

# The mobility of a transnational generation.

Dorothea Breier

PhD candidate at University of Helsinki, Department of European Ethnology.

Supervision by Hanna Snellman, and Tuomas Martikainen.

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## Without mobility, life would not be.

A simple statement, true on a very general level, but also more specifically for people with migrant background. Without the mobility of their ancestors, they would not exist. - This corresponds to Tim Cresswell's demand to always consider the historical background of phenomena related to mobility and migration in order to understand their current developments and specific constitutions<sup>1</sup>. For many people of such background, the knowledge of their family history forms grounds for specific manifestations of self-understanding. Those can be vague and blurry at times, or then concrete and tangible at other times. Furthermore, this self-understanding of migrants' descendants may have considerable impact on their life-choices and strategies to find their place in the world.

Unlike former studies in the field of migration whose focus lay mostly on a relocation from one country of origin to one country of residence, like a one-way-movement, today there is a rather common awareness of the complex and manifold directions a person's path can take.<sup>2</sup> Ideas of step-by-step-migration or circular movements are just examples of the different variations mobile life can have. Those forms of mobility can be defined as "transmigration", differentiating from the classical idea of migration precisely in the inclusion of multiple movements, which then may result in a "transnational social space"<sup>3</sup>. The mobility of descendants of migrants is another shade of the world of migration, as it points towards "long-term trajectories which develop in stages over generations"<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>See: Cresswell, Tim: Towards a politics of mobility, In: Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 2010, volume 28, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>See for instance Goulbourne, Harry, 2010; Østergaard-Nielsen, Eva, 2012; Ruokonen-Engler, Minna-Kristiina, 2012. Scherke, Katharina, in Marinelli-König, 2010; Smith, Robert Courtney, 2006.

<sup>3</sup>See: Schellenberger, Uwe: Transmigration als Lebensstil. Selbstbilder und Erfahrungswelten von Pendlern zwischen Deutschland und Neuseeland, Münster 2011, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Inga Schwarz in an E-mail correspondence, 09.03.2016.

The article at hand gives insight into an ongoing dissertation project on descendants of German migrants, living in contemporary Helsinki. For this research I have conducted 32 semi-structured interviews, both with German migrants as well as descendants of those. The latter were of different constellation with both German, Finnish or German-Finnish parents, who were either born and raised in Germany or in Finland. The basic prerequisite here was that they grew up with the influence of a German as well as a Finnish socialisation and were permanently living in Helsinki at the moment of the interview. The interviews were held in German and translated into English, however, in this article the original passages can be found in the footnotes.

On the following pages I will present how the mobility of this descendant generation influenced their life, the choices they made and the paths they took. It links to Helen Lee's demand to look at descendants of migrants as people who are "actively engaging in transnational practices themselves" rather than being only "passively transnational" through their parent's and ancestors' movements<sup>5</sup>. Concerning my interviewees, not all of them consciously reflected on how mobility had an impact on them, nonetheless in every single interview I held, mobility was present.

### **Summer-illusion vs. reality**

I argue that the mobile life my interviewees experienced already as children had great influence on their life choices and their personal feeling of belonging. All of them had frequent contacts with two countries, Germany and Finland. Partly they lived for longer passages in the respective other country, partly they only went there for the summer months. Those annual trips should not be regarded

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<sup>5</sup>See: Lee, Helen: Ties to the homeland : second generation transnationalism, Newcastle 2008, p. 11.

as bare holidays, as for the families those often meant more than that. They helped to cure possible home-sickness of the parent(s), helped to maintain and strengthen transnational family ties and contacts as well as raising the child(ren) bilingual and under the influence of both German and Finnish culture. Those stays were for many interviewees coined by nice experiences, and several described having therefore had developed a "summer-illusion" or "holiday-illusion" of Germany respectively Finland: a thoroughly good picture of freedom in different interpretations, being allowed to do things they normally were not allowed to do, getting to eat things they did not have at home, and just enjoying the days without much restrictions. Lari, who was born in Germany, but moved with his German-Finnish family to Finland aged six, pictures vivid memories of his vacations in Germany:

Lari: As a child that was, that was always like holiday, of course. As a child it always was very, very nice there. Everyone was happy that you were there, one got loads of —

I: Attention —

Lari: Yes, attention, always got those fifty or hundred Mark from someone or fifty Mark from the godfather and then we went to Karstadt<sup>6</sup> and I got my Herpa-lorries<sup>7</sup>, which you couldn't get in Finland, there was Nutella<sup>8</sup>, which in Finland wasn't available, and then there was Hohes C<sup>9</sup>, which in Finland wasn't available, then at the bakery you got those cherry-ehm-lollipops, which in Finland were not — first of all one did not go to a bakery in Finland and then those cherry lollipops were not available. That was very nice. And there were croquettes and Holzfäller-steak and such things. One always had some certain things.

Then with 13, 14, 15 actually, during the teenage years, I was of the opinion that, immediately, as soon as I can, I will move to Germany, there the world is still ideal and well. Because, with 13, 14, 15 it already was kind of OK in Germany to go to a pub, one kind of was allowed to do such adult things, one could accompany other people, even if it was in a familial circle, one was allowed to come with them

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<sup>6</sup>German chain of shopping malls.

<sup>7</sup>Toy.

<sup>8</sup>Chocolate spread.

<sup>9</sup>Brand of orange juice.

to the pub. And then there were the children and the adults and then one maybe even got a small beer with 15 and was allowed to play billiard - that was actually the big life. That was absolutely awesome. - Unthinkable in Finland! (...) <sup>10</sup>

Similar positive views could be found in passages where people described their summer months in Finland, just with different reasons for them, for instance the quiet and peacefulness when being on the family's **Mökki**<sup>11</sup> and being so close to nature. For others, their positive image of Finland was constructed by what they heard about it from afar, for instance sports and crazy competitions Finland is worldwide known for<sup>12</sup>. These observations go along the line of what also other scholars found out, for instance Helen Lee, who even goes so far to call those visits one of the most important "strategies" to connect children with the home-country of the parent(s) and to "reaffirm their sense of cultural identity"<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup>Lari: Als Kind war das, das war natürlich immer Urlaub. Als Kind, das war immer sehr sehr schön da. Alle haben sich gefreut, dass man da war, man hat unheimlich viel —  
I.: Aufmerksamkeit —

Lari: Ja, Aufmerksamkeit bekommen, hat dann auch immer diese fünfzig oder hundert Mark von irgendwem bekommen oder fünfzig Mark vom Patenonkel und sind wir dann nach Karstadt gegangen und dann habe ich meine Herpa-LKWs gekauft, die man in Finnland nicht bekam, da gab es Nutella, das es in Finnland nicht gab, und dann gab es Hohes C, das es in Finnland nicht gab, dann gab es beim Bäcker diese Kirsch-ehm-lutscher, die es in Finnland — erst einmal ist man in Finnland nicht zum Bäcker und dann gab es nicht diese Kirschlutscher. Das war sehr schön. Und Kroketten gab es dann und Holzfäller-Steak und solche Sachen. Man hat immer so bestimmte Sachen gehabt.

Dann mit 13, 14, 15 eigentlich, wo dann so die Teenagerjahre waren, da war ich dann eigentlich der Meinung, sofort, wenn ich kann, ziehe ich dann nach Deutschland, da ist die Welt noch heil und gut. Weil, mit 13, 14, 15 war es in Deutschland dann schon halbwegs OK, in die Kneipe zu gehen, man durfte halbwegs so Erwachsenensachen machen, man konnte irgendwo mit Leuten mit, auch wenn es in familiären Kreisen war, man durfte mit in die Kneipe. Und dann waren die Kinder da und die Erwachsenen da und dann hat man vielleicht sogar ein kleines Bier bekommen mit 15 und durfte Billard spielen – das war eigentlich so das große Leben. Das war absolut geil. - In Finnland unvorstellbar! (...)

<sup>11</sup>Finnish: cottage in the countryside, often without running water or electricity, where people tend to spend especially their summer months.

<sup>12</sup>Lasse: (...) Und so das war für mich immer so das Finnische, dass man diese freien Sachen macht und dann hab' ich gehört von diesen Stiefel-Weitwürfen und —

I.: Handy-Weitwerfen, ja...

Lasse: Handy-Weitwürfen und sowas, und so was hat schon mein Finnlandbild geprägt (...) so ein Bild von Finnland, das halt so nicht existiert. So aus Ski-Weitsprung und ach... Skispringen und Sisu und dieses, das ist geprägt von lauter so positiven Sachen. Und wahrscheinlich total verklärtes und romantisches Bild von Finnland (...).

<sup>13</sup>Lee 2008, p. 20.

As seen in the passage from Lari's interview above, those illusions my interlocutors had of the respective other country often resulted in the wish to move there. Most of them did and what then followed, was often a clash between the summer illusion and reality, as perceived once actually living there. Going back to the talk I had with Lari, he continued telling me how he then, as a young adult, had first experiences in work-life with Germany and Germans:

Lari: (...) and that was basically the first time that I was there outside of that holiday-context. And actually, thinking of the countries of Europe, Germany was not my thing. (...) Germany was, (...) where it was always grey, the streets were bad, where people were grumpy, where you have trouble with officials, where everyday communication between people is actually quite arrogant and aggressive; didn't like it at all. Then I had years of break from Germany again. (...) But now I can separate a bit better again between holiday-Germany and profession-Germany, I still don't like the profession-Germany, but for a holiday it's quite OK. I like going to Berlin once in a while and I also like going to [German city X], once in a while, for a long weekend or a week; longer I don't really need to be there.

I do like eating my rolls for breakfast [father Dieter agrees], then I eat currywurst or... - For me a German dish is Döner. No, seriously! When I go to [German city Y], when I am in [Y] Sunday evening, I won't be looking for Bratwurst<sup>14</sup>, I will be looking for Döner. And I'm quite happy, Monday morning at breakfast there will be Mohnbrötchen<sup>15</sup>; Nutella is not the thing anymore, as nowadays it's also available here, and jams are also available here. Only in the 90's Finland got (incompr.) for the first time orange juice in supermarkets with ehm... fruit pulp, until then that was basically only available in Germany. So that's also no reason anymore for going to Germany.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>German fried sausage.

<sup>15</sup>Buns with poppy seeds.

<sup>16</sup>Lari: (...) und das war eigentlich das erste Mal, das ich so außerhalb von diesem Urlaubskontext da gewesen bin. Und da war eigentlich so, wenn man jetzt an die Länder in Europa denkt, Deutschland nicht mein Ding. (...) Deutschland war da (...) das, wo es immer grau war, die Straßen schlecht waren, wo die Leute stinkig sind, wo man Ärger mit den Beamten hat, wo die Kommunikation zwischen Leuten im Alltag eigentlich unheimlich arrogant und aggressiv ist; hat mir überhaupt nicht gefallen. Dann hatte ich auch jahrelang wieder Pause mit Deutschland. (...) Ich kann das jetzt aber auch wieder ein bisschen besser trennen, was Urlaub-Deutschland ist und was Beruf-Deutschland ist, ich mag das Beruf-Deutschland immer noch nicht gerne, aber für den Urlaub ist es ganz OK. Ich fahr gerne mal nach Berlin und ich fahr gerne mal nach [Deutsche Stadt X], für ein langes Wochenende oder eine Woche; mehr muss ich das dann auch nicht haben.

Ich esse meine Brötchen ganz gerne zum Frühstück [Vater Dieter stimmt zu], ich esse dann die Curry-Wurst oder... - Für mich ist ja ein deutsches Essen ein Döner schon. Nee, ehrlich!

Before Lari unfolded all those memories from above, he had stated that he "just started thinking about it" and realised that he had "a certain diversity" in his attitude towards Germany and explains that the way he thought about it as a child was different from when he was teenager, which yet again was different when he was 20, 25 and today.<sup>17</sup> For him, the contact he had with Germany at different stages of his life was shaped by multiple impressions which then had great impact on his attitude towards the country and in this his wish to go or live there.

Lari's narration shows what I consider to be true for many people of mixed ethnic or otherwise transnational background: Already his early childhood experiences were coined by an intense relationship to two countries and cultures, more intense as it probably is the case for children whose international contacts are restricted to media or few weeks of vacation. Similar statements were made by scholars such as Michael Braun and Walter Müller, who stressed that "migrants can relate, in addition to supra-national units, to two different countries in a much more encompassing sense than members of national populations with transnational contacts"<sup>18</sup>.

However, even though Lari was sure to move to Germany when he was teenager, he never did, as his adult experiences with "profession-Germany" were appar-

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Wenn ich nach [Deutsche Stadt Y] fahre, wenn ich Sonntag Abend in [Y] bin, ich such mir keine Bratwurst, ich such mir einen Döner. Und ich bin ganz zufrieden, Montag beim Frühstück gibt es wieder Mohnbrötchen; Nutella ist nicht mehr so das Ding, weil Nutella gibt es heutzutage auch hier, und Marmeladen gibt es heutzutage schon hier. Finnland bekam ja erst Mitte 90er mit (unv.) das erste Mal einen O-Saft in die Supermärkte mit ehm. . . Obstfleisch drin, bis dahin gab es das eigentlich nur in Deutschland. Ist also auch kein Grund mehr, nach Deutschland zu fahren.

<sup>17</sup>Lari: Ich habe eigentlich so eine — Ich habe gerade eben angefangen, darüber nachzudenken, aber ich habe eigentlich so eine gewisse Diversität in der Einstellung gegenüber Deutschland, die sich eigentlich über die Jahre aufgebaut hat. So, wie ich als Kind gedacht habe, so habe ich nicht mehr als Teenager gedacht, so habe ich nicht mehr mit 20 gedacht, so habe ich nicht mehr mit 25 gedacht und so denke ich wiederum heute nicht mehr. Ich habe jetzt so im Laufe der Jahre unheimlich viele verschiedene Einstellungen zu dem Ganzen gehabt.

<sup>18</sup>Braun, Michael/Müller, Walter: National and Transnational Identities of Intra-European Migrants, in Höllinger, Franz (Ed.): Crossing borders, shifting boundaries : national and transnational identities in Europe and beyond ; Festschrift for Max Haller, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, p. 264.

ently already disillusioning him enough to change his mind. As he acknowledges, he does nowadays enjoy going there once in a while for short private trips, but living and working there is no option for him. By describing how certain things, particularly related to cuisine, lost meaning for him, Lari in a sense deconstructs his summer-illusion of Germany. It once more underlines how his attitude towards Germany changed with time and - in this case also with the increased mobility of goods worldwide.

Concerning possible illusions about the respective country, growing up under both German and Finnish influences could also entail other consequences. Here, I want to draw on the interview with Hans and Jonas, one of the two father-son-conversations I had. Hans, child of a German father and a Finnish mother, and his son Jonas were both born and raised in Finland, even though the family spent few years of Jonas' childhood in another European country, before they returned to Finland. However, both Hans as well as Jonas went to Germany to work for a while, and described the time as following:

Hans: (...) And I thought that it would be like my second home, Germany - that was quite a culture shock for me. Even though I did not have any problems about the language, but the way people worked [there], was completely different than what I was used to from Finland. - So, that was really exhausting for me there. (...) There were too many frictions between people, all the time with someone else, someone complained about something or wanted something differently. One wasn't used to that here (...).

Jonas: But I think with you that was different, with me the shock was much smaller, because my expectations were completely different (...). I went there as a Finn and you are so much more German and maybe you had the expectation that you could just - access straight away.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Hans: Und ich dachte, das wäre wie eine zweite Heimat, Deutschland - das war ein gewaltiger Kulturschock für mich. Also, obwohl ich schon von der Sprache her wirklich nichts, keine Probleme hatte, aber die Art, wie die Leute [dort] gearbeitet haben, das war total anders, als ich das gewöhnt war in Finnland. - Also, es war für mich schon sehr anstrengend da. (...) Das ist irgendwie - das machte zu viele Reibereien mit den Leuten, ständig mit irgendjemandem, also jemand hat sich über irgendwas beschwert oder wollte was anders. Das

Since Hans grew up bilingual and with a Finnish-German socialisation, apparently he identified strongly as German and believed he could simply slip into German society and become part of it without any difficulties. A bit further below, Hans adds that he had to learn that Germans abroad are different than Germans in Germany, therefore his impression of Germans was set up on wrong grounds as it was drawn on Finland-Germans, who were "more open, more flexible" than Germans living in Germany.<sup>20</sup> This can be seen in the light of John Gumperz' differentiation between "linguistic competence" and the "much more significant communication competence", which enables "in a world of strangers (...) to detect the social norms and values of the group and to act according and conformally to them"<sup>21</sup>. Regarding the narration of Hans, his son Jonas explains that his father was "so much more" German than himself and this made him have too high expectations which were bound to be disappointed. When Jonas went to Germany to work there, he "went there as a Finn", with different expectations than his father used to have. For Jonas, things took a different turn:

Jonas: But I do notice that, when I'm in Germany, then I do feel a lot, a lot of Finnish. Well, then we do stuff with Finnish friends, well a lot, then we really want to be Finnish, of course one is a bit homesick for Finland or not really homesick, but one misses Finnish things and then one prepares Finnish food once in a while and spends Juhannus<sup>22</sup> and such days, of course, and so on, so, there is a lot of influence from Finland compared to German influence on me in my Finnish every day life.

Hans: Yes, that's somehow funny, that especially Jonas, who from our family lived longest in Germany, (...) is most Finnish of all of

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war man her nicht gewohnt (...).

Jonas: Aber ich glaub', bei dir war das anders, also bei mir war der Schock kleiner, weil meine Erwartungen waren ganz anders (...). Und ich, ich bin als Finne hingegangen eigentlich schon und du bist viel mehr deutsch und du hattest vielleicht die Erwartungen auch mehr, dass du — direkt einsteigen kannst

<sup>20</sup>Hans: (...) Und ich dachte eigentlich, (...) ich würde Deutsche gut kennen und kennen, wie die denken, aber so Auslandsdeutsche sind ganz anders als Deutsche im Inland. Hier im Ausland, gerade die Deutschen, die in Finnland wohnen, sind vom Charakter her - ich weiss nicht, ob man das sagen kann - irgendwie offener, flexibler.

<sup>21</sup>Schellenberger 2011, p. 178, translated by author.

<sup>22</sup>Midsummer.

us.

Jonas: Yeah, but that's maybe because one sees the contrast then and learns to appreciate the Finnish things and then one identifies even stronger as a Finn, when one lives there.<sup>23</sup>

It becomes visible here how someone's mobility and possibilities are interlinked with his/her self-identification. Hans, whose German identification was stronger than the one of his son, was confronted with what he calls a "culture shock", when living and working in Germany for the first time. On the other hand, his son Jonas, who said that he went to Germany "as a Finn", experienced even a strengthening of his Finnish identification when living there as he started to miss "Finnish things".

## **Trial and error**

Having the possibility to go to another country to see if one would want to live there, is nothing uncommon. However, going to the other country of one's ethnically mixed family might have a different meaning, as those countries are often closely attached to one's picture of oneself, one's self-identification and feeling of belonging. Like Jonas, who experienced a strengthening of his personal Finnish-ness when living in Germany for some years, also others went to the respective country to try if that is where they feel most home. Jan for example, born and raised in Finland, decided to spend an exchange semester in Germany and as he put it, for him it was not about the studies as such, but about being

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<sup>23</sup>Jonas: Aber ich merk' das, wenn ich in Deutschland bin, dann fühl' ich da sehr, sehr viel Finnisches. Also, da machen wir mit finnischen Freunden, also sehr viel, also, da wollten wir wirklich finnisch sein, man hat natürlich ein bisschen Heimweh nach Finnland oder nicht Heimweh, sondern man vermisst finnische Sachen und dann macht man finnisches Essen ab und zu und verbringt Juhannus und solche Tage natürlich und so was, also das ist sehr grosser Einfluss aus Finnland im Vergleich zum deutschen Einfluss bei mir in dem finnischen Alltag. Hans: Ja, ist eigentlich lustig, bei Jonas gerade, der von uns allen in der Familie am meisten jetzt in Deutschland gelebt hat, (...) er ist am meisten Finne wahrscheinlich.

Jonas: Ja, aber das kann auch daran liegen, dass man den Kontrast sieht und dann die finnischen Sachen schätzen lernt und dann identifiziert man sich noch stärker als Finne, wenn man da lebt.

able to live in Germany once in his life. He describes his experiences there as following:

Jan: (...) But my priority was not academic; I wanted to live in Germany once in my life. (...) Well, I wanted to get this feeling of home, but there one realises that one is a bit more Finnish. You notice it, when I'm speaking German; many people answered immediately in English. Such a feeling of... (thinks) belong, so I belong here - [he uses the English expressions here]

I.: "to belong"

Jan: Belongingness, I didn't really get that there; that's also because of the language. But Yes, I could imagine that I end up living or working in Germany.<sup>24</sup>

It shows that even though Jan really wanted to feel home there, he could not, as he felt still more Finnish there. He links this to not being fluent in German, so by people responding in English his feeling of not belonging there got even stronger. I dare say that there are many people who learn a language, travel the country in question and feel frustrated when locals respond in English. It signals clearly that one is an outsider, not part of the local community, and is obviously and clearly perceived and marked as such. - However for someone who has this mixed family background and who grew up knowing that he has roots in both Germany and Finland, reactions like this might feel yet different. This makes decisions to move to Germany respectively Finland and the experiences there highly emotionally loaded - on a level that might be different from that of people who lack such an ethnic background.

The aforementioned trial-and-error method became strongly visible in the talk I had with Heiko, born and raised in Finland, who described a time of his early

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<sup>24</sup>Jan: (...) Aber meine Priorität war nicht akademisch; ich wollte einmal in meinem Leben in Deutschland wohnen. (...) Naja, ich wollte ein bisschen Daheim-Gefühl kriegen, aber da merkt man ja, dass ich ein bisschen mehr Finnisch bin. Das merkt man ja, wenn ich Deutsch spreche; viele Leute haben sofort auf Englisch geantwortet. So ein Gefühl von... (überlegt) belong, also I belong here -

I.: "Zugehören"

Jan: Zugehörigkeit, so etwas habe ich nicht so richtig gekriegt; das ist auch wegen der Sprache. Aber ja, ich könnte gut denken, dass ich irgendwann in Deutschland wohne oder arbeite.

adult years in which he struggled to find his spot in life:

Heiko: And that was of course quite a critical phase for me, and okay, I was in Germany and then I came back to Finland and then I also wasn't really satisfied in Finland. And then the Finnish culture: "No, it's better in Germany!" and then I quickly went back to Germany and after a while in Germany: "No, that's also shit there!" and again. But it was just such a time, maybe two years, when I didn't really know myself. (...) <sup>25</sup>

For Heiko, those years after high school were characterised by a search for direction for his life and a place to call home, a place where he felt to belong to. This process apparently was not easy for Heiko and he ended up going back and forth between Finland and Germany, always finding reasons to leave again. When I asked him what it was that he did or did not like in the two countries, among other things, he told me of a greater openness between people in Germany. Referring back to his stays in Germany as a child, he expresses appreciation of people in the neighbourhood knowing and greeting each other. Heiko does not particularly say why he decided to stay in Finland in the end, however, in the beginning of his reflections he stresses that Finland was his "**Heimat**, somehow" <sup>26</sup>. This shows something quite common for today's mobility and migration, which can no longer be seen as a one-way-street, but instead could rather be compared to moving from one place to another, yet not being limited to a "two-way-journey" <sup>27</sup> either. Furthermore, those passages prove what also Harry Goulbourne warned about, namely not to underestimate "identity and belongingness (...) as crucial elements driving the motor of transnational family

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<sup>25</sup>Heiko: (...) Und das war natürlich so eine kritische Phase bei mir und gut, da war ich in Deutschland und dann kam ich nach Finnland zurück und dann war ich in Finnland auch nicht richtig zufrieden. Und dann die finnische Kultur: "Nein, es ist besser in Deutschland!" und dann bin ich schnell mal wieder zurück nach Deutschland und nach einer Weile in Deutschland: "Nein, das ist auch scheisse hier!" na und wieder. Aber das war so eine Zeit, so ein, zwei Jahre, wo ich nicht richtig wusste. (...)

<sup>26</sup>Heiko: Ne, das war immer so ein Gedanke, meine Heimat ist schon Finnland, für mich irgendwie. (...)

<sup>27</sup>Østergaard-Nielsen, Eva (Ed.): International Migration and Sending Countries. Perceptions, Policies and Transnational Relations, Chippenham/Eastbourne (10) 2012, p. 13.

experience"<sup>28</sup>.

Also other interviewees went back and forth between Germany and Finland - for instance it took Lena several attempts to settle down in Finland, her mother's home country. Born and raised in Germany, Lena spent her summer months visiting her Finnish relatives and explains that even though her family was not particularly wealthy and even though getting to Finland was by far not as easy as it is nowadays, they still managed to go there once a year, also because "the **Heimat** was important for [her] mother"<sup>29</sup>. As she puts it, despite those summer vacations, at that point she did not really have an own relationship to Finland, but rather "ran alongside", while her mother re-established her ties to her home-country and family during what Lena calls her mother's "soul-holidays"<sup>30</sup>. After high school Lena ended up doing an internship in Finland, but admits that it was initially not her idea to do it there, but happened with the help of relatives and their connections. During this time she realised that she might like it there and decided to move to Finland to do an apprenticeship. Lena explains that "only then" she started to develop an own relationship to Finland, learned the language properly and met the man she later would marry. Despite all this, Lena soon felt that she had to leave:

Lena: (...) And then I also met the Finn I later married, but I just had to leave at all costs, that was between '89 and '91 and I just had to return again, because for me that was — there's a Finnish word called 'ankee'<sup>31</sup>, that is somehow — it just was too different from Germany, well, I was used to, I don't know, you can just go around

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<sup>28</sup>Goulbourne, Harry: Transnational families : ethnicities, identities, and social capital, London 2010, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup>Lena: (...) und dann die finnischen Verwandten, die aber so wichtig waren und auch die Heimat war also wichtig für meine Mutter, dass wir jeden Sommer nach Finnland gefahren sind. Und das war damals, (...) man ist nicht einfach mal eben schnell irgendwo hingeflogen, wie heute, also heute fährt man, was weiss ich, echt zum Kaffeetrinken fliegt man schnell irgendwo hin, aber obwohl meine Eltern sicherlich nicht, ehm, wohlhabend waren, war das jedes Jahr drin, dass wir mit dem Auto hoch nach Finnland gefahren sind. (...)

<sup>30</sup>Lena: (...) So diese Seelen-Urlaube für unsere Mutter eigentlich, dass die heimfahren konnte, ihre eigene Sprache sprechen konnte und wir sind halt so nebenher gelaufen.

<sup>31</sup>Finnish for "drab", "mirthless".

the corner to eat at a Greek restaurant and everything is available and here nothing was available, that really was — Eastern block and as a child I never realised that, because my summer-Finland basically was, ehm — that really was pure summer and Mökki and so on, all those adventures that one experiences there, but this real-life here with the, with the darkness and — I mean, in the supermarkets of those days, for me the picture is always: Chinese cabbage and Edam cheese. And I thought, I can't live here, that is - that won't work. And then I went back again — <sup>32</sup>

Like for instance Lari and Hans, also Lena experiences a clash of summer-illusions and reality. When I asked Lena what the reasons were for her to give Finland another chance, she explained that again it was more by accident. In the meantime she had started and given up studying in Germany, but heard of a temporary job offer in Helsinki and felt that "Ah, it doesn't really matter where I do nothing or where I hang out"<sup>33</sup>. From this passage it seems like Lena's decisions were mostly made by accident. Lena herself says:

Lena: (...) Well, I think my life has been totally, most of the time it was rather without a plan, most things, it was usually kind of like "Ah, let's wait and see, let's go just here..." - so, as a child I never had the feeling that I desperately want to, ehm, go to Finland, to see how it is to live in the country of my mother. Because, you know, there are many who say that they are consciously doing that, for me that was all more by accident.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Lena: (...) Und dann hab' ich auch den Finnen kennen gelernt, den ich später geheiratet hab', aber ich musste damals unbedingt gehen, das war also von '89 bis '91 und ich musste dann einfach wieder zurück, weil das war mir, das war — es gibt ein finnisches Wort, das heisst 'ankke', das ist so — es war halt so anders als Deutschland, also, ich bin das gewohnt gewesen, weiss nicht, da geht man mal schnell um die Ecke zum Griechen zum Essen und alles ist vorhanden und hier war halt nichts vorhanden, das war wirklich, das war — Ostblock und das hab' ich aber als Kind nie mitbekommen, weil mein Sommer-Finland war halt immer so, ehm — das war so voller Sommer und Mökki und so, diese ganzen Abenteuer, die man da erlebt, aber dieses echte Hier-Leben mit der, mit der Dunkelheit und dem — Ich sag' mal, in den Supermärkten damals, für mich ist das Bild immer: Chinakohl und Edamkäse. Und ich dachte, ich kann hier nicht wohnen, das ist mir - das geht nicht. Und dann bin ich wieder zurück —

<sup>33</sup>Lena: (...) und dann hab' ich über jemanden erfahren, dass die so eine [Angestellte] suchen, und dann hab' ich gedacht: "Ach, das ist ja jetzt egal, wo ich jetzt nichts mache oder wo ich abhängen!" und bin halt dann deshalb her.

<sup>34</sup>Lena: (...) Also ich glaub', eben mein Leben ist völlig, das ist meistens eher ungeplant gewesen, die meisten Dinge, das ist immer so "Ach, schau' 'mer mal, gehen 'mer mal her..." - also, ich hatte nie so das Gefühl als Kind, ich möchte unbedingt mal, ehm, mal nach Finnland, mal sehen, wie's so ist, im Land meiner Mutter zu leben. Weil es gibt ja so viele, die sagen, sie machen das ganz bewusst, das ist bei mir eigentlich alles eher Zufall gewesen.

Even if the moments in which Lena decided for or against moving to Finland feel like pure coincidences to her, still I argue that the fact that her focus did seemingly point exclusively towards Finland, tells a different story. She may not have actively felt the wish to move to Finland, but the opportunities that made her do so were strongly related to her family background, to her connections and ties with and to Finland. At a later point of the interview, Lena describes how much she feels home in her apartment in Helsinki and acknowledges:

Lena: (...) And that just happens to be in Helsinki and I do believe however that it is not by accident in Helsinki, but it is quite consciously here.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout most of her narration about how she ended up in Finland, Lena depicted it as all pure coincidence and concatenation of circumstances. However, later-on, when talking about her apartment in which she had been living for many years and which is the reason why she feels home in Helsinki, it seems like in the process of talking, Lena realises that it is more than just coincidence and suggests that it is "supposed" to be like this. This passage as well as the others above serve as examples of the characteristics of a transnational life as Alejandro Portes and Josh DeWind defined it, namely a "ceaseless back-and-forth movement, enabling migrants to sustain a presence in two societies and cultures and to exploit the economic and political opportunities created by such dual lives"<sup>36</sup>. Thanks to the recent history of their families, descendants of migrants inherit what Kevin Hannam, Mimi Sheller and John Urry referred to as "tools"<sup>37</sup> that give them a comparably easy access to an own mobile life. Those tools can be in the form of double citizenship, social networks in both countries, but of course also social capital such as language and cultural knowledge of both places.

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<sup>35</sup>Lena: (...) Und das ist jetzt aber zufällig in Helsinki und ich glaub' aber, dass es nicht zufällig in Helsinki ist, sondern es ist schon ganz bewusst hier.

<sup>36</sup>Portes, Alejandro; DeWind, Josh (Hg.): Rethinking Migration. New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives. New York/Oxford 2007, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup>Hannam, Kevin; Sheller, Mimi; and Urry, John: Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings, Editorial Introduction to Mobilities, 1: 1, March 2006: p. 12.

As shown above and also already in the previous section, the close relationship my interview-partners had with Finland and Germany already as children, certainly had an impact on their life-choices and feeling of belonging. Many of those, who as adults decided to move to the respective country, experienced a clash between how they expected life to be there and how it then really turned out to be. Nevertheless, even if they realised that their centre of life, or **Heimat**, is nowadays in Finland, none of my interviewees had decided to abandon Germany from his/her life completely.

### **On-hold migration**

For some of those, who were born and raised in Germany and moved to Finland at later points in their lives, it seemed as if Germany remained as some kind of backup plan to the life in Finland. - Not in the sense that they were actually planning to return there, but in several talks it became clear that even though many considered Finland to be their home, they still wanted to make sure to maintain also a physical connection with Germany. This is what I call an *on-hold migration*, which can be seen as another nuance of transnational life as for me it describes exactly the maintenance of those ties and open options in the different countries involved. Others, like Katharina Scherke, referred to the same phenomenon as a "identity anchor" of descendants of migrants, who often do not have a concrete wish of "returning", which can be seen as part of their "transnational identity"<sup>38</sup>.

One way of implementing this on-hold migration is related to owning real estates in both countries. That this was also for emotional reasons shows a passage from the interview with Larissa:

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<sup>38</sup>Scherke, Katharina: Transnationalität als Herausforderung für die soziologische Migrationsforschung, in: Marinelli-König, Gertraud: Zwischenräume der Migration : über die Entgrenzung von Kulturen und Identitäten, Bielefeld 2011, p. 81.

Larissa: (...) Well, I would, yes, I could move to Germany again, but I think I would become *happier* in Finland. (...) (takes a breath) Yes, that's a gut feeling somehow. Yes, that's just a gut feeling. I mean, I grew up in Germany and I always wanted to go to Finland, and now I am in Finland, partly... Partly I wanted to return to Germany, but I was never *really serious* about it. Okay, I *could* go to Germany, but if I had to chose, I would stay in Finland. Yes. But then always with the option of being able to come to Germany from time to time, well, my father still lives in Germany and we have a house there and I would, even if my father was not alive anymore, I would want to keep the house. Or selling it and buying a small apartment in [German city X], that I somehow there — That I somehow have a, well, domicile in X. That is important to me, because I somehow feel connected to Germany or to my *Heimat*.<sup>39</sup>.

Larissa was not the only one who described it in such way, as a connection to *Heimat*. As she came to Finland in her mid-20's, it does not come as a big surprise that she refers to Germany by using a rather emotionally charged expression such as *Heimat*. However, also others with different background feel similar. Laura, who had most of her early socialisation in Finland, describes that unlike her siblings who do not care about it, she would find it sad if they were selling the parental home of her father, if there was "nothing left in Germany, no connection, if all would disappear"<sup>40</sup>.

As I tried to show with those passages, for some of my interlocutors keeping an

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<sup>39</sup>Larissa: Aber, also, ich würde schon, ja, ich könnte schon nach Deutschland ziehen, aber letztendlich würde ich glaube ich *glücklicher* in Finnland werden. (...) (holt Luft) (holt Luft) Ja, das ist ein Bauchgefühl irgendwie. Ja, das ist ein Bauchgefühl. Also, ich bin in Deutschland aufgewachsen, da wollte ich immer nach Finnland und eh, jetzt, da ich in Finnland bin, teilweise... Teilweise wollte ich, aber nicht so *richtig ernsthaft*, zurück nach Deutschland. Na gut, ich *könnte* nach Deutschland, aber wenn ich wählen müsste, würde ich dann schon in Finnland bleiben. Ja. Aber immer mit der Option, dass ich mal nach Deutschland kommen kann. also, mein Vater lebt ja noch in Deutschland und wir haben da ein Haus und ich würde dann auch, also, wenn mein Vater nicht mehr leben würde, würde ich auch das Haus behalten wollen. Oder halt es verkaufen und eine kleine Wohnung in [deutsche Stadt X] kaufen, dass ich da irgendwie das — Dass ich da irgendwie in X, also, ein Domizil habe. Also, das ist mir schon wichtig, weil ich mich halt doch irgendwie mit Deutschland oder mit meiner Heimat verbunden fühle.

<sup>40</sup>Laura: Na, ich merk' das eben, dass ich mir Gedanken drüber mache: was passiert dann, wenn meine Eltern nicht mehr können? Ich fände es schade, wenn das jetzt verkauft wird irgendwie und wir *nichts* mehr da in Deutschland haben, also, keinen Kontakt mehr haben oder wenn es wegfällt. Bei meinen Geschwistern ist das anders, die interessieren sich überhaupt nicht dafür.

estate in Germany to which they can easily return to, sometimes served as a way to *live* an emotional connection and a feeling of belonging to both countries and cultures and to give those more tangibility. Drawing back on Lena, whose trial-and-error path to settling down in Finland I presented earlier, another nuance of such an on-hold migration becomes visible:

Lena: (...) the way it is right now for me, ehm, I think, that's perfect, well, I have my life here [in Helsinki], I have work, I also have friends and certain things that I do here, but I totally enjoy it to escape on and off and to go home or somewhere else - well, to stay *only* at one place, ehm, I wouldn't like that at all. Because all my friends say I should come back to [German city X], then I say: 'And then? Then I'm there!' - well, I think, I wouldn't go to Finland just like that, but the other way round I do. Then I could always stay at my parent's place for example, so, everything is so simple! One just goes there, everything is how it used to be, but one gets the advantages from it. So, sometimes I just call people and say: 'Phew, I only have time tonight, do you have time?' and one takes the time, that's just such a luxury that one has when being as a guest at the place where one is from. That's also what my mother liked a lot when she came here [to Finland], that everything is a bit like at home, but a little bit better (both laugh), because one gets courted. <sup>41</sup>

Here, several of the aforementioned aspects become apparent: First, Lena signals an understanding that when returning to Germany for some days, she basically experiences what I previously referred to as a "holiday illusion", just that she is aware of its unreal character. Moreover, Lena highly appreciates being able to travel back to her former home Germany (and also other places), where

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<sup>41</sup>Lena: (...) so wie es mir jetzt geht, ehm, denke ich, ist das einfach optimal, also, ich hab hier so mein Leben, die Arbeit, hab auch Freunde und bestimmte Sachen, die ich hier mache, aber ich genieß' das total, dann mal wieder auszubrechen und wieder heimzufahren oder irgendwoanders hinzufahren - also, dass ich *nur* an einem Ort wäre, ehm, würde mir überhaupt nicht gefallen. Weil immer meine ganzen Freunde sagen, ich soll wieder zurück nach [Deutsche Stadt X] kommen, dann sag' ich: 'Und dann? Dann bin ich da!' - also, dann würde ich glaub' ich nicht so einfach nach Finnland fahren, aber andersrum schon. Da könnte ich immer bei meinen Eltern wohnen zum Beispiel, also, alles so einfach! Man kommt einfach hin, ist alles wie früher, aber man kriegt so diesen Vorteil von dem. Also, ich ruf teilweise Leute an und sag': 'Boah, ich hab' nur heute Abend Zeit, hast du Zeit?' und man nimmt sich die Zeit, das ist einfach so ein Luxus, den man hat, wenn man Gast da ist, wo man herkommt. Das ist auch das, was meiner Mutter dann gut gefallen hat, als sie immer hierher gekommen ist, dass alles irgendwie ein bisschen so wie zu Hause ist, aber so ein bisschen besser (beide lachen), weil man ja so hofiert wird.

she feels like home again while still keeping her current life in Finland. This links directly to the concept of transnationality, whose intention is to give expression to migration not being necessarily tied to a loss of familiar surrounding and human relationships. Instead it acknowledges the possibility of migrants living in several societies at the same time, which would make them "rooted at several places" rather than "up-rooted"<sup>42</sup>. Coming back to the interview with Lena, her gratitude for the privileges she has due to her transcultural and transnational background becomes even more obvious in another passage from the interview with Lena:

Lena: Ehm, and that as a half-German-half-Finn you're in the lucky position of always being able to go there, yeah, well, I often think about people who *have* to leave their country and who won't get this sense of *Heimat* back, never again, that is, ehm, this being-cut-off from a part of yourself. And yes, that's why I think — well, we are in such a lucky position, I mean us half-German, half-Finnish.

I.: Hm, also because one can choose...

Lena: One can choose, one can seek everything, one won't be — I have never been dissed about what I am actually doing here, that is — Someone who is black, probably gets to hear this three times a day, what he is actually doing in Finland...<sup>43</sup>

In those two passages Lena expresses her awareness of the "lucky position" she and people with similar background are in. She knows that - unlike others who lost their home and were forced to leave - she could always return to Germany

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<sup>42</sup>Original: "Migration nicht mehr zwangsläufig an den Verlust der vertrauten Umgebung und menschlicher Beziehungen gekoppelt. Der Begriff Transmigration will zum Ausdruck bringen, daß in heutiger Zeit viele Migranten nicht die Brücken zur Heimat abbrechen, und sich in der Fremde neu akklimatisieren, assimilieren und re-sozialisieren (...), sondern in mehreren Gesellschaften gleichzeitig, also transnational, leben. (...) Migranten wären dann nicht mehr als Entwurzelte (...), sondern als an mehreren Orten Verwurzelte zu begreifen.", in: Schellenberger 2011, p. 12 f., translated by author.

<sup>43</sup>Lena: Ehm, und dass man halt als Halb-Deutscher-Halb-Finne eigentlich in der glücklichen Lage ist, ständig halt da hingehen zu können, ja, also, ich denke immer an Menschen, die ihr Land verlassen *müssen* und dieses Heimatgefühl nicht wieder bekommen, jemals, das ist, ehm, dieses Abgeschnitten-Sein von einem Teil von einem Selbst. Und ja, deshalb finde ich's — also wir sind so in einer so glücklichen Lage, also wir halb-deutsch, halb-finnisch.

I.: Hm, weil man auch wählen kann...

Lena: Man kann wählen, man kann alles aufsuchen, man wird jetzt nicht — ich bin nie blöd angedredet worden, was man eigentlich hier macht, das ist — Jemand, der schwarz ist, der muss sich das wahrscheinlich drei mal am Tag anhören, was er eigentlich in Finnland macht...

or then back to Finland. She knows that her migration to Finland does not have to be final or unchangeable and that she could easily release her *on-hold* return to Germany if she wanted to. Lena's words show what also other interviewees of mine seemed to possess, namely a "mobile mindset".

## Mobile mindset

The possibility to just move to Germany or Finland had considerable impact on how my interviewees perceived and positioned themselves. Most of them had put their focus on those two countries. They seemed to be the places they felt closest to, most likely due to their family background, those were the countries they had most experiences with, and thus many seemed to build or at least had built their life around them. However, some of the people I talked to also expressed a more general openness that they linked to having been brought up with mixed ethnic family background. This matches with findings of other studies, which claim "high mobility aspirations"<sup>44</sup> of people with migrant family history.

Coming back to Lena, she was wondering about exactly this thing, namely if having been raised as what she calls "bi-country-al"<sup>45</sup> made her more open in general. When I asked her if she could imagine going back to Germany, she explained:

Lena: I can imagine everything. Well, I can also imagine going somewhere completely different. I just started (...) learning Portuguese and ehm, yes, it would be great to go somewhere completely different, to adjust myself to something different, to learn a new lan-

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<sup>44</sup>Juhasz, Anne/Mey, Eva: Die zweite Generation: Etablierte oder Aussenseiter? : Biographien von Jugendlichen ausländischer Herkunft, Wiesbaden 2003, p. 35.

<sup>45</sup>Lena: (...) manchmal hatte ich so dieses Gefühl, ob ich, ob man so ein bissl was anderes ist. (...) Also, mir ist oft dieses Zitat von Goethe, so "Zwei Seelen wohnen ach! in meiner Brust!", weil ich wusste nicht so ganz genau, was bin ich eigentlich? Bin ich jetzt deutsch? Bin ich finnisch? Aber das weiss ich eben auch nicht, ob das damit zusammen hängt, dass ich zweisprachig - oder zweiländerisch bin, oder dass ich, dass das meine Persönlichkeitseigenschaft ist - ich weiss nicht, wie man das unterscheiden kann. Ehm, dass ich immer das Gefühl hab', ein *bisschen* was ist anders bei mir.

guage, everything.

I.: Do you think, it's some kind of openness that you have, because you grew up between two cultures - or with two cultures, is that somehow —

Lena: Well.

I.: — that it made you a bit more open, did it?

Lena: I sometimes ask that myself if that's it or if it is simply some kind of personality traits. (...) <sup>46</sup>

At this moment Lena continues explaining that when she was younger, she always felt a bit different, living in what she describes as a at that point still "homogeneous" Germany. Also at a later point, when talking about behavioural patterns and character-traits, Lena again wondered how much of someone's personality is like that due to his background and to what extent (s)he is born with it. Even though Lena acknowledges that she might be more open, flexible or just a bit "different" than others, she leaves room for interpretation about the inter-connection of this and her "bi-country-al" background.

While in Lena's interview we can sense already some variation of a mobile mindset with her being curious and eager to move somewhere else, to a totally new place, another interviewee, Hauke, expresses such attitude to an extreme not present in any other discussion. Unlike it was the case with most of the people I talked to, who had the aforementioned focus on Germany and Finland, Hauke's life was coined by multiple international experiences. He was raised in various countries while having both Germany and Finland as stable *simultaneous* "base camps". He explains:

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<sup>46</sup>Lena: Ich kann mir alles vorstellen. Also, ich kann auch mir vorstellen, noch mal woanders hinzugehen. Ich hab' jetzt angefangen, (...) Portugiesisch zu lernen und ehm, ja, wär toll, nochmal irgendwo hinzugehen, sich nochmal auf irgendwas anderes einzustellen, eine neue Sprache zu lernen, alles.

I.: Meinst du, das ist so eine Offenheit, die du hast, weil du so zwischen zwei Kulturen - oder mit zwei Kulturen aufgewachsen bist, ist das irgendwie —

Lena: Naja.

I.: — dich weng offener gemacht hat, oder?

Lena: Frag' ich mich auch manchmal, ob das was ist oder ob das einfach so eine Persönlichkeitseigenschaft ist. (...)

Hauke: (...) In that sense, yes, Helsinki was always, is, some kind of base camp, on the other hand also the, that kind of calm anchor, Helsinki. [German city X] was, [X] was also some kind of base camp, has always been that, so one can't — I always say that I have two nationalities, two mother tongues, two homes, two teddy bears, two parents...<sup>47</sup>

Even though in the process of the interview, Hauke did refer to Germany and Finland as his points of orientation, his mobility was not confined to those. Already as a child, Hauke spent several years in countries other than Finland or Germany and obviously this experience shaped his character. As he pointed out at several points of the interview, Hauke considers himself to be a world citizen, questioning the whole idea behind nation-states. However, Hauke's reflections were not only about theoretical ideas on the world, but clearly also about him as a person and his personality. Besides that he refused to position himself in exclusively a "German", "Finnish" but also not a "German-Finnish" box, his mobile experiences in his childhood had a concrete impact on his later choices in life. Hauke studied in several different countries of the world and that this was not by coincidence, becomes clear when looking at his interview more into detail.

Already in the beginning when summarising his background, Hauke explains that after high school graduation, he would not have wanted to study in Finland, *because* he had stayed there the previous years and "actually wanted to leave again"<sup>48</sup>. However a certain study program was still convincing enough for him to study there, but nonetheless he spent several semesters at other universities abroad and explained:

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<sup>47</sup>Hauke: (...) Das heisst, ja, Helsinki war immer, ist, so eine Art Basislager, andererseits aber auch schon der, so dieses Ruhepol, Helsinki. [Deutsche Stadt X] war, [X] war auch so eine Art Basislager, auch schon immer gewesen, also kann man nicht — Ich sag' immer, ich hab' zwei Staatsangehörigkeiten, zwei Muttersprachen, zwei Zuhause, zwei Teddybären, zwei Elternteile...

<sup>48</sup>Hauke: (...) Ich wollte eigentlich nicht zurück nach Finnland, weil ich '98 bis 2004 in Finnland war und wollte eigentlich wieder weg, aber — rein inhaltlich war das [Studien-] Programm in [Finnische Stadt Y] (...) dann inhaltlich doch überzeugend (...).

Hauke: (...) Ehm, well, I wouldn't stand it for too long in Finland, well, then I'd rather go to Spain again or something like this or South America, to have a bit more life around me again.<sup>49</sup>

For Hauke this thought was not only about Finland, but a general feeling about not being able to stay at a place for too long:

Hauke: (...) That means, if I had to imagine that, regardless in which country, doesn't matter, and may it be ever so beautiful, the country, to stay somewhere forever or even only for five years, oah, I would suffocate! No, well, I definitely have to move around.<sup>50</sup>

As Hauke explains, he needs a change once in a while and in view of his very mobile childhood, in which he never stayed longer than a few years at one place, it seems natural that this mobile lifestyle eventually became part of his character. This does not only affect his own choice of being mobile, but goes further into the field of everyday preferences when living at a place:

Hauke: (...) and if I am in a group of people for example, where there are only Finns, when I'm surrounded only by Finns, then it's a bit too Finnish for me, so I — when I throw a party here - I do a lot, eh, organise events in Helsinki and I like keeping that always international. And not just because I see myself as an international world citizen, but also because for me an exclusively Finnish group would be a bit too boring.<sup>51</sup>

Upon my further request Hauke explained that his reflections are unproportionally focussed on Finns and Finland, since even though he had numerous trips to his second "base camp" in Germany, he yet did not live there as long as he had

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<sup>49</sup>Hauke: (...) Ehm, also, ich würde es jetzt nicht allzu lange in Finnland aushalten, also, da geh' ich mal lieber wieder nach Spanien oder irgendwie sowas oder Südamerika, um ein bisschen mehr Leben um mich zu haben.

<sup>50</sup>Hauke: (...) Das heisst, wenn ich mir jetzt vorstellen müsste, dass ich egal in welchem Land, egal, und wenn's noch so schön wäre, das Land, irgendwo für immer oder sogar auch nur fünf Jahre sein müsste, oah, da würde ich ja ersticken! Nee, also, da muss ich mich schon bewegen.

<sup>51</sup>Hauke: (...) und wenn ich dann zum Beispiel in einer Gruppe von Menschen bin, wo nur Finnen sind, wenn ich nur von Finnen umgeben bin, dann ist mir das dann etwas zu finnisch, also ich — wenn ich hier eine Party veranstalte - ich mach' ziemlich viel eh, veranstalte Events in Helsinki und ich mach' das immer ganz gerne international. Und eben nicht nur deswegen, weil ich selbst mich als internationaler world citizen sehe, sondern auch, weil eine rein finnische Gruppe ich meistens etwas zu langweilig finde.

lived in Finland. He tries to imagine the situation of being surrounded by only Germans and says that he would probably find it "odd" and assumes he would be ending up thinking: "Huh? How come everyone here is German? We are a global world, why are we only German?"<sup>52</sup> Hauke continues pondering that also in Germany he thinks he would "intuitively" be interested in foreigners there instead of German locals, and points out:

Hauke: (...) Or a mix in general, well I don't want to put it negatively, that I were *not* be interested in Finns or *not* in Germans or would be interested, but rather always some kind of, yes, in the end it all comes back to me not liking national borders. I like cultures, I like languages, I like everything else, but not national borders.<sup>53</sup>

Of all the people I talked to, Hauke was the one who had the strongest and most pronounced mobile mindset, who showed that he had reflected upon it a lot and led this mobile and transnational lifestyle consciously and deliberately. Most others had still put their focus on Germany and Finland as their orientation frameworks for life. It appears to be how Knut Petzold wrote, namely that it was more likely that "multiple local identifications emerge than one single cosmopolitical commitment to one overarching plane"<sup>54</sup>. Considering Hauke's background, which can be described as much more international than the background of my other interviewees, one could link his positioning as a world citizen to Deutsch's transactionalist theory (1957), in which he suggested that "transnational relations of national populations, such as frequent foreign travel, knowledge of foreign languages, and foreign friends have also been demonstrated

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<sup>52</sup>Hauke: (...) "Hä? Wieso sind hier eigentlich alle deutsch?! Wir sind doch eine globale Welt, wieso sind wir nur deutsch?" Also, das wär' dann komisch.

<sup>53</sup>Hauke: (...) Oder generell ein Mix, also ich will es nicht negativ ausdrücken, dass ich mich *nicht* für Finnen oder *nicht* für Deutsche interessieren würde oder interessieren täte, sondern immer eine gewisse, ja, letztendlich kommt es darauf zurück, dass ich Ländergrenzen nicht mag. Ich mag Kulturen, ich mag Sprachen, ich mag alles andere, aber keine Ländergrenzen.

<sup>54</sup>Petzold, Knut: *Mobilität und Identität. Eine theoretische und eine empirische Exploration am Beispiel multilokaler Akteure*. In: Hömke, Maik: *Mobilität und Identität. Widerspruch in der modernen Gesellschaft*, Wiesbaden 2013, p. 96, translated by author.

to increase identification with larger regional units"<sup>55</sup>. However, I also wish to remind of Val Colic-Peisker's reflections on the correlation between mobility and the extent of a personal "community commitment". Colic-Peisker asks if high mobility weakens a person's sense of community commitment and instead increases individualism, but as she continues, she acknowledges that it might be too simple to state that "in intensely mobile and relatively privileged professionals local and national identifications have been replaced by professional and cosmopolitan orientations".<sup>56</sup> The scope of this research is too small to make solid conclusions on this matter, but based on the material at hand it still seems that the level of a person's mobility and mobile lifestyle might have a significant effect on his/her self-consciousness as a "global citizen" or "cosmopolitanist".

## Conclusion

As the passages above intended to show, the fact that descendants of migrants, in this case of German-Finnish origin, were confronted with a great amount of mobility throughout their lives, had considerable impact on their own decisions, paths and positioning. As all of the people involved in this study were raised under the influence of two or even more cultural frameworks, ideas about themselves and about where they see their centre of life were formed in ways that are possibly different from people without such mixed family background.

Their relationship to the countries involved were intense, and, I argue, more emotional than if they had only been there on some weeks of school vacation.

Often this resulted in idealistic pictures of the "other country" and the wish to move there when grown up, followed by a disillusionment once they did. Others

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<sup>55</sup>Braun, Michael; and Müller, Walter: National and Transnational Identities of Intra-European Migrants. In: Höllinger, Franz (Ed.): Crossing borders, shifting boundaries : national and transnational identities in Europe and beyond ; Festschrift for Max Haller, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, p. 264.

<sup>56</sup>Colic-Peisker, Val: Crisis of Community in the Era of Mobility? In: Babacan, Alperhan: Migration, belonging and the nation state, Newcastle 2010, p. 79.

used the strategy of moving back and forth between the two countries, trying to find their place in life. While this is nothing uncommon for many people, for descendants of migrants the starting point is of different nature: expectations and strong emotions are involved, which stem from having grown up with both cultures and the knowledge that "this" is where part of the family comes from. Moreover, having such background also brings practical opportunities like being able to draw on a family network at the other place or owning an estate to which one could return to, which both function as concretisations of the otherwise emotional ties to a place. While most participants of the study had put their focus on Germany and Finland, few expressed a general openness to moving to new, unknown places.

The passages drawn upon illustrate how multifaceted paths of descendants of migrants can be. It is not enough to think of them in terms of "second generation migrants" living at the place where their parents once moved to, nor is it enough to see them as "return-migrants" if they decide to go to the country their parents came from. Reality is much more complex, the emotions and thoughts involved in decision-making and life-strategies are much more complex. It is necessary to consider the versatile variations in the life course of mobile people in order to promote an acceptance and understanding of what people might perceive as "habitually and culturally different"<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup>Berchem, David Johannes: *Wanderer zwischen den Kulturen : Ethnizität deutscher Migranten in Australien zwischen Hybridität, Transkulturation und Identitätskohäsion*, Bielefeld 2011, p. 613, translated by the author.

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