (Petra: Why?) _I don’t know - no idea. Perhaps, because we’ve got no kids ... or the thought that something happened to one of us. That was simply a nightmare! Imagine something had happened one of us and the one had to bury the other. No, I mean, nothing against the country, no - just this certainty that you’d perhaps be alone or something._ (222)

_One fundamental point was that [my partner] and I had often said that we didn’t want to grow old in New Zealand. (Petra: Why not?) Because in the end we’d have been perhaps just too far away to be able to still have a life in your old age with social contact somehow. And yeah, the more friends you have, the more pleasant your life can be in your old age, because if you’ve got none then you can be really lonely. And to die lonely, that’s not really a feeling that is all that comforting for me. And the social environment_
Germany] is simply larger, much larger. And even though we didn’t have such little contact with others in New Zealand, it’s maybe not really the contact that you’re after when you’re dying. (Petra: Do you mean more the cultural offerings or do you mean more friends and the type of friends?) Exactly, that’s well put - the friends and the type of friends – the type of friends. That’s the important thing! (223)

As the first quotes suggests, the concern of dying alone or being alone when their partner dies might be particular to German immigrants who do not have children.

Not Experiencing Nature Much
Many returners came to New Zealand because they perceived New Zealand as a beautiful country where one can interact with and live connected to nature. However, the returners did not experience nature as much as they had hoped and desired to do:

But for me, if I look back for one instant, it was so intended live to the fullest [in New Zealand] – to do the things which one can’t do [in Germany] maybe as far as nature is concerned. I actually had a bit the expectation to do more in nature: to go tramping, to go camping in the wild somewhere - to experience the wilderness. And, basically, I did not achieve that at all. (224)

... which, in retrospect, is also an essential point. There are so many who say: “Oh, are you lying in the sun all day and are you having only fun?” That's not the way it works, for sure, if you have to earn money, then you are on the road somewhere for eight, nine or even ten hours. And if you work physically, it's always the question whether you have enough leisure to go tramping on weekends, even if the mountains are lying around you so close and are tremendously inviting, but it simply does not grab you like that. (225)

The realisation that when one lives in one’s dream country but that does not actually have the time or leisure to do things in the beautiful environment, cancels one important reason why they had come to New Zealand in the first place. This makes New Zealand less desirable as a place to live permanently.

Anxiety that Children would be Disadvantaged
Some returners were anxious that their children might be disadvantaged when the children would decide to leave New Zealand, because the participants found New Zealand education too limited and they were concerned that their children might not receive enough social stimulation. One returner couple was concerned that the New Zealand education might not be recognised worldwide and that their son might experience problems getting a proper job if he would have decided to leave New Zealand:

And one important reason for returning home was [our son]. [My partner] was afraid that he is too limited regarding his professional training. You know, that he perhaps does not want to stay in New Zealand, but does his training [in New Zealand] and then goes wherever, and then it may not be recognised or something like that. (226)

One couple who lived in the rural area was also concerned that their child might not develop sufficiently socially because, where they lived, there were not many opportunities for interacting with other children, and the few opportunities which existed their child did not like to pursue.

Concerns for Well-being of Children
Another factor that pushed returners away from New Zealand was their great concern about the well-being of their children, since their children were teased and harassed at school because of their German descent and since the schools did not put protective measures in place (see Children Beaten and Called Nazi and Hitler). The returners and their children not only felt unsupported and discriminated against, but they also could not see an improvement of the situation. Consequently, they were very concerned about the physical safety of their children and about the impact of discrimination on their children’s sense of self.
New Zealand too far Away from Germany

While one of the reasons why the participants came to New Zealand was that it is far away, for some of the returners New Zealand proved to be too far away:

*But this feeling, to be so far away from Europe, was maybe then more negative. If New Zealand had been a bit closer so that you could fly quickly across to Europe, soaking it all up, we perhaps would not have [returned to Germany]. (230)*

There were many interconnected reasons for why New Zealand being so far away was an issue for returners. Being so far away New Zealand means it does not offer much cultural life and intellectual stimulation. The lack of stimulation increased the desire to fly more often back to Germany or Europe. However, the great distance between New Zealand and Germany/Europe increases the costs and duration of flying. High costs and duration of flights makes it also more difficult to stay in contact with family and friends. The low wages in New Zealand and the high expense of flights meant that the returners could not afford to go home as often as they had imagined that they could. High costs and long duration of flights also amplified the Fear Something Bad Happens to Family & Friends (see Chapter Five). For some returners this fear was too much to bear:

*And then there was of course the thought: ‘what if something happens to my parents?’ Yeah, for me that was always terrible. If you think about your father - I mean you’d never get back there in time! (232)*

Some returners fear got augmented by making negative experiences or hearing negative stories in this respect:

*And when you’re ‘down under’ and there is something, you can’t get there quickly. [In Germany] it takes me two and a half hours to get [to my mum’s place]... Yeah, even when I’m in Germany and I live in Hamburg and don’t manage it with the car so quickly, I can jump in the ICE [International Express Train] and then someone picks me up in [the city], drives half an hour from there and picks me up. So like it can all be pretty quick. And that’s the hard thing [in New Zealand]. We went in October to New Zealand and in December my grandfather died. And I didn’t know anything about it – no one rang me up either. And so I ring up, just before Christmas, and my brother: “Hi, g’day, it’s me, how you doing?” “Oh well,” he said: “I don’t know.” I say: “Hey, what’d you mean by that now?” “Yeah, we’ve just buried grandpa.” That’s how I found out. That was: uff!!! At first I couldn’t do anything. I couldn’t have said anything else. I could only swallow. And then there was a long pause. And then sometime I asked him when he died and how he died. And then I hung up. I could not talk anymore then, because I was howling and ... I should add that I grew up in my grandfather’s house. I lived there the first 13 years of my life. (231)*

One returner heard a very touching story of a German immigrant who had paid a very large sum of money to get on the next possible flight and still did not make it in time. She also imagined that the flight home must have been awful, because the flight is so long and one constantly worries whether one would make it back in time. Although she realised that it is not always possible in Germany to make it in time either, she believed that the likelihood of being there in time is much higher in Germany.

Feeling Isolated in New Zealand

Another factor that pushed the returners away from New Zealand was that they felt isolated in New Zealand. They firstly felt isolated because they could not afford to fly home to Germany as often as they would have liked to for the reasons discussed above. This led to their feeling cut off from their family and friends, and from their cultural heritage. They secondly felt isolated because of the fewer choices in clothes and groceries and because it was difficult to find certain groceries (especially German food) at all. The degree to which this factor was an issue depended on whether they were fashion-conscious and whether they lived in rural as opposed to urban areas:
But it's a bit like that: [my partner] is fashion-conscious, you know, and loves going shopping here and there in several stores. You try that in [in the town where we lived in New Zealand]? There you stumble from the bookshop to the hardware store and to the bike shop and with that you are through. And when you reach the Outdoor Centre, you are offered the latest gumboot line and a pair of jeans, perhaps, and then call it a day. Naturally, that's a bit sparse. (233)

Having little choice of goods was especially an issue, because they were used to a wide choice of goods as this quote by a participant who lived for a while in Sydney too demonstrates:

For starters you can, for example, have in Sydney in most shops all those things we knew from Germany. Starting with food and then the choice of clothes. ... The point is that you can have everything when you want to. As I said, clothes for example. If you need something and wanted to buy it, you had an endless selection, as we were used to from Germany. (234)

Interestingly, the crucial point was not that they needed those things so much or that they needed a wide choice of goods, but the knowledge that, if they would like to buy something, they could get it.

Concerns About Social Coverage
Some returners left because they were concerned about the decline of the once very good New Zealand social system. Having the impression that they are not well cared for in the case of health problems and retirement made them anxious:

But when [my partner] heard about [how the social system works] that put more fear in her. (235)

This concern was compounded for those returners who experienced financial stringency and, thus, did not feel that they could save enough to provide for health problems and their retirement.

Opportunities for New Experiences Exhausted
For one participant couple a strong factor that pushed them out of New Zealand was they had the feeling that they had exhausted the opportunities for new experiences in New Zealand. Especially he had experienced enough in New Zealand and felt the desire to move on to do something new:

It simply like this: man, New Zealand had done nicely, but it had reached its limit, because one became aware somehow, ah well, it would be so nice to be back [in Germany] and you did have the experience [in New Zealand]. That's enough, that's okay. (236)

This factor underlines the immense thirst for knowledge and experience some of the participants have.

Saving Relationship & Family
In harmony with their belief that the relationship and family is paramount and the deal several couples made before they migrated that they would return it one of them or their relationship would suffer, some returners returned to save their relationships and/or their families. For instance, one returner wanted to stay, but he returned because his wife and son did not feel well in New Zealand and did not want to stay, and he did not want to lose them. Another couple also decided to return because they wanted to save their relationship. They had migrated to New Zealand to save their relationship, but experienced, after an initial phase of improvement, a worsening of their relationship. He believed that the issues they experienced were partly due to his dissatisfaction at work. Thus, when he was offered what appeared to be a very good job in Germany, he saw it as a chance for him to improve his well-being and their relationship.
The discussed factors that pushed returners away from New Zealand were only one side of the return decision. The other side were factors that pulled the returners to Germany. It is to a discussion of these factors that we turn now.

**Pull Factors: Reasons and Conditions Pulling them to Germany**

Pull factors embraces all those factors which attracted the returners back to Germany. The analysis identified eight main pull factors:

- **Intensely Missing Family and Friends**
- **Desire to Return to Roots**
- **Feeling Better in Germany Now**
- **More Positive Perception of Germany**
- **Germany Offers Sufficient Cultural Life & Intellectual Stimulation**
- **Germany Changed to the Positive**
- **High Paid & Challenging Job Offer**
- **Several Reasons Related to Children**

**Intensely Missing Family and Friends**
Some of the returners were attracted to returning to Germany because they intensely missed their families and friends. The degree to which they missed family and friends was to do with gender, closeness to family and friends, time in New Zealand, whether they could build up a sufficient new circle of friends in New Zealand, and whether they were satisfied with their new friendships. Both returners who missed their families and friends considerably were women and were very close to their family and friends. One returner was only here for eight months, which means that she was still in the first hard year, when homesickness is most pronounced. The same returner could not build up a sufficient new circle of friends in New Zealand, whereas the other returner had managed to build up a new circle of friends, but was not satisfied with the kind of friends she had.

**Desire to Return to Roots**
Some returners strongly felt that their roots were pulling them back to Germany. By ‘roots’ the returners meant their cultural heritage, which referred to aspects they had learned during their upbringing and which are, therefore, deeply ingrained in their memory. Roots also include language, history (e.g. especially old buildings), family and friends, hometowns, traditions, characteristics, certain ways of thinking, and German food. All these aspects of roots were missing to a greater or lesser degree in New Zealand. Because these aspects of roots are aspects with which the participants are familiar, they give a sense of security. For this reason and because they reminded the returners of their happy childhood days, roots contributed to their well-being. The returners might have felt that their roots pulling them back, because the returners did not feel well in New Zealand because of uncertainty, unfamiliarity, and many obstacles. They longed more for those aspects that would make them feel well – their roots.

This desire to return to roots might have been amplified by a less developed inner identity. The elaborations under Evolvement Towards Transcendent Inner Sense of Self/Identity imply that the roots might have pulled the returners so strongly back, because they had not yet managed sufficiently to detach and let go of the connection between their cultural heritage as place and their self, and to simultaneously internalise their cultural heritage. Moreover, as one returner pointed out, the degree with which the roots pulled towards returning might have been influenced by the age she was at migration. She believes that the older one is when one migrates, the deeper one might be connected to one’s roots:
... and I would think our roots were already too deep in the ground. I was 35 when we went to New Zealand. (Petra: And how old was [your partner]?) Four years younger than I. And maybe our roots were too deep here in Germany - unconsciously. (238)

Feeling Better in Germany Now
One returner couple was pulled to Germany by a strong feeling during their second trip home. They felt that, after six years living in New Zealand, they would have even more fun living in Germany for two major reasons. Firstly, they fell in love with their hometown. Their hometown had changed much for the better while they lived in New Zealand. They realised that their hometown provided now everything which they needed and valued. This positive view of their hometown was facilitated by their attitude change to grey thinking. Whereas they had perceived their hometown and Germany very critically before they migrated, they now do not take the negative sides so seriously anymore and simply focus on the positive:

I mean I have always liked [my hometown], but I was always very critical. In principle, that is still so to this day, but I don't bother with it so intensely any longer and we simply enjoy being here. It's simply wonderful. (239)

Secondly, they realised how much they enjoyed the cultural life and intellectual stimulation in Germany and they became conscious that this was something they had missed in New Zealand:

My feeling is that there was always maybe something in the back of my head, even while in New Zealand, about which we never talked and of which we weren't conscious at all either, that something was missing. And I can, yes, only by living [in Germany again] we became more and more conscious that something was missing. And that is that our leisure time is, in principle, extremely busy. On the one hand it annoys me, but on the other it's fantastic, because through such a busy leisure you experience so much too: you are constantly invited somewhere, you are going out all the time. Maybe that's what was missing and much more, above and beyond. To put it in a nutshell: life here can never become boring. (240)

The second factor and quote bring us to the next pull factor.

Germany Offers Sufficient Cultural Life & Intellectual Stimulation
The returners also felt pulled by the good things Germany has to offer. As a result of Insufficient Cultural Life and Intellectual Stimulation in many returners realised that they actually need much cultural life and intellectual stimulation around them, and cultural life and intellectual stimulation became more important for them. Hence, the experience of the extensive cultural life and intellectual stimulation that Germany experienced during their trips home attraction draws them very much to return to Germany.

More Positive Perception of Germany
On of the reasons why the participants wanted to leave Germany was that they had perceived everything as bad in Germany (see Chapter Four). However, through all the experiences they gained while living in New Zealand, the participants become more conscious of their German heritage and think more in grey terms. Both facilitated a more positive perception of Germany. Firstly, with an increase in their awareness of their cultural heritage, they became more conscious of the good aspects of their German heritage and Germany:

And I think our views of Germany has certainly changed over the years. If you start realizing from abroad what Germany is capable of it is really remarkable. Germany has a negative history, but it has also a good history which one should never overlook. What made me always very sad was that when people abroad talk about Germany that they always only refer to the Germany of 1933 to 1945. And I believe that Germany had a great history prior to that and after that. One should start leaving out the wars. I mean it is still a nation of poets and philosophers, and there has been a great potential in this country and there continues to be. That's what is so remarkable somehow. (241)
As a result of discovering the good aspects of Germany, they became less critical of Germany.

Secondly, being more aware of the good aspects of Germany and having experienced both countries, puts them into a position which allows them to discern the advantages and disadvantages in each country and to weigh them up. Returners came to the conclusion that Germany is the ‘lesser of the evils’ for them. This informed decision making process enabled returners to accept and live with the negative sides of Germany:

*I still see [Germany] in a critical way, it’s just that I try not to make such a big deal out of it. ... In Germany we’ve got – and there’s really no doubt about it – the best democratic system that there is at this time. That doesn’t mean that there is perhaps a better democratic system, but here in Germany it’s at least the best. I could imagine a better one; it’s just that there isn’t one. ... So in this respect, as I said, I still see things in a critical way, but not so that I’d say: “It’s all shithouse here.”, because it’s just not. Somewhere else it’s bound to be shittier. ... Germany is the lesser of the evils. (170)*

*I mean I have always liked [my hometown], but was always very critical. In principle, that is still so to this day, but I don't bother with it so intensely any longer and we simply enjoy being here. It's simply wonderful.*

However, as one returner pointed out, since perceptions are subjective, it might also be that the returners’ shift to a more positive view of Germany was because the many obstacles they had encountered during their establishment made them realise that their life in Germany was not that bad after all. This change in their perception of Germany was certainly also facilitated by the fact that Germany had changed to the positive in many respects over the previous decade, as the next paragraphs show.

**Germany Changed to the Positive**

When the returners went on trips to Germany, they became aware that Germany had changed in some of the areas which had pushed them away from Germany. For example, Germany had become much greener and cleaner:

*Now, as far as pollution is concerned – there is most certainly an improvement. Well, one could actually see it and it occurred to me that so much has actually changed. I am still aware of that today. Well, in the 80s the streams looked as if they had become mere sewage canals really and how much pollution was in the air. And I mean acid rain is no longer talked about either, because the causes for it had been eliminated. The long-term effects are still there, but the causes have been extensively eliminated and one could sense that. (Petra: You think it's cleaner now?) I would say so in any case. ... Now, yes, Germany does no longer appear as negatively as it did in 85 or 86. (243)*

Moreover, as a consequence of the reunification, which ended the cold war, many American soldiers left Germany and the political atmosphere became much quieter. As a result, the returners felt attracted to Germany again, since they perceived it as now providing higher quality living conditions.

**High Paid and Challenging Job Offer**

When they checked out their options on scouting holidays, two male returners were immediately offered high paid and challenging work in Germany. Both just could not refuse such an excellent opportunity:

*Yes, and especially in Germany, when you are offered such jobs, then you simply have to do it - only if you'd like to, naturally. (244)*

Moreover, one returner saw this job offer as a good chance to end his dissatisfaction with his work situation in New Zealand and hoped that an improvement in his work situation would positively affect his troubled relationship. The job offer the other returner got was from his old company indicating the importance of leaving the door open to Germany by leaving a good impression and maintaining contact.
**Several Reasons Related to Children**

A strong factor pulling the returners with children back to Germany was that they wanted their children to have their roots in Germany, so that their children could decide for themselves where they want to live. This pull factor has its origin in the concern that migration and/or growing up in New Zealand might not be good for their children for the diverse reasons discussed under *Obstacles*. The concerned returners were fearful that their children would not have a home. They were worried that, by continuing to move around the world, they would have forced their children into a travelling life, making their children unsettled and generating questions such as:

*When will we move again? Shall I make friends or not?*

Further, the returners were concerned that their children would experience identity problems and would not know their family, and would thus, when they are older, say things such as:

*I don’t know where my home is. ... We come from Germany – how is Germany?... Where is grandma and granddad?*

As a result of these concerns, they returned, in order to give their children a chance to be able to live in Germany. They wanted to let their children grow roots in Germany through giving them a home in Germany, providing the opportunities for more contact with their family, and letting them finish school in Germany so that they learnt German properly. One couple plans to discuss the issue of migration again when the children have finished school:

*... and then everybody can decide for themselves again: we go now or we stay or ... (245)*

In sum, these eight factors, in various combinations, pulled the returners back to Germany and contributed, besides insufficient hold factors and various combinations of push factors, to their return to Germany. However, the diverse push and pull factors are very much the result of the returners’ migration experience. As we argued in *Chapter Five*, the migration experience was, among other things, greatly effected by the participants’ beliefs/attitudes and strategies. In *Chapter Five* we talked about the beliefs/attitudes and strategies that increased the likelihood of staying. In this chapter, we will discuss the beliefs/attitudes and strategies that increased the likelihood of returning for much can be gained from the knowledge of these factors too because it allows one to prevent making the same mistakes.

**Beliefs/Attitudes & Strategies that Increased the Likelihood of Returning**

The analysis brought to light certain beliefs/attitudes and strategies that increased the likelihood of returning to Germany, because they made the establishment and/or living in New Zealand harder. A more difficult establishment might have, in turn, lessened the strength of the hold factors, and might have amplified the push and pull factors. Some of the factors that went wrong were pointed out directly by the returners. Other factors we inferred from the returners answers to our questions about what they would have done differently in retrospect. Eight main factors emerged from the analysis:

- **Black and White Thinking**
- **Believing one Can Run Away from Problems**
- **Ignoring of Disconfirming Information**
- **Not Listening to Own Feelings**
- **Not Courageous and Flexible Enough To Realise Dream**
Moving to Rural Area
Not Working Hard Enough to Establish Social Life
Comparing to Germany & Focusing on the Negative
Not Giving Themselves Enough Time

Some of these factors were already integrated in other parts of this book. However, we believe that pulling them together from the whole migration process in this section would be valuable for your learning process. In addition, it is reasonable to conclude that opposite beliefs/attitudes and strategies to those beliefs/attitudes and strategies that increased the likelihood of staying (see Chapter Five) increased the likelihood of returning. In fact, some of the following factors are opposite of those beliefs/attitudes and strategies that increased the likelihood of staying.

Black and White Thinking
Several participants thought in black and white terms before and during their migration. Those participants perceived, for instance, that everything in Germany is bad and negative, and everything in New Zealand is better and positive. This black-and-white thinking was amplified by a low awareness and appreciation of their cultural heritage. Consequently, they predominantly left Germany because they were highly critical of Germany, and they predominantly migrated to New Zealand because they believed that New Zealand is a paradise. Because of this thinking, they had inflated expectations which led to much disappointment during their establishment.

Believing one Can Run Away From Problems
Those participants who believed that they can run away from their problems in Germany by migrating and mainly migrated to escape from the problems they experienced as result of potentially traumatic experiences, experienced more obstacles (e.g. relationship problems, less support from partner when their relationship problems escalated) making their establishment much harder. Moreover, if not dealt with relationship problems could push participants away from New Zealand (see Fleeing Relationship Problems).

Ignoring of Disconfirming Information
As already mentioned under Acquisition of Information, one participant gathered a lot of information, but he emphasised the positive things he read and ignored disconfirming information. He did not want to consider and think of both sides of the coin: the advantages and the disadvantages migrating to New Zealand would have for his family:

And somehow I maybe forgot that [my son’s] whole future hung on it. And then it was for me in that moment, when all the packing and the going there and so on went on, I just repressed so many thoughts. Among other things, I had really not thought much about [my son’s] education or how it would turn out. For me it was simple: he grows up with two languages and he grew up internationally and that’d be only good for him – that was pretty much how I saw it. And well, yeah, that I got fairly quickly refuted down there. (246)

Hence, he came to New Zealand with inflated expectations and was disappointed when he discovered that not everything was as positive as he had imagined.

Not Listening to Own Feelings
One couple, in particular, did not listen to or follow their own feelings. They ignored warning signs regarding a migration agency, and they listened to and trusted other German immigrants and the migration agency:

... and those were the things, where I always thought: ‘My God, why didn’t you, or why didn’t we do what we actually wanted to do and why we always listen to other people?’ (247)
Because they let fall apart their sensible establishment plans, they set into motion a downward spiral which contributed to financial stringency and missing out on cultural life. Both conditions were the main contributors to their return.

**Not Courageous and Flexible Enough To Realise Dream**

One returner couple believes that they actually did not realise their dream – that they seemed to have forgotten why they actually left Germany and came to New Zealand. When they realised that they did not like the place where they lived in New Zealand, they were not courageous and flexible enough to move to a place which seemed to represent everything they had imagined for themselves. They thought that he would not find work there and that it would not be good for the children to move again. Hence, they became more and more dissatisfied with the place in which they lived, which contributed to their return, as she realised in retrospect:

What I’m trying to say is simply this wishful thinking: Why did you leave [Germany]? What were you missing? That this goal didn’t get forgotten just because of the work situation. For instance, there are enough jobs in Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland for what [my partner] does. And then to say: “Okay Christchurch, I don’t want Christchurch. … To [go to the city where we lived] for a visit yes, but I wouldn’t want to live there any more – it’s just too windy and not warm enough for me during summer.” And that is how it was at the end when I said: “Hey man, we live now here for years, have the sea right in front of our nose and you can’t ever go swimming, because it’s too cold. What am I doing then living at the seaside?” So then I’ll move somewhere, where you can at least do swimming, where you get something out of it where I can really enjoy it, which is in the end the reason why I’m [in New Zealand]: that I have the sea all around me. (248)

**Moving to Rural Area**

One returner couple moved to a rural area. This was not conducive for several reasons, as they later realised:

And then in between, like I said, we were again and again in Wellington and always heard from the friends, that we had there, that it was a huge mistake that we’d made by moving to such a place. [The town where we lived in New Zealand] is known as a place where you go when you’re older, a bit ‘relaxed’, but not for work or to make some money. (249)

Firstly, it was more difficult in rural areas to find suitable work, because there were not so many employment opportunities and, since everybody knew everybody, it was difficult to get a job without having the right connections. Hence, it was very difficult for him to find a job in the area and he had to accept a job which was many kilometres away. Secondly, in rural areas it was more difficult to be accepted as a new member of the community. Thus, it was more difficult to build-up a new circle of friends. This problem was compounded by the fact that there were fewer German immigrants, which meant there was less choice and likelihood that one would find somebody on the same ‘wavelength’. Hence, their circle of friends was very small and they missed out on much social support. Thirdly, in rural areas there was not much going on culturally, the normal range of goods was very limited, and usually there were no German goods available. This issue might have been especially pronounced for them, because they had lived previously in a big city and thus were used to more cultural life and a wider range of goods. It seems that under those circumstances, the change to a quiet, slow, and relaxed lifestyle was simply too substantial. Fourthly, wages were lower in rural areas, but prices for goods were higher. This constellation contributed to financial stringency. The returner couple experienced the difference in atmosphere between Wellington and the place where they lived as follows:

And so, when I was in Wellington, I really bloomed and when it was only, like I said, we always went there to our tattooist, talked a bit with him - that bucked you up a bit. And then you went out, there was a little café around the corner, you sat down, watched the people, some were a bit weird and so on. And that was when
you knew there is something alive. And then you ‘flew’ back into your cave and there was deadly silence again. And that was pretty much it, I reckon. (250)

When the couple realised that moving to this rural area was not a positive move, it was too late for further changes, because she had already decided that she wanted to return.

Further, given that the participants are very active and want to expand their knowledge and experience, living in a remote area does not offer them enough stimulation and therefore, makes them feel ‘dead’. Yet, on the other hand, they love nature and want a lifestyle connected to nature. This suggests that the participants have to balance out these two needs when they choose their living place. Living close to big cities might be a good compromise, because it would allow them to enjoy nature; give them more job opportunities and higher wages, allow them to obtain cultural stimulation when they felt the need for it; and would provide more opportunities for making social contacts:

One has probably to go to the bigger cities or move near to a bigger city or so. (251)

However, despite the outlined advantages of cities, for some immigrants rural areas might nevertheless be the better place to live, depending on their personal characteristics and values, as well as on their degree of inner sense of self.

Not Working Hard Enough to Establish Social Life
Some of the returners said that they probably did not work hard enough and did not try enough to get in contact with New Zealanders and other German immigrants:

But we had, I reckon we sought maybe too little contact with the New Zealanders, or perhaps we should have, I don’t know. ... (252)

As a result of not having a proper social life, they missed out greatly on all the different kinds of social support a circle of friends would have been able to provide (see under Social Support). Thus, they had difficulties figuring out how things work in New Zealand and they felt lonely, homesick, and depressed.

Comparing to Germany & Focusing on the Negative
Some returners went into an emotional downward spiral. As a result of a negative basic attitude (e.g. women who went along) and/or decisive negative experiences, these returners noticed more, or concentrated more on, negative things. Once they were on this negative path, many little things bothered them, which set in motion a negative spiral which dragged them even more into a depressive state. Comparisons to Germany seem, in particular, detrimental. This process is evident in the quote under Decisive Experiences as well as this quote:

I’d have to say, at lot of the time, starting in the middle of our time there, we ourselves spoke things ill. That started with things like you were in the supermarket and you wanted chocolate or something, and then the chocolate was a bit too expensive and then it started: ‘It’s all shit here, everything’s so expensive and you can’t buy things! ’, and so on. And then you say to yourself: ‘Yeap, I didn’t need [looking whether I could afford it] before [in Germany, because we had good incomes]. ’, and so. When we got to that point, then I thought: ‘It won’t be good for long when you start comparing and digging up the past, ... (253)

As a result, they perceived their life in New Zealand increasingly negatively and they became dissatisfied and depressed.
Did not Give Themselves Enough Time

One returner couple returned after about eight months. Given that, for all participants, the first year was very hard and after that their lives became drastically easier, the couple might have not given themselves enough time for their establishment. This conclusion was also drawn by the returner himself:

*But then I think sometimes the time was too short, because I always tried to talk with [my partner] and said: “You’ve got to take at least a year to even understand the various things somehow.”* (254)

NEW DREAMS

Having lived their dream to migrate and to live in another country does not mean that the participants do not have dreams anymore. On the contrary, due to their characteristics and values, and due to several gains from living through the migration, both stayers and returners continue to have dreams. At the point of the study, the participants had four major dreams:

- Returning to New Zealand
- Living in Another Country
- Combining the Best of Both Worlds
- Continuing an Interesting Life full of New Experiences

Returning to New Zealand

For some of the returners, New Zealand is not crossed off the list - they still dream about returning to New Zealand some time. For example, one returner, who returned over ten years ago and has not been back since, often feels homesick for New Zealand, dreams about New Zealand, and would like to do a placement in New Zealand for a longer time, in order to find out how New Zealand is now. Further, her children were born in New Zealand and she would like the children to live in New Zealand for a longer time so that they can get to know their country of birth. Although she is dreaming about New Zealand, she is not sure whether returning to New Zealand would make her happy, because of the common fear that she would not be back in time if something happened to her mother. This is especially important since her mother is now quite old:

*(Petra: You say perhaps once again New Zealand?) I would love to. Of course, that's always a two-sided thing. Come to think of it, my father did die. Then, I went up on the same day to him, was able to see him again, and was able to say take my leave from him, and spent some time with my mother. My mother isn't going to live forever – she is going to be 79 now. But if you are down under now and something happened, you can't get there right away - in two and one half hours I'll be there. Yes, but even if am living in Germany now, in Hamburg and I can't get there so easily by car anyway, I would then hop on the ICE [intercontinental express train] and someone will pick me up in [the city], takes a half hour drive from there, and picks me up from there. I could then be there in a relatively short time.* (255)

Living in Another Country

Other returners dream about going to another country and are ready to go to another country again. Thus, they either work consciously on creating the conditions for going there or are open to it and would go if opportunities arise again:

*I think I am now dreaming more of [another country]. And I think I should work on that - on going there.*

*If [my partner] now would get an offer to go to God knows where, we would think about it and we would say: “Yes, we'll do that.” Let's say it like that: I wouldn't have any problems packing my bags, whether next*
week – no, not next week – let’s say next year. I have done it once, I can do it again. Claro, I would think so. Although it is a bit paradoxical, because you are so happy right now, and you like to get back to your roots, but if anything would come my way: I don’t have a problem with that - I would pack up everything. (Petra: It all comes back to the opportunities - if you had an opportunity which is irresistible, you would then leave, even though you are happy here?) Exactly. I believe we would be just as happy there, too. We have been happy in Germany, before we left. Have been happy in New Zealand and are now happy again here. (256)

One returner dreams about living in another country again, because he felt that he returned prematurely. This dream lends further support to the importance of fulfilling one’s dream properly, because otherwise one feels the desire to try it again in order to overcome the challenges and pass the tests.

At the moment, the stayers do not dream about going to another country, presumably for similar reasons and conditions for their not returning to Germany.

That some returners dream about returning to New Zealand or living in another country suggests that they have not yet found the place which matches their selves best; have not yet developed a transcendent inner sense of self to a sufficient degree; have prematurely returned and, thus, have not learned all they could learn through the migration challenge. It could also mean that they feel that they are ready again to gain new experiences to start a new phase of their personal evolvement.

Combining the Best of Both Worlds

For several participants, the dream country would be a combination of the best aspects that Germany and New Zealand have to offer:

*If I had a chance to bring some things across here from New Zealand, or it would have been the other way round - to take some things from Germany to New Zealand, then it might have become the optimum thing.* (257)

Thus, several participants dream about living half a year in New Zealand and half a year in Germany:

*I wouldn’t mind a job where you could like live half a year here and there, you know. That would be quite nice. If I would have a job in Germany it would be a good job and I could live like the summer months in Germany, and then jet back and live for half the year here.*

However, as the experience of the one stayer couple demonstrates, the going back and forth between the two countries has disadvantages also, which does not make going back and forth seem like a fruitful long term solution.

Continuing an Interesting Life full of New Experiences

Overall, the participants’ dreams are driven by their desire to personally evolve and to live a fulfilled and joyful life. Therefore, they dream about continuing to have an interesting life and gaining many new experiences. While dreaming, the participants, consistent with their characteristics and values and beliefs/attitudes, remain open and go with what sets their heart on fire:

*I take things as they come up. ... I haven’t got any concrete plans.*

Nevertheless, some other concrete dreams emerged. The participants dream about travelling to and working in other countries, when their children are old enough and when they are retired; retiring early in order to not to be dependent on money and to be able to travel, doing something they like without having to really make
money out of it; being with their family; being self-employed; changing career; studying at the university; owning a small farm and living an alternative, self-sufficient lifestyle; and learning to sail.

**FUTURE CONCERNS**

Most participants are not afraid of their future, because one does not know what the future may bring anyway and because they have the confidence that they can cope with most things as a result of living their dreams because this has resulted in their having many experiences and abilities:

*But you can think whatever you want about your future, there’s only one certain thing: you don’t know. So why bothering about something which you don’t know anymore about? So there’s no sort of reason for fear something, because this is unreal, as far as I can see. I don’t have to be afraid of something I don’t know at the moment. If there was something I have to be afraid of, I will be afraid of when the time comes.*

When it arises and then I know I will find to cope with that. I mean, I after, you know ... I mean at 45 I’ve done many things in my life. I’ve been through lots of things, from sort of, heavy things to other ... lots of things! And hardly things can surprise me anymore, you know. And so I’m gradually certain most of the things I would cope with.

**SUMMARY**

As a result of having fulfilled their dream of leaving Germany and living in New Zealand, the participants created a position for themselves to choose which of the two countries – their birth country, Germany, or their dream country, New Zealand - provided the best conditions for their and their children’s further evolvement, and their and their children’s living a fulfilled and joyful life. Both stayers and returners made the best use of this powerful position by constantly, consciously, and carefully weighing up whether it was most conducive for them to continue their personal journey in New Zealand or in Germany.

Similar to the migration decision, the reasons and conditions influencing the ongoing weighing up process greatly varied, and were complex and interrelated. Stayers, especially the women, also thought about returning. They nevertheless stayed in New Zealand, as a result of a complex combination of hold factors and deterrent factors. The hold factors mainly included having difficulties finding a point of return; having invested too much time, effort, and money into migration to New Zealand; feeling happier in New Zealand; and feeling a ‘sense of love’ in New Zealand. The deterrent factors consisted predominantly of believing that it is increasingly difficult to return for various reasons and that they could not afford a similar living standard in Germany. In addition, they stayed because Germany is still unattractive for them.

Although returning might appear at first sight like a retreat or a step backwards, it was, in fact, a conscious decision which required much courage and strength. The reasons and conditions for returning were the result of a combination of insufficient strength of holding factors, sufficient strength of push and pulling factors, and insufficient deterring factors. The participants were pushed away from New Zealand for fourteen central reasons and conditions. Most importantly, they were pushed away because of financial stringency, insufficient cultural and intellectual stimulation, dissatisfaction with work, dislike of several aspects of New Zealand culture, dissatisfaction with friendships, and several reasons related to children. The pull factors included missing friends and family, desiring to return to roots, feeling better in Germany at the present time, having a more positive perception of Germany, Germany offering sufficient cultural life and intellectual stimulation, Germany having changed positively, well paid and challenging employment, and several reasons related to children.
The pull and push factors represent at the same time factors which increased the likelihood of returning, because they entail certain beliefs and attitudes. In addition to those beliefs and attitudes, the migration process of the returners was unfavourably influenced by their black and white thinking, believing they can run away from problems, ignoring disconfirming beliefs, not listening to their own feelings/heart, not being courageous and flexible enough to realise their dreams in New Zealand, moving to a rural area, not working hard enough to establish a social life, comparing New Zealand negatively to Germany, and not giving themselves enough time to establish themselves in New Zealand.

That, overall, it was well worth living their dream is also indicated by evidence that the participants continue to dream. That is, they continue to live their life to the full – to experience life through participating in it - and they want to gain new experiences and to personally evolve, in order to live a fulfilled and happy life. It is at this point that the participants’ New Zealand migration experience spiral came to completion and led to the beginning of the next path, whether it was return migration, migration elsewhere, or new challenges.

Finishing this thesis about the experiences of German immigrants to New Zealand is, ironically, also the end of Petra’s own New Zealand migration experience. Equipped with the synergy of the knowledge which the participants shared with her and the knowledge of her own experiences, she is following an inspired dream and looking forward to her personal new challenge: migrating to Australia.
... keeping an open mind is of utmost importance. ... We need to take a firm stand, but we also need to feel that we have not thus put our feet in shackles. Wherever we stand, we should stand free and unbiased and grow aware of the world.

(Martin Buber, 1996, p. 185)
By exploring the participants’ experiences through the whole migration process, how they assigned meaning to their experiences, and how these experiences and meaning-making processes were influenced by individual, cultural, and historical context, this study aimed to develop a local theory of the experiences of German immigrants to New Zealand. The objective of compiling this local theory was to identify the psychological and social factors, and their interrelationships, that influence the migration process and adaptation in New Zealand. In line with the salutogenic paradigm, in identifying these factors we concentrated on identifying the factors that facilitated health/well-being by focusing our investigation on how the participants successfully overcome obstacles during the migration process, and what psychological and social resources they develop and/or use to maintain their psychological health.

In particular, we set out to answer the following questions:

- What factors motivate the migration from one first world country to another first world country?
- Which psychological and social factors make the experiences positive; facilitate health, well-being, resilience, and increase the likelihood of staying? Which psychological and social factors make the experience negative; increase distress and dis-ease; and increase the likelihood of returning?
- Do the pre-migration experiences influence the immigration experiences and, if yes, in which way do they influence the immigration experience?
- What are the positive health/growth outcomes of migration?
- How do German immigrants renegotiate their identities during the immigration process?
- In which ways are the experiences, interpretations, and outcomes of female and male migrants similar and in which ways different? How do the two genders interact?

In the beginning of this chapter we will present the local theory by discussing the emerged thread running through the story of the migration experiences (core category) and the overall nature of the migration process of German migrants to New Zealand. In the next section, Particular Issues of the Migration Process, we will answer each of the posed questions by drawing together the relevant findings of the present study and comparing our findings with the existing literature regarding German immigrants to New Zealand. This comparison will identify similarities and differences, and will highlight under-researched aspects of the migration experience of German immigrants to New Zealand. We will conclude by providing recommendations.

LOCAL THEORY: THE EXPERIENCES OF GERMAN MIGRANTS TO NEW ZEALAND

An overview of the local theory of the experiences of German migrants to New Zealand - the categories, sub-categories, and their dimensions; and the links between them - is presented in Figure 3.1. You can use this Figure to support your understand of the following discussion.

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6 In selecting the literature, we focused only on the available literature on German immigrants to New Zealand. Migration is an “extremely complex and multi-faceted” phenomenon (Boyle, Halfacree, & Robinson, 1998, p. 1), because migration is characterised by several “overlapping dimensions that merit study and understanding”: psychological, cultural, economic, political, spatial, and historical (Boyle, Halfacree, & Robinson, 1998, p. 5). As a result, scholars from many different disciplines (e.g. psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, policy studies, geography, and history) compiled an extensive body of literature with regard to specific aspects of the migration. Thus, the criterion for inclusion was guided by grounded theory. In grounded theory, the context, history, and meaning of a phenomenon are perceived as crucial, and group specific. Consequently, we selected literature from various disciplines investigating the same migrant group (German immigrants) and the same migration destination area/host country (New Zealand). These studies we have already introduced in Chapter One.
Core Category: Living the Dream

The thread running through the whole story is: Living the Dream. This core category is the most important psychosocial process influencing the experiences of German migrants to New Zealand and links all the identified categories logically. The German migrants who participated in this study dared to live their dream of migrating to another country in order to personally evolve and to live a more joyful and fulfilled life – they dared to live their unique truths by following their hearts with courage and passion.

As a result of their upbringing, the participants either developed the personal dream to migrate, or were open and ready to be inspired by this dream. Their life circumstances and the resulting gradual expansion of their horizons through independent travels first within Germany and later throughout Europe and the world prepared them for migration and migration obstacles, by evolving their characteristics and values, beliefs and attitudes, and abilities and strengths to a level that made them sufficiently confident of realising their dream. Consequently, they started to enliven their dream.

While the participants more or less consciously worked on creating the conditions for realising their dream, certain conditions in Germany pushed them away from Germany and certain conditions in New Zealand pulled them to New Zealand. Several prevailing conditions in Germany mismatched their characteristics and values leading to discontent. They perceived the conditions in New Zealand as better fitting their characteristics and values, and as being conducive for their personal evolvement and for living a joyful and fulfilled life. Thus, when they had created the right conditions and/or the right conditions arose, they seized the opportunity to realise their dream and migrated.

Realising their dream presented the participants with many different and substantial obstacles simultaneously. Hence, stress was an inevitable aspect of the migration process. However, whether obstacles were experienced, which obstacles were experienced, whether distress developed, and the degree of distress, adaptation and the likelihood of staying was influenced by the extent to which their individual resources had evolved and how social resources facilitated this transformation. Individual resources included the degree to which the participants had already evolved towards an inner sense of identity that transcended national boundaries; and to which their characteristics and values, beliefs/attitudes, and strategies were already adaptive. The higher the degree of evolvement, the less distress they experienced, the less assistance they needed from social resources, and the more they could evolve, and vice versa.

As a result of living their dream the participants reaped many fruits, irrespective of the level of distress they experienced or whether they stayed or returned. Experiencing these obstacles provided opportunities for gaining many important new experiences. These experiences assist the participants to become aware of their selves; to change their characteristics and values, beliefs/attitudes, and abilities; and to gradually unfold the potential of their selves. This process increased their knowledge and understanding of their selves and the world. The associated stress made available the energy necessary to deal with and master the great number of obstacles within a short amount of time. Together, these processes acted as force that facilitated and exhilarated the further unfolding of their potential and the further evolvement of a transcendent inner sense of self - a higher state of consciousness/awareness, adding another layer to their evolvement spiral (see Chapter Six, Figure 6.1.). As a result of widening their consciousness/ awareness, they perceive life in more unlimited ways; live more joyful and fulfilled lives; are more tolerant, accepting, and less judgemental; and have a much richer spectrum of life experiences to choose from when responding to obstacles. All in all, they feel richer, stronger, and more confident of mastering future obstacles.

The fruits the participants reaped through living their dream also enabled them to weigh up and to choose which path was most conducive for their personal evolvement and for living a joyful and fulfilled life. Some participants decided that New Zealand continued to be conducive for their personal evolvement and fulfilment of their dreams and thus, chose to continue to live their lives in New Zealand. Other participants, in contrast, decided that returning to Germany was more conducive.
Given these growth outcomes, it is important that German immigrants go through these experiences. However, since they are so profound, the challenges can push migrants to their extreme limits. Therefore, it is important to provide resource structures that assist German migrants to unfold their potential, to learn as much as possible, and to evolve and adapt. These experiences demonstrate both that it is possible to live one’s dream and that, if one lives one’s dream by following one’s heart with courage and passion, one gains higher consciousness/awareness and one’s life becomes more joyful and fulfilled. These findings, then, lend support to the forgotten positive meaning of dreams discussed in Chapter Three.

The emergence of Living the Dream as the core category is validated by Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich’s (2002) research. She uses expressions such as “this life was dreamed up and planned in Germany” (p. 141), “dream country” (p. 138), “life they once dreamed of” (p. 143), “to realise the dream” (pp. 114, 117, 139), “to fulfil their dream” (p. 117), and “dream of an almost perfect life in harmony with one’s feelings” (p. 140). In addition, she found that women migrants felt since their childhood or puberty that it was their destiny to migrate to New Zealand, because they had dreams and daydreams. This reason for migrating, which she called the “spiritual dimension” (p. 269), sounds very similar to that which I found had propelled men to New Zealand. In contrast to this research, Bönisch-Brednich (2002) maintains that only women have these dreams. This finding, however, contradicts her statement that men were the driving force. Maybe these women who followed their dreams were single women, who came on their own to New Zealand. Nevertheless, this finding lends strong support to the interpretation that German immigrants seem to follow their dreams, which propel them to New Zealand, and that there might be a spiritual dimension underlying the migration of German immigrants to New Zealand.

The Migration Process

The analysis suggests that the migration process can be divided in three phases: before the migration, migration, and consequences of migration. These three phases are comprised of five sub-phases as depicted in Figure 8.1. Rather then being independent and clear cut, these phases and sub-phases are interconnected: components of one sub-phase interact with other components of that sub-phase and/or components of one sub-phase influence the following sub-phase and/or sub-phases. Overall, experiences, interpretations, and actions during developing the dream, readiness and enlivening the dream influenced the experiences, interpretations, and actions during realising the dream. These experiences, interpretations, and actions, in turn, affected the outcome of living the dream (reaping the fruits of living the dream) and consequently resulted in the decision whether to stay in New Zealand or to return to Germany (weighing up: choosing the path which is most conducive for fulfilling future dreams).

These interconnections blur the boundaries between phases and sub-phases. This finding implies that it is important to understand the nature of the experiences of the whole migration process and how parts of the migration experiences are interlinked, rather than just the temporal boundaries of the experiences. To achieve this, researchers need to study the migration process in its entirety.

The finding that the phases are interlinked and blurred questions the usefulness of conceptualising the migration process as independent and clear-cut phases, as Bönisch-Brednich (2002) has done. She subdivided migration into preparation, leaving, arrival, settling in, acculturation, and integration phases. The existence of these phases is only partly supported by this research. Preparation and leaving could be seen as equivalent to the organisation part of Enlivening the Dream. However, as this research shows, and Bönisch-Brednich (2002) also found, migration starts with the dream to migrate, which has already developed during their upbringing. However, the key issue here is the phases’ interdependence. Arrival and settling are part of Realising the Dream – the establishment phase. The term establishment is more appropriate term for this phase. The participants used the term ‘establishment’ when referring to the initial challenges encountered and their strategies of overcoming them; and the term ‘settlement’ when referring to the time after they had overcome the most crucial obstacles and when their lives had become more normal, relaxed, and quieter.
This terminology is consistent with the meaning of these words for Germans. Germans interpret ‘settle’ as ‘sich setzen, sich beruhigen, Aufregungen legen sich’ (sitting down; calming down and quieten down, the situation is stabilising; excitement eases off) (Messinger, Türck, & Willmann, 1990), which suggests that this phase is passive and not demanding. This meaning does not correctly describe having to manage many difficult challenges simultaneously, which is exciting but also requires hard work and is emotionally demanding. This activeness is represented in the meaning of establishment. ‘Establish’ means ‘etwas bilden’

16 My translation.
Contrary to this study, Bönisch-Brednich’s (2002) does either not perceive the weighing up phase as a distinct phase, or she perceives this phase as part of acculturation and integration. Although we would agree that weighing up is part of the acculturation and integration phase, including the weighing up phase only in this phase does not do sufficient justice to its importance, nor does it correctly represent the fact that some German immigrants leave the migration process at various points, because they decide to return or to step migrate. Therefore, we suggest the combining of the two. We would call this phase ‘acculturation and weighing up’, and would point out that these phases happen simultaneously and lead to either staying or returning/step migrating.

The experiences, interpretations, and actions in each sub-phase of the migration process influenced and were influenced by an interconnected trio of individual factors: characteristics and values, beliefs and attitudes, and capabilities and strategies (see Figure 8.2.). The individual factors interacted among themselves too. The characteristics and values influenced the beliefs and attitudes participants held and the capabilities they developed. The beliefs, attitudes, and capabilities, in turn, influenced whether issues were perceived as obstacles and which strategies the participants had at their disposal, used, or developed to manage the obstacles of their migration process. The individual factors either eased or aggravated the experiences the participants made during their migration process.

The psychological factors influenced and were influenced by the social conditions related to Germany, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. The social conditions were made up of the personal environment (e.g. family background, friends), physical conditions (e.g. climate, landscape, air quality), social conditions (e.g. population density, population characteristics, lifestyle), psychological (e.g. differences in interaction, differences in friendship concept), and historical (e.g. ‘shadow of the war’ due to New Zealand having been a British colony). The complex interplay between the psychological and social factors influenced the experiences, interpretations, and actions of the participants. The participants’ experiences, interpretations, and actions, in turn, affected the social context. In summary, it is the complex interaction among and between these psychological and social factors that influenced whether or not and the degree to which the participants experienced eustress (positive stress) or distress (negative stress); a good sense of self or an identity crisis; health, well-being, and growth or dis-ease; good or poor adaptation; and the likelihood of staying or returning, rather than the factors per se.

All the identified psychological and social factors contributed either to staying or to returning. None of these factors alone led to staying or returning respectively; it was always an accumulation of many different factors. Additionally, a factor contributing to returning (e.g. insufficient English skills when migrating) could be neutralised or compensated for by factors that contribute to staying (e.g. sharing accommodation with New Zealanders which facilitated English language fluency) it is impossible to predict which outcome will ensue by knowledge of the factors alone. Further, since people differ, the factors do not necessarily apply to each German immigrant. For instance, moving to a rural area may contribute to the decision to return for those used to urban living and missing cultural stimulation and felt it was needed to assure their wellbeing. In contrast, moving to a rural area could contribute to the decision to stay for those who were used to living in rural areas in Germany or who could counterbalance living in a rural area by being able to afford to travel frequently to places that offered more cultural stimulation.

It is vital to point out that migration is always a success and that thus one cannot necessarily perceive migration as being ‘successful’ when migrants stayed in the country they migrated to and as being ‘failed’ when they return to their home country. From the individual perspective, migration was for all participants a growth experience. Through experiencing and dealing with the migration obstacles all participants gained important new experiences and knowledge about their selves and the world around them – they evolved. From the perspective of the country of origin and the host country, returners are not failed migrants and
Figure 8.2. Overview of the Interaction between Migration Phases and the Psychosocial Factors that Increase the Likelihood of Staying and Returning
stayers are not necessarily successfully adapted. The relationship between adaptation and staying and returning is not straightforward. Good adaptation does not necessarily mean that migrants stay; poor adaptation does not necessarily mean that migrants leave again.

While the study found several individual and social factors that lead to poor adaptation and increased the likelihood of returning, it also showed that there are individual and social factors independent of adaptation and the control of the individual that contribute to return (e.g. Germany Changed to the Positive, Germany Offers Sufficient Cultural Life & Intellectual Stimulation, Insufficient Cultural Life & Intellectual Stimulation in New Zealand) (see Chapter Five and Figure 3.1.). Many of these factors are actually a result of the migration growth process (e.g. More Positive Perception of Germany). The argument that returners are not necessarily failed migrants is well demonstrated in the experience of one returner couple, which we discussed in detail in the previous chapter. This returner couple had established themselves very well, had settled, and felt happy and well in New Zealand. However, they nevertheless returned to Germany, because he had a very strong feeling that he wanted to live in his hometown again. Many wonderful opportunities arose for the couple in Germany. In addition, he felt that he had exhausted the possibilities for new experiences in New Zealand and thus, felt the desire or thrill to start something new again. Consequently, the common assumption and judgement of society (i.e. family and friends, governments, business) that returners are failed migrants does these people great injustice. In fact, due to their migration growth process, returners are potentially very valuable for the receiving societies. If appreciated and facilitated, returners’ wider perspectives, deeper insights, new skills, cultural knowledge, and connections, can infuse precious vitality into society and businesses of traditional countries like Germany.

The study found various individual and social factors that lead to good adaptation and increased the likelihood of staying, and evidence that the participants felt well in New Zealand (e.g. Feel Happier in New Zealand, ‘Sense of Love’ in New Zealand). However, the idea that because they stay stayers are feeling well or that stayers stay because they are feeling well is not necessarily supported either. The study found several reasons independent of good adaptation that contributed to staying (e.g. Invested too Much into Migration to New Zealand, Increasingly Difficult to Return after about Three Years, Could not Afford Similar Living Standard in Germany Now) (see Chapter Six and Figure 5.1.). Consequently, some stayers might stay predominantly because of these reasons rather then because of feeling well in New Zealand. This conclusion points to the importance of investigating not only objective indicators of adaptation but also subjective well-being when examining adaptation of immigrants.

The psychological and social factors that increased the likelihood of staying were identified as the means by which the participants overcame obstacles during the migration process. Thus, they represent the psychological and social resources German immigrants developed and/or used to maintain their psychological health throughout the process of migration.

PARTICULAR ISSUES OF THE MIGRATION PROCESS

This study identified several concrete reasons and conditions, as well as interactions between them, for German migration to New Zealand. Figure 5.1. provides an overview of the concrete reasons and conditions under Reasons and Conditions. In contrast to the economic reasons and conditions that predominantly motivate migration from third to first world countries, the participants of this study mainly decided to migrate to New Zealand to personally evolve and to live more joyful and fulfilled lives. This intentionally instigating of change in order to move out of their comfort zone to evolve stands in strong contrast to most people for most people do not like change. The participants commonly felt and/or perceived several conditions in Germany as hindering their evolvement and fulfilment, which led to discontent. Moreover, they chose to move to New Zealand because they perceived several conditions in New Zealand as facilitating their evolvement and fulfilment.
This finding is consistent with those of Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) and Bönisch-Brednich (2002). The former concluded that Germans migrate to New Zealand for reasons connected to realising their selves. The latter maintains that migration became increasingly “a quest for the personal evolution” (p. 305). That German immigrants desired to leave Germany because they felt that the conditions in Germany oppressed their selves and hindered their growth is supported by Bönisch-Brednich (2002). She specifies that the reason for these feelings is that Germany is lacking spirituality. However, according to the participants and my own experience, this is only partly correct, for spirituality exists in Germany also. Rather, the conditions in Germany, predominantly the hectic life style and characteristics of Germans (e.g. being predominantly rational and analytical), hinder the development and the living of spirituality.

Bönisch-Brednich (2002) concluded that migration is “motivated less by obvious push-factors … and much more by an inner conviction about how the individual’s life should be structured” (p. 305). The findings of this study confirm the interpretation that dreams or visions about how people wish to live their lives is the force underlying the migration, because this research clearly demonstrates that dreams, and characteristics and values, created the desire to migrate to another country. However, the conditions in Germany and New Zealand also played a decisive role. The conditions in Germany did not allow the fulfilment of these dreams, and did not fit the characteristics and values of the participants. Hence, the conditions in Germany pushed them away. In addition, they perceived conditions in New Zealand as being conducive to the fulfilment of their dreams and as fitting their characteristics and values. Therefore, the conditions in New Zealand pulled them to New Zealand. This interpretation is supported by the finding that making the migration decision required the development and co-existence of particular characteristics and values and several ‘right’ reasons and conditions at the right point in time. Moreover, the reasons and conditions are very diverse, intertwined, and highly specific. These findings are consistent with other research. Gruber and Kraft (1991) found that “seldom only one motive is decisive for migrating” (p. 171). Bönisch-Brednich (2002) found that “there was usually a combination of reasons for this [migration] decision, made up of a critical assessment of Germany and a personal desire to do something different” (p. 111).

Gruber and Kraft (1991) concluded that their participants were much more pushed away from Germany and that the pull factors to New Zealand played only a small role. Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) and the findings of this research disagree with this conclusion. This study suggests that a combination of push factors and pull factors played a role, with the push factors preceding the pull factors. In addition, the dreams created a strong desire to follow the dream content up and the participants believed that it was important to do so. Although it might seem at first sight as if the right reasons and conditions came together coincidentally, it is reasonable to suggest that the participants also created some of these conditions, because their characteristics and values fuelled their desire to make their dream come true.

Gruber and Kraft (1991) concluded that “the stronger the component ‘away-from-something’ were, the greater were the acculturation difficulties in New Zealand.” (p. 171). This study does not support this conclusion. Rather, the degree to which the participants experienced obstacles and coping difficulties depended on the reason underlying the ‘away-from-something’ component of the decision making process. If the reason for migrating was fleeing, participants experienced more obstacles and had greater difficulties coping with them. However, if the reason was expanding - to gain experience to further evolve – the participants experienced fewer obstacles and had less difficulty dealing with them.

The push factors were a combination of the participants’ desire to get away from Germany, to break away from their old life, and their desire for new experiences. The reasons and conditions typically originate in their upbringing, reflect their interests/special loves and characteristics and values, and are linked to conditions in Germany and New Zealand. The conditions in Germany, which centred on crowdedness and long history, were inconsistent with the characteristics and values of the participants and hampered their full evolvement. Over time, the constant disharmony accumulated, creating dissatisfaction and fuelling the participants’ feelings of being oppressed or not allowed to flourish. For some of the participants, certain

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17 The article by Gruber and Kraft (1991) is written in German. This direct quote was translated by me.
potentially traumatic events were ‘the straw that broke the camel’s back’ pushing them strongly towards realising their dream.

Consistent with the findings of Gruber and Kraft (1991) and Bönisch-Brednich (2002) our study also found that a desire to start a new life phase and to break away from their old life in order to leave adverse events behind. Gruber and Kraft (1991) found, in addition, that professional changes and divorce facilitated the readiness to emigrate. The latter finding applied to single immigrants, which Gruber and Kraft’s (1991) sample included. Bönisch-Brednich (2002) also found that couples experiencing relationship problems often migrated in the hope that the migration would help solve the problems. As did this study, she concluded that this strategy did not work and confirmed our suggestion that migration under those circumstances increased the likelihood of the couple separating. However, as this study shows, some couples chose not to separate. Instead, they tried to solve their ongoing problems by returning.

The desire to gain new experiences, dissatisfaction with political conditions, and environmental concerns were factors that pushed the participants away from Germany. This finding is consistent with those of Bönisch-Brednich (2002) and Gruber and Kraft (1991). The latter study’s specific focus on environmental concerns confirmed the findings of the present study in that concerns about nuclear power, water and air pollution were environmental push factors. In addition, they found that German migrants felt threatened by acid rain and dying forests, chemicals in food, and industrial accidents, and they were concerned about rubbish disposal, chemicals in the soil, and formaldehyde in the living environment. As a consequence, these German immigrants, according to Gruber and Kraft (1991), felt threatened for themselves and their children, were anxious about the future, felt demoralised and left alone, and felt that these aspects restricted the quality of their lives.

Gruber and Kraft (1991), as did the present study, identified crowdedness and desire for adventure as push factors. However, they also found some additional reasons and conditions, such as war anxiety, social exclusion due to alternative life style, and anti-alien feelings. According to Bönisch-Brednich (2002), many West Germans left after reunification, because of “economic problems, fear of unemployment and a rising the crime rate, and xenophobia associated with an apparently unending stream of new comers from all sides” (p. 139). The former two reasons contributed to the migration of one participant of this study.

The German migrants’ decision to opt for New Zealand also resulted from the operation of various pull factors. New Zealand’s green and clean paradise image that prevailed in Germany, and experiences gained during holidays and placements in New Zealand, led potential German migrants to feel that the conditions in New Zealand were more consistent with their characteristics and values, and more conducive for their evolvement. The decision to follow their dream to live in New Zealand was strengthened by their strong belief in following one’s dreams - to go on one’s unique path – in order to live a fulfilled life. They believed also that a fulfilled life, in turn, leads to the desired feelings of well-being, joy and happiness.

The finding that the green and clean image that New Zealand enjoys in Germany was acting as a pull factor is also supported by Holfter (1998) and Bönisch-Brednich (2002). Holfter (1998) found that New Zealand is regarded as a dream destination by Germans and that the image consisted of unique nature (i.e. great variety of landscapes, unspoilt, many contrasts), clean and unspoilt environment, friendly people, Maori culture, and being far away. She argues that these are largely emotional factors and that many dream about New Zealand as a better world where they could start a new and better life. These conclusions are consistent with the findings of this study. Holfter (1998) suggests that the long distance between German and New Zealand, which makes it difficult to get realistic information about New Zealand, sustains this dream. However, according to her, New Zealand’s positive image has been slightly dented in recent years by cuts in social welfare, dwindling equality, and the growing ozone damage and the potential dangers that go with it (i.e. skin cancer).

Bönisch-Brednich (2002) also found that New Zealand was the dream destination for Germans and identified the green and clean paradise image as the main pull factor in the 1980s: “The personal utopia of life in a clean, unpolluted environment led them to go looking for an earthly paradise” (p. 109). She discovered
specific pull factors similar to the present study. Gruber and Kraft (1991) also identified New Zealand’s more relaxed life style as an important pull factor. In addition, they found that some German immigrants were pulled to New Zealand because of better chances for self-employment and the climate.

Bönisch-Brednich (2002) discovered additional pull factors, namely seeking to live an alternative lifestyle, following their loved New Zealand partner, and enjoying an early retirement in New Zealand. She also provides excellent detailed discussions regarding the many specific social conditions in Germany and New Zealand that facilitated the migration during the 1980s and 1990s.

That the participants consciously chose to migrate to New Zealand after considering alternatives and that various push and pull factors could be identified suggests that the migration decision was made rationally. This interpretation is, however, challenged by the finding that the decision is usually an emotional rather than a rational one. A similar conclusion was drawn by Bönisch-Brednich (2002). She also observed that German immigrants chose to migrate, and that the decision reflected their following their feelings in order to live their unique lives and to live fulfilled and joyful lives. However, she argues that the immigrants presented quasi-objective stories to reassure themselves of their emotional reasons for migrating. We disagree with this interpretation, because the stories of our participants show that they trusted their feelings and thus did not need to justify them with rational reasons. Rather, the predominantly rational world in Germany forced the German migrants to rationalise their emotional decision, because people around them had problems understanding and accepting emotional reasons. Several participants were upset that their feelings were not accepted as sufficient explanation for their decision and that they had to justify their decision rationally to people around them. The participants questioned the authenticity of these rational reasons, because they assigned more importance to their feelings with respect to decision-making.

That the participants nevertheless gave us many reasons and conditions for why they migrated might seem to contradict this interpretation at first glance. However, this could be an extension of their experience of having to provide rational information and Petra specifically asking for their reasons. On the other hand, the participants may have been unaware of the reasons and conditions when making the decision, but knew in their heart that migration was conducive for their evolvement. People going through a potentially traumatic incidents or processes like migration commonly lack understanding and clarity of what is happening and why it is happening, because they are too much involved or attached to the situation. The understanding and clarity of what has happened and why it has happened tends to be greater when asked after the incident as a result of reflections upon past incidents/processes, greater detachment from incidents/processes, and their own evolvement since that time. In this respect, dreams might be a ‘voice’ of their heart that propelled them towards choosing a path that was most conducive for their evolvement at a point in their lives when they were not able to form an detached opinion about their life circumstances and about which path to choose. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that various factors led to the feeling that it was right to migrate and that the German immigrants were more or less aware of the reasons and conditions that generated their feelings.

The migration decision was not absolute. Rather, the migration was perceived as a trial for up to two years before making the final decision. This conclusion is supported by Bönisch-Brednich’s (2002) finding that German immigrants do not make long-term plans and stay flexible: they are “just cruising along” (p. 147) – they do what they feel is right for them at certain points in their life – and do not rule out returning. She called this type of migration “life-phase migration” (p. 147).

The Psychosocial Factors that Influence the Migration Experience

Our study identified a wide array of psychological and social factors that influence the migration process of German immigrants. The meta story discusses these factors in conjunction with the experiences. Table 8.1. provides an overview over these factors according to the migration phase, and according to whether they contributed to staying or returning. The left side of the table lists the factors that made the migration experiences positive; facilitate health, well-being, resilience, and increase the likelihood of staying. The right
side of the table lists the factors that made the experience negative; increase distress and dis-ease; and increase the likelihood of returning. We decided to discuss the pre-migration factors in detail in the next section due their complex interactions with each other and their influence on the migration process.

When studying this table it is important to keep in mind that, as discussed above, all the listed factors contributed either to staying or to returning, and that due to individual differences the factors do not necessarily apply to each German immigrant. To keep the graphic reasonably simple, we did not list under Factors that Increase the Likelihood of Returning all the opposite factors that contributed to staying (e.g. when the participants found out that watching children’s television programmes as a good strategy to improve their English, we did not list under Factors that Increase the Likelihood of Returning ‘not watching children’s television programs’ as a factor). The opposite of each factor that increased the likelihood of staying naturally increased the likelihood of returning.

With regard to the overall migration strategy, Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) found that most German immigrants preferred to integrate their selves and many tried to assimilate. This finding is not supported by the present study, which concluded that the participants used a combination of integration and individualisation/marginalisation. They maintained aspects of their German heritage and tried to take on board aspects of New Zealand’s culture (integration). However, in doing so, the participants dealt with their German heritage and the New Zealand culture. They carefully assessed the cultures and sorted out the desirable from the less desirable aspects according to their own individual standards, irrespective of the specific culture, in order to move towards a transcendent inner sense of self. This strategy might need to be added to the existing four strategies.

The reason for this inconsistency may relate to the way in which Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) collected data regarding acculturation strategies. The survey questions focused only on the German culture. Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) but did not ask questions regarding New Zealand culture, because they assumed that high values reflect a strong importance of maintaining the German culture and a low interest in New Zealand culture. This approach does not, however, take into account the fact that immigrants can be interested in specific aspects of both cultures. Diehl and Ochsmann’s (2000) questions only captured a few aspects of what German immigrants understand under their German cultural heritage, whereby German cultural heritage was pre-defined by the survey. Further, they only asked 11 general questions. Given the many different aspects of cultural heritage and the complexity of the four different acculturation strategies, it seems unlikely that 11 questions can adequately assess which acculturation strategies are used.

The Influence of Pre-migration Experiences on the Migration Experience

The analysis found several psychological and social pre-migration experiences (phase one) that influenced experiences, interpretations, and actions of immigrants during their establishment in New Zealand (phase two) in substantial ways. Some factors facilitated establishment and increased the likelihood of staying; while other factors impeded establishment and increased the likelihood of returning.

Firstly, the participants’ characteristics and values played a role. Low attachments to places, being used to being different and to learning new things, having high levels of curiosity and fantasy, and having looser family ties facilitated the migration decision and coping during the establishment phase. Having a love of reading, a high interest in travelling and other cultures, and a thirst for experiences and knowledge played a similar role. Finally, the more the participants had an inner sense of self, a relative feminine/masculine balance, a high acceptance of responsibility, a high level of independence and social orientation, and great love of nature, the better were they able to cope with the challenges of the migration.

Secondly, beliefs and attitudes influenced the migration experience. The participant couples were better able to overcome the demanding first year when the women were open to the migration and ready to migrate too (i.e. had the characteristics and values outlined above), and when both partners were highly committed to the migration decision. The migration experiences were more positive when the migration was motivated by the
desire to personally develop. More realistic or no expectations and goals led to less disappointments during the establishment and enabled the participants to better handle the disappointments. Awareness that information gained during travelling was different to actually living in New Zealand, and consideration of disconfirming information resulted in more realistic expectations and goals. Perceiving and selling the migration as a trial reduced the pressure for the participants during their establishment.

In particular, this study found that accepting responsibility for their lives and believing that things happen for a reason facilitated the overcoming of challenges. The first part of this finding is supported by Diehl and Ochsmann’s (2000) research, but not the second part. They found that the majority of their participants had an internal locus of control, which they defined as “the general view to be able to determine one’s life” (p. 13), and that an internal locus of control reduces stress. They also discovered that immigrants with an external locus of control, defined as “the view not to be able to influence one’s own life and the happenings in the world” experienced more stress (Diehl & Ochsmann, 2000, p. 13). This finding is inconsistent with the finding of this study which found that the belief that things happen for a reason (e.g., that everything happens as it is meant to happen or that they received some sign to support their decision) facilitates the overcoming of challenges and thus distress.

This inconsistency suggests that both internal and external locus of control are conducive for managing the challenges of migration in different situations. Consequently, it seems more important to be able to assess the situation and to act accordingly as the participants of this study did. They were open for signs/clues to be better able to assess a situation, followed the flow (clues/signs their feelings and/or thoughts gave them) with perseverance, but were flexible and changed their actions when the conditions changed.

Thirdly, the migration experience was influenced by various strategies. More extensive internal and extended independent travelling worldwide, temporary migration, and holidays and/or placements in New Zealand gave the participants new experiences and abilities, which contributed to the further evolvement of their characteristics and values, and beliefs/attitudes. Consequently, the participants had a greater response spectrum at their disposal for managing the challenges during the establishment. At the same time, extended travels ensured sufficient English and cultural knowledge and skills, and enabled them to gain first hand information. The higher their level of English proficiency and cultural skills, the higher their feelings of well-being and the fewer their difficulties in establishing a good social life, work life, and identity. First hand information led to more realistic expectations and goals.

The establishment was facilitated when the migration decision was emotional, based on first hand information, and made jointly yet independently by both partners. The importance of joint decisions is confirmed by Bönisch-Brednich (2002). She found that those German immigrants who she believed were well established made the decision jointly. Leaving the door open to Germany by leaving a good impression reduced the pressure during the establishment. Generating starting capital sufficient for surviving for one year without income, organising a job from Germany, or being on a pension ensured lower drops in living standards and prevented financial stringency, and thus reduced distress during the hardest first year. While applying for a work permit or permanent residence from within Germany increased the stress during enlivening the dream, it reduced the stress during the establishment.

Fourthly, social factors impacted on the migration experience. Migrating as a couple/family reduced distress and facilitated well-being, because partners provided social support and security, gave strength, reduced loneliness, and helped to maintain the German language, culture, and identity. This conclusion is supported by the finding of Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) that immigrants who live with a partner and who have children experienced significantly lower distress than single immigrants and immigrants without children, although they orientated themselves more on their German cultural heritage which should have increased distress.

18 The article by Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) is written in German. This direct quote was translated by me.
Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) believe that migrating with a partner may not have led to more distress, because it strengthened the German identity, which helped immigrants to resist the pressure of New Zealand’s society to adjust. This interpretation is supported by the findings of this research that the participants tended to evolve transcendent inner identities rather than to become New Zealanders. Moreover, this research proposes that a strengthening of German identity does not necessarily mean totally rejecting things from New Zealand’s culture. Rather, the strengthening of their German identity seemed to provide a secure base which allowed the participants to incorporate the things they liked from different cultures, including New Zealand culture - ‘kiwianisation’, without running risk of scattering their identity, which would have led to much distress. Therefore, the strengthening of German identity may build the platform for the evolvement of a transcendent inner sense of self. This study found also that these potential advantages took effect only when relationships were strong and intact, and that migrating as a couple/family could also slow down the assimilation process and/or aggravate the migration process, by hindering the learning of English and hampering social interactions, which would increase the likelihood of the occurrence of all the negative spin off effects associated with insufficient English skills and social networks.

Looser family ties, younger parents, and parents interested in travelling reduced homesickness. Having siblings living in Germany and more positive reactions from family and friends reduced guilt feelings with regard to leaving family behind. Family and friends responding positively also ensured emotional and financial support during the migration, which reduced homesickness and financial stringency. Migrating without children made the migration easier, since all the challenges related to children did not have to be faced. Having friends in New Zealand led to more realistic expectations and goals, and eased the migration, because the friends assisted the participants in several ways.

Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) argue that external modifying factors (i.e. internal vs. external locus of control, individualism vs. collectivism, and life goals) influence the intern modifying factors (i.e. acculturation strategies), which, in turn, influence the acculturation criteria (i.e. depression, quality of life). This study did not intend to investigate which acculturation strategy the participants used and, thus, I cannot comment on this proposed relationship. However, this study identified not only the diversity of characteristics and values, beliefs and attitudes, and strategies which influence the migration process, it also indicated that they can interact in various ways.

Further, the study identified that often a balance of specific characteristics, beliefs and attitudes, and strategies was conducive for managing the migration, since it enabled the participants to choose from a wider variety of ‘tools’. For instance, having both feminine and masculine characteristics in greater balance enabled them to make better use of both characteristics (e.g. mental and active and emotional and passive). Likewise, having a relative balance of an internal and external locus of control allowed them to better read whether situations required an active or a passive response strategy and to act accordingly, as discussed above. Moreover, the study identified many additional acculturation criteria that could be used to measure the degree of adaptation (see Chapters Eight and Nine).

The Positive Health/Growth Outcomes of Migration

The participants reaped many fruits from following their hearts and experiencing living in another country. We discussed these health/growth outcomes in detail in Chapter 7. While the migration presented the participants with many obstacles, which were often painful and could result in much distress, the experience of overcoming them forced both stayers and returners to gradually unfold and change their characteristics and values, beliefs/attitudes, and abilities. Through this process, they became more conscious of their selves, gained a higher degree of understanding of life, and personally evolved towards a more transcendent inner sense of self. As a result of widening their consciousness/awareness, they perceive life in more unlimited ways, live more joyful and fulfilled lives, are more tolerant, accepting, and have a much richer spectrum of life experiences to choose from, and feel stronger and more confident of mastering future challenges. Taken together, the changes in their characteristics/values, beliefs/attitudes, and abilities, the connected evolvement towards an transcendent inner sense of self, and the increasing awareness of a higher power and universal
perspective suggest that the participants connected to the spiritual dimensions of their selves and life. They advanced in their spiritual development and broke into new dimensions of life, advancing to another level in the evolvemental growth spiral (see Chapter Six, Figure 6.1.). These individual outcomes also affect society positively. They facilitate more understanding, respectful, and loving interactions with other people contributing to being able to live harmoniously together with people from other cultures.

The finding that the participants experienced health/growth outcomes is confirmed by Diehl and Ochsmann (2000) and Bönisch-Brednich (2002). The former found that many participants, especially younger participants, perceived migration as useful, because they personally grew, and therefore they would migrate again to New Zealand if they would have to decide again. The latter concluded that her participants perceived their migration to New Zealand positively.

Likewise, the specific finding that the participants evolved towards a more transcendent inner sense of self is supported. Most of Diehl and Ochsmann’s (2000) and Bönisch-Brednich’s (2002) participants did not feel like real New Zealanders (i.e. real ‘kiwi’). Bönisch-Brednich (2002) concluded that the identity of German immigrants remains German. However, the quote which she provided as evidence and which, according to her reflects a widespread view, clearly suggests a transcendent sense of self: “But I would say I see myself first as a human being. I’m a citizen of the world and then, at some point, the German element is undeniable; I will never be a New Zealander” (Bönisch-Brednich, 2002, p. 120, in original cursive). In addition, later on she stated that “a new personality has emerged by blending what has been brought with what has been encountered” (p. 201); that living in New Zealand “includes [constantly] creating a balance between the foreignness of both Germany and New Zealand” (p. 204), which results in becoming different; and that German immigrants in the 1990s live a ‘do-it-yourself existence’, accept responsibility for their own lives without a guiding system, and “write the scripts for their own lives, draw the maps for their own orientation in society, and act as directors of their own life-stories” (p. 306).

In Bönisch-Brednich’s (2002) point of view, an identity in between the two cultures, a “bicultural identity” (p. 206), is crucial for ‘successful’ migration. Based on the findings of this study, I would qualify this view. To me, it seems that the more German immigrants evolve a transcendent inner sense of self, which entails elements of a bicultural identity, but exceeds a bicultural identity, the better they feel, irrespective of whether they stay or return.

Bönisch-Brednich (2002) argues that German immigrants underestimate the effects the migration has on them. This conclusion is inconsistent with this study. Firstly, the fact that one central reason for migrating was the gaining of new experiences to personally develop shows that the participants were aware before their migration that the migration would affect them. Secondly, the accounts of the participants regarding their personal evolvement indicate that they were highly aware of how the migration affected their lives and their selves. This awareness is very well reflected in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

The Ways in which German Immigrants Renegotiate their Identities during the Immigration Process

The migration experience presents German immigrants with challenges capable of affecting their sense of self/identity. Many participants consciously chose to migrate exactly because they perceived migration as providing many challenges that would allowing them to gain new experiences and more knowledge about their selves. Because the participants desired to gain knowledge about their selves, and because they had travelled extensively before their migration in order to get to know their selves better and to expand their horizons, most participants seemed to have already had a strong inner sense of self when they migrated to New Zealand.

Leaving German culture and history behind and living in New Zealand as foreigners made it easier for the participants to deepen their understanding of themselves and to evolve their unique self for three interrelated reasons. Migrating allowed the participants to break free from being a known id/entity and meant that they did not need to identify straight away with the New Zealand culture, providing space to experiment with
their selves. The confrontation with a new cultural environment facilitated a deeper understanding of their own culture heritage and presented alternative perspectives.

The two most crucial processes that underlay the restructuring or evolvement process were consciously choosing what to let go of and what to incorporate from the German heritage and from the New Zealand culture and detachment of sense of self from a particular place. These two processes occurred simultaneously and interacted, resulting in a spiral-like growth process in which they gradually unfolded their potential and adapted.

The confrontation with a new cultural environment with a different language and history and with different ways of living, attitudes, beliefs, and traditions, increased the participants’ consciousness of their German culture and history, which they took for granted in Germany and thus did not see. They were forced to deal with and question their German culture and history. Being more conscious of their cultural heritage allowed them to distinguish the desirable and the less desirable things in their heritage, to choose what they wanted to keep, and to integrate these into their new selves. At the same time, through living in New Zealand, the participants experienced alternative ways of living, attitudes, beliefs, and traditions. This allowed them to figure out the aspects they liked and the aspects they did not like in New Zealand, and to choose what they wanted. As a consequence, participants asked many questions of their selves, which led them to keep those parts from Germany and/or to incorporate those parts from New Zealand that they felt or thought served them better. This reconstructing of their selves resulted in some participants transcending their German ‘national identity’ towards their unique inner sense of self/identity.

In becoming more conscious of their own cultural heritage, the participants realised that they had much of their cultural heritage within them. This realisation helped them to detach the connection between their cultural heritage as place and their self, and to internalise the parts of their cultural heritage that they liked. The more they advanced in this process, the more they evolved towards an inner sense of self and an identity transcending national boundaries. The degree to which participants evolved towards this transcendent inner sense of self contributed to their staying or returning. This process was greatly supported by conditions in New Zealand, which appear to have resulted from the low population density, the young history of New Zealand, and from the fact that New Zealand is at the beginning of its developmental cycle.

Those participants who were ready for migrating, who already had an advanced sense of self/identity (i.e. who had good knowledge of their selves and were on the whole much settled in their own selves) were better able to navigate the migration, because only then did the migration not disturb their sense of themselves. Thus, they were able to better manage the obstacles of the migration process and to learn from them. Consequently, they evolved further towards a transcendent inner sense of self. In contrast, when the participants were not ready for the migration, when they did not know their selves well enough, the migration experiences shattered and disturbed their sense of themselves. As a result, they questioned their selves, became very depressed, and suffered emotionally. Thus, to protect their selves from further disturbing outside influences, they could not be open to their new environment. This meant that they could not figure out and cope with their new environment, which contributed further to their distress. Consequently, they could not transcend towards an inner sense of self. This downward spiral contributed to their return to Germany. However, although the migration was very disturbing for them, they nevertheless gained valuable knowledge about their selves.

Unfortunately, there is no available literature on German immigrants to New Zealand with respect to the way in which German immigrants renegotiate their identities during the migration process.

**Gender Differences and Gender Relations**

Overall, the experiences, interpretations, and outcomes of female and male participants are remarkably similar. This similarity might result from investigating female and male German immigrants within couples rather than single German immigrants. It also might reflect the finding that both male and female participants
had a high degree of balance between their feminine and masculine characteristics. However, several gender
differences emerged. Firstly, for men, the dream to migrate to New Zealand was their personal dream and
they were the driving force; whereas for women, the dream to migrate to New Zealand was an inspired
dream. Women usually followed the men or went along with them. This gender difference increased the
likelihood of returning only if the woman had just agreed to migrate in order to help the man fulfil his
personal dream, but she herself neither desired nor was ready for migrating.

This first gender difference is consistent with Bönisch-Brednich (2002), but not with Gruber and Kraft
(1991). Bönisch-Brednich (2002) found that “there is some evidence to suggest that very often the men were
the driving force in the emigration enterprise and that the women allowed themselves to be infected with this
enthusiasm.” (p. 286). Notably, she also uses the term ‘driving force’ to describe the men’s role; and the
phrase ‘allowed themselves to be infected with this enthusiasm’, which could be seen as a circumscription
for ‘being inspired’, to describe the women’s role. Gruber and Kraft (1991) concluded that the female
partners tended to be more ready to migrate and that some participants pressured their partners extensively to
migrate with them. However, Gruber and Kraft (1991) did not specifically ask which partner was the driving
force and they only stated that some of the 41 interview partners made statements to this effect. Hence, there
is some ambivalence in their finding, which makes it difficult to compare the findings.

The second gender difference is that in the beginning of the establishment phase the men commonly
organised jobs or study places for themselves and started working first; whereas the women stayed at home.
In some cases the couples had agreed that the women would stay at home to ease the transition for the
children, to search and establish a house, to find out how things worked (e.g. school system, social system),
and to organise these things. Further, some woman could not work or continue studying, because they were
pregnant; because they needed their qualifications recognised, which took a very long time in some cases; or
because their English was insufficient (some women had very high qualifications and working in them
requires greater English skills). These reasons were sometimes interrelated with the previous reasons. As one
result, the migration was less likely to affect the men’s careers, whereas the careers of women were often
interrupted. These circumstances contributed to financial stringency and put great pressure on those men
arriving in New Zealand without a job to find one, in order to ensure the financial survival of the couple. As
another consequence, the women were for long times alone at home and had to do the bulk of organising
their new life for the men not only worked, but also were exhausted when they came home from adapting to
a new work in a different work environment (e.g. English-speaking, different systems, different working
moral). Both could lead to frustration and drastically increase feelings of isolation/loneliness, which, in turn,
increased their homesickness. In contrast, when the men were not working, they had more time to support
the women emotionally and to assist with organising their new life. In addition, not working made the
women financially dependent in the beginning, which was a great issue for many women since they were
used to being independent especially those women who had higher qualifications than their men. Bönisch-
Brednich’s (2002) findings are consistent with those findings.

The third gender difference is that the women had generally the most responsibility for childcare and were
typically on their own, since they had no relatives to share childcare duties and assistance from friends was
often not readily available. Having to take care of the children around the clock mostly on their own led to
distress.

Bönisch-Brednich (2002) found some gender differences with regard to the construction of the migration
story that this study does not support. According to Bönisch-Brednich (2002), women talked openly about
their emotions, presented spiritual and emotional reasons for migrating, spoke about homesickness, judged
the ‘success’ of their migration in terms of personal satisfaction/development, and assessed their migration as
having been harder than for their men. Men, in contrast, did not talk about their emotions; carefully gave
logical reasons for migrating; focused on constructing their migration as success; did not speak much about
problems, doubts, and homesickness; focused on their work rather than personal relationships with their
partners and others; judged the migration ‘success’ more objectively; and did not make their personal
development a central theme. However, in this study, both women and men talked considerably about their
feelings and thoughts; the obstacles they faced; the personal relationships with their partners and others; and
their personal evolvement. Consequently, the gender differences Bönisch-Brednich (2002) found might have resulted more from the fact that she established better rapport with the women than with the men.

This research discovered that two central gender interactions influenced the migration process in important ways: interacting in making decisions, and migrating as a couple. Couples were more likely to stay when the partners made the decision to migrate jointly yet independently, and/or when the women were highly committed to the migration decision. In contrast, when the men made the migration decision alone and then put their partners under pressure to migrate with them, and/or the women were not committed to the migration, couples were more likely to return.

Migrating as a couple influenced the migration process positively in that the partner could provide social support and security, could give strength, and could help maintain the German language and desirable parts of the German culture and identity. For the positive influences to occur, the relationship needed to be strong and intact. Partners could influence the migration process negatively in that they could impede learning English and interacting with others, thus hampering the development of important social networks.

Bönisch-Brednich (2002) concluded that the migration was more challenging for women than for men. In contrast, this study suggests that migration was challenging for both genders and that women and men might have had to overcome some different obstacles which are hard in different ways. For instance, men often felt the pressure to provide for their family and to have to work immediately, which meant that they had to manage the various challenges associated with a new work environment (e.g. English, technical language in English, negative work experiences). Women, in contrast, generally stayed at home first, which often resulted in loneliness and homesickness, and could create dependency issues. We find it difficult to assess which challenges are more demanding. Again, this gender difference that Bönisch-Brednich (2002) found might be more because of the different degrees of rapport she established with women and with men, and because of her female perspective.

In summary, the present study confirms many conclusions in the available literature on German immigrants to New Zealand and challenges others. The great similarity with the literature on German immigrants to New Zealand is especially fascinating for, in accordance with the Grounded Theory approach, we did not have knowledge of these findings at the time of the study. Through its specific focus on the whole process of migration, tracing its developmental origins and following up those who returned, this study adds important findings, further specifies findings and/or offers explanations for the inconsistent findings. In several cases, the other studies specified the findings of this study and/or added further findings. Since the proposed local theory maps the migration process and shows the interaction among the different parts of the migration process, which none of the other studies does, the proposed local theory appears to provide a logical and useful framework for pooling the findings of the various studies available to German immigrants to New Zealand. All specifications and additional findings could now be integrated in the proposed theory, which the scope of this study unfortunately did not permit. The studies, taken together, provide a comprehensive picture of the experiences of German immigrants to New Zealand, which is closer to the reality than each individual study and which suggests many useful recommendations. However, the discussion of the literature also revealed some inconsistencies or gaps, which indicate the need for further research.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Migration presents migrants with many obstacles. While they are potentially stressful and demanding, they are challenges that can also provide many valuable opportunities for personal growth. Yet, these opportunities arise only when migrants experience these obstacles– when they live through them and feel them. This suggests that it is important that migrants experience these obstacles, in order to maximise the growth outcomes. The results presented by this research provide several insights into how this outcome could be facilitated and how interventions could be implemented proactively to assist German migrants dealing with these obstacles.
While the study also suggests many resource structures that New Zealand’s society and institutions providing service to German migrants could put in place, the research generated, maybe more importantly, many recommendations regarding useful beliefs, attitudes, and strategies that German migrants themselves could use when preparing for their migration to New Zealand, and when establishing themselves and/or living in New Zealand, in order to facilitate their migration process and to maximise their learning experiences. Many useful suggestions are weaved throughout the meta story chapters, especially Chapter Five, and summarized in an overview format in Table 8.1. Thus, in this section, we only present the responses of the participants to our final question:

*If a couple from Germany would ring you, tell you that they are thinking about migrating to New Zealand, and ask you what would be important to consider or to do, what would you tell them?*

These recommendations complement and reiterate those discussed in the analysis chapters - they present the most crucial advice. They are organised in accordance with the migration process.

**Before Migration**

- **Analyse your reasons for migrating:**
  - do not flee/escape from problems, because that does not work since you only change the environment; the factors which led to the problem are still there
  - migrate only when your relationship is stable and strong
  - use the assistance of a counsellor

- **Get informed about New Zealand and the migration process:**
  - try living in New Zealand for a while before you migrate
  - read specific literature about migrating and culture shock

- **Keep the door to Germany open by leaving a good impressions and keeping in contact with Germany. That strategy will give you a better feeling, because it reduces the pressure.**

- **Have low and realistic expectations. Expect:**
  - that you will not obtain all the information you ask for and that some information you do receive will be incorrect
  - an initial drop in your standard of living
  - hard times
  - that New Zealand is not a green and clean paradise
  - to lose many friends in Germany
  - that it can be lonely, especially in the beginning

- **Imagine a more negative picture of New Zealand.**

- **Realise and be aware that:**
  - the grass is not greener on the other side
  - you can only go back within a certain time frame (up to about 3 years)
  - there will not be much help when you arrive in New Zealand

- **When using the assistance of migration agencies, enquire about their reputation.**
In New Zealand

- Make the final decision whether you want to stay or to return after about three years.

- Aim at incorporation: maintain the aspects you like from your German heritage, from the New Zealand culture, and from other cultures.

- Accept the New Zealand culture.

- Adapt the following beliefs/attitudes and strategies:
  - do what you feel and think is right for you
  - be willing to:​
    - go through hard times,
    - work hard, and
    - learn.
  - stick out the first year
  - release your self from the anxiety of failing and from thinking too much about your financial security
  - do not put your self under stress and force your self to stay if you do not like it
  - do not worry about the children too much
  - be your self
  - be confident, determined, and persevering, yet flexible
  - be open and roll with the blows
  - keep up your optimism
  - make compromises and accept restrictions, because it is not possible to get the best of both worlds
  - be careful with what you say and how you say it
  - do not offend people if you do not have to
  - better to try and learn to do things in a way similar to the New Zealand way up to a point

- Possible strategies in the beginning to secure appropriate jobs later might be working voluntarily in the beginning (e.g. for community groups or in a practicum) and accepting low paid jobs below your qualifications in order to improve and to practise your English.

- When World War I and World War II are taught, offer to give to schools a talk, alone or together with your child, about Germany and Germans, in order to ensure a balanced view of Germany and Germans (i.e. country of great poets and thinkers, achievements of Germany today) to prevent racial harassment.

- If possible, choose a school where there are other German children, so that the children can support one another.


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