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Shifting Personal Brandscapes: Young Sojourners' Consumer Acculturation

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores additional acculturation agents and forces for young sojourners. In particular, this research focuses on how individual sojourners' consumer-brand relationships and personal brandscapes shift as result of temporary mobility. In addition, the impacts of the individual's sojourn on home and host others through gifting and the shared production and consumption of foods is investigated. Although consumer researchers have explored consumer socialisation and consumer-brand relationships intensively, the potential of these findings to inform consumer acculturation research has not been fully explored. A review of the literature reveals a gap with regard to how individuals' brand consumption and personal brandscapes are affected in temporary global mobility. To address this gap, this thesis has adopted a qualitative approach in the form of longitudinal research. In-depth interviews were conducted over a period of twenty months prior to, during and post-return of young consumers' temporary sojourns. Participant observation in the form of shopping with consumers and a netnography permitted the triangulation of data which was hermeneutically analysed. This analysis revealed that despite globalisation, differences do exist between home and host brandscapes, which can trigger the reliance on familiar home brands for pragmatic as well as emotional reasons. However, varying degrees of temporary relationships with locally available brands or local instantiations of global brands are also evident. The gifting of foods and other mundane products between sojourners and home and host others allows for the representation of different selves and for the creation, establishment, maintenance and modification of social bonds during and post sojourn. The exchange of branded products thereby lets those mundane items act as material acculturation agents. The findings further show that shared production and consumption of foods (mundane and extraordinary, home and host) acts as acculturation force which aids intercultural exchange and multicultural adaptation between sojourner, home and host others and other sojourners. This thesis concludes that brands can act as acculturation agents and the sharing of mundane consumption and production as an acculturation force in temporary sojourns.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my son, Mason.
You can achieve anything you set your mind and heart to!

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“One’s destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things.”

Henry Miller (1891-1980)

Obviously the intention of undertaking this PhD journey was to earn a degree at the end but the way to get there has been most insightful. I can honestly say I have come out the other end as a different person. It has been a long but very rewarding experience and certainly one that I could not have managed by myself! I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to various people that helped shape my PhD journey and me personally.

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

This chapter introduces this thesis. Key literature on personal brandscapes, consumer-brand relationships and consumer acculturation is briefly introduced. Then, the research context of sojourners is justified. Next, the research objective and questions are outlined before an overview of the research methodology is provided. The importance of this research and its contributions are highlighted. Finally, the structure of the thesis is outlined.

1.2. Background and Importance of Research

Brands are ubiquitous and prevalent in our daily lives (Biel, 1993). To cope with the totality of brands available, consumers create their own mental marketplace of preferred brands – a perceptual space referred to as personal brandscape (Biel, 1991, 1993; Cristol & Sealey, 2000; Fournier, 1998; Mendez, 2011; Sherry, 1998b). Research on consumer-brand relationships has found that consumers' identity concerns are experienced even in mundane and trivial everyday brand behaviours, which in turn provide meaning (Ashworth, Dacin, & Thomson, 2009; Escalas & Bettman, 2009; Fournier, 1998, 2009; Reimann & Aron, 2009). Consumers' personal brandscapes and their brand relationships allow them to navigate through everyday life with the assurance that their key brands will provide the essential tools to resolve arising life themes.

However, familiar brands might not be readily available in mobility. The increasing prevalence of global citizenship, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism due to blurred borders has led to the investigation of permanent immigrants' consumer acculturation (Appadurai, 1990; Askegaard, Arnould, & Kjeldgaard, 2005; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1989, 1994). Increasingly, young consumers undertake temporary cross-border exchanges ranging from international exchange semesters, over work placements abroad and gap year travels (Brooks & Waters, 2009; J. L. Cox, 1988; Waters, Brooks, & Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). These longer-term but temporary encounters with local cultures require the transitory acculturation to the host country whilst knowing that a return to the home country is foreseeable. It is not yet known if and how consumers' personal brandscapes ultimately shift due to the resultant consumer acculturation to the host culture. Furthermore, it is unknown if these shifts

influence extraordinary consumption choices and/or shifts in consumers' mundane everyday consumption.

1.2.1. Brandscapes and Consumer-Brand Relationships

The total brandscape, the branded landscape comprising all brands available to a consumer, is salient for consumers especially when they shop for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) (Biel, 1993). To cope with the large number of brands available, consumers create their own personal brandscapes with brands placed in the evoked, inept and inert awareness sets, constructing a mental marketplace that can be called upon whenever necessary (Biel, 1991, 1993; Cristol & Sealey, 2000; Fournier, 1998; Mendez, 2011; Sherry, 1998b). Consumer socialization studies have long evaluated the ways in which one's family, peers, institutions and traditional media influence and shape consumption processes and behaviour within one society (Peñaloza, 1989). Predominantly through parents who act as prime socialization agents, young people learn skills and gain knowledge necessary to function as consumers in the marketplace (S. Ward, 1974). Subsequently, they establish consumer-brand relationships based on the preferences of their parents and root their identity concerns in "something as mundane and trivial as everyday brand behaviours" (Fournier, 1998, p. 365). Additionally, those consumer-brand relationships add and structure meaning in a consumer's life and have the potential to change a person's self-concept, deliver on important life tasks and reward its members with security, guidance and assistance in everyday life (Ashworth, et al., 2009; Escalas & Bettman, 2009; Fournier, 1998, 2009; Kleine, Schultz-Kleine, & Kernan, 1992, 1993; Reimann & Aron, 2009). Consumer-brand relationships held within the personal brandscape allow consumers to navigate through branded landscapes and retailscapes and make consumption choices (Fournier, 1998; Fournier & Alvarez, 2010). However, personal brandscapes and consumer-brand relationships might possibly change when consumers move to live temporarily in another cultural setting.

1.2.2. Consumer Acculturation

As studies on cosmopolitanism, global citizenship and global nomadism have shown, people increasingly move between countries (Bardhi, Eckhardt, & Arnould, 2012; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Early research on acculturation stems from anthropology, sociology and psychology and has been defined as the clash of different cultures resulting in cultural change for all participating parties (Barnett, Broom, Siegel, &

Vogt, 1954; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Oberg, 1960; Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). Consumer behaviour researchers have since focussed on the process of movement and subsequent adaptation of consumers from one country to the consumer cultural environment of another country, a process termed consumer acculturation (Peñaloza, 1989, 1994). The key focus of consumer acculturation studies has been on permanent immigrants who voluntarily and permanently move to reside in another country. Initial work has mainly investigated immigrants moving to the United States (Desphande, Hoyer, & Donthu, 1986; Hirschman, 1981; Mehta & Belk, 1991; O'Guinn, Lee, & Faber, 1986; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994; Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999; Saegert, Hoover, & Hilger, 1985; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983b) whereas more recent papers have focussed on immigrants moving from and to non-North American countries (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Chytkova, 2011; Lindridge, Hogg, & Shah, 2004; Luedicke & Giesler, 2009; Sutton-Brady, Davis, & Jung, 2010).

Parsons and Bales (1955) and Ward (1974) evaluated the influence of socialisation agents such as parents, peers, social institutions (e.g. churches, schools) and traditional media on children's socialisation processes. (These researchers used the term "agents" to mean active influencers that affect acculturation experiences (Luedicke, 2011) rather than in the sense of consumer agency/efficacy. Consequently, this thesis also utilises the term "agents" to mean factors/influences). These were also regarded as the predominant influencers in the acculturation process both in the home and host country (O'Guinn & Faber, 1985; O'Guinn, Faber, & Rice, 1985; O'Guinn, et al., 1986; Peñaloza, 1989, 1994). The home and host country have long acted as the two prime overarching acculturation agents. However, Askegaard et al. (2005) found that consumers also possess a transnational understanding of cultural ideas and practices, thereby introducing transnational consumer culture as a third type of acculturation agent. Most recently, Luedicke (2011) challenged this concept of there being only three agents and included the relevance of additional acculturation agents such as neighbours, sales personnel or fellow brand enthusiasts who are not in constant and personal contact with the immigrant.

Prior consumer acculturation research has established various forms of attachment to and reliance on home artefacts. Permanent immigrants use symbolic possessions (e.g. photos, jewellery, etc.) and consumption to transport their selves during a geographic move (Mehta & Belk, 1991) whilst cosmopolitan consumers often unwillingly retain close emotional ties to home (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999) and constantly mobile global nomads form rather liquid relationships to cherished possessions (Bardhi, et al., 2012). Some more recent work has also uncovered how food consumption can be a particular source of nostalgia (Bardhi, Ostberg, &

Bengtsson, 2010; Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012). However, no particular attention has been paid to consumers' relationships with fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) and FMCG brands that are used on a day-to-day basis, and which are regarded as mundane and ordinary, in mobility. This omission seems surprising, given that research on brands as socialisation agents has been conducted (Moore, Wilkie, & Lutz, 2002). Luedicke (2011) called for action to identify and investigate how more distant human, non-cultural acculturation forces and material acculturation agents affect acculturation experiences. This thesis therefore aspires to explore if, and how, brands and branded products facilitate the sojourn experience of young consumers.

1.2.3. Sojourners

In comparison to studies of permanent immigrants' consumer acculturation, only a few consumer behaviour researchers have investigated the experience of sojourners or short-term visitors living temporarily in a host country for specific reasons, for example expatriates, guest workers, gap year travellers, missionaries or financial and technical aid workers (Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1997; Lee & Woosnam, 2010; Lyons, Hanley, Wearing, & Neil, 2012). Their stay can be defined as temporary between-society contact and may have transformative potential indicated by a possibly increased cross-cultural understanding (L. Brown & Graham, 2009). Sojourners are not to be mistaken for tourists even though both groups visit a host country voluntarily and temporarily. However, tourists usually stay for a shorter, transitory period of time where key attractions and sites are visited and little immersion into the local culture is needed (Bardhi, et al., 2010; Bengtsson, Bardhi, & Venkatraman, 2010; Berno & Ward, 2005; C. Ward, 2008).

Four studies on sojourners are particularly relevant to this research. Thompson and Tambyah (1999) have focussed on sojourners' cosmopolitanism by exploring how affluent professional expatriates from various countries acculturate in Singapore (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). One study has focussed on the conjunction of global brandscapes and consumer acculturation through the investigation of international exchange students in a multicultural environment (Rahmann & Cherrier, 2009). And lastly, Bardhi et al. (2012) explored the attachment to and relationships with home in the context of global nomads while Figueiredo and Uncles (Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014) focused on temporal dimensions of global mobility. This thesis extends these four studies and contributes to research on the consumer acculturation of sojourners. It does so by focussing on their mundane everyday consumption of fast-moving consumer goods rather than on their participation in

extraordinary consumption, rituals and events (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Because acculturation is a process, this research utilises data collected longitudinally rather than providing one-off snapshots of the sojourn experience.

1.2.4. Research Context

The quest to find an appropriate job (particularly for younger consumers) often results in a temporary stay in another country. These could be international exchange semesters, overseas internships or experiences gained during an overseas experience (“OE”), such as taking a gap year, voluntourism, backpacking and working holidays (L. Brown & Graham, 2009; Larsen, Øgaard, & Brun, 2011; Lyons, et al., 2012; UNWTO, 2010). Even though computer-savvy Generation Y is not as affluent as Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999) professional expatriates, they are more mobile and adventurous and due to their age-related lack of responsibilities (for example caring for a family, paying mortgages etc.) it is easier for them to live, work and travel in another geographical setting and culture (UNWTO, 2010).

By and large, worldwide youth travel is steadily increasing with a predicted rise from approximately 190 million international youth trips in 2010 to almost 300 million youth trips in 2020. In 2010, those youth trips accounted for 20% of total international travel of 940 million trips (WYSE, 2012) and it is expected that youth travel will overtake business travel by 2015 (WYSE, 2014). In 2014, the youth and student travel segment accounted for US\$203 billion in monetary value (WYSE, 2014). This study investigates young female German sojourners working as au pairs¹ in New Zealand. Au pairs act predominantly as caretakers for the host family’s children; however, the inclusion of the au pair as an integral part of the family is expected (AuPairWorld.net, 2011). Unlike backpackers (Larsen, et al., 2011), gap year volunteers or voluntourists (Lyons, et al., 2012) and most tertiary international exchange students in the same age range (L. Brown & Graham, 2009; Waters, et al., 2011), au pairs live with and work for a New Zealand family in a fixed location where they need to integrate and adjust to the family’s customs, routines and mundane activities. Therefore, au pairs provide a valid subgroup of sojourners for the investigation of the mundane consumption of brands in mobility.

¹ *French*: on equal terms; young person between 18 and 30 years who becomes a temporary member of the host family; take care of the children and help with light housework; opportunity to improve language skills and get acquainted with a new culture; “Having an au pair is like having an older daughter instead of an employee” (AuPairWorld.net, 2011)

1.3. Research Objective and Questions

As noted previously, personal brandscape shifts are an understudied phenomenon. Further, consumer-brand relationships in mobility have received only limited attention. Using young sojourners (in itself an understudied group) to investigate how temporary mobility influences mundane everyday consumption allows to shed light on various aspects of consumer acculturation. Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to combine findings on personal brandscapes with the consumer acculturation of sojourners. The overall objective of this research is **to explore additional acculturation agents and forces for mobile, young sojourners**. More specifically, this thesis will seek answers to the following three specific research questions:

Research Question 1

- How does sojourners' mundane everyday consumption of their personal brands change?

Research Question 2

- How does gifting (of material items) facilitate the sojourn experience?

Research Question 3

- How does the shared production and consumption aid the sojourners' acculturation and re-acculturation process?

1.4. Research Methodology

This thesis utilised a qualitative research approach to explore sojourners' shifting personal brandscapes. Longitudinal research was conducted over 20 months in both New Zealand and Germany. Purposive sampling was employed to investigate the specific phenomenon of young sojourners staying within a host family and being exposed to the family's domestic consumption practices. Out of 72 replies to a research advertisement in three Facebook groups for German au pairs in New Zealand, 23 participants were selected. The informants were all female, ranged from 18-26 years of age, were from various rural and urban areas in Germany, came from middle-class families and lived in various rural and urban areas in New Zealand for between five and twelve months. Data was collected using multiple semi-structured depth interviews, which were conducted either in person or via Skype prior to, during and post-return of participants' sojourns. The initial in-depth interviews began using grand tour questions (McCracken, 1988), subsequently allowing the

informants to lead the interview discussions. Follow-up interviews were semi-structured and based on the preceding interview(s) to gain deeper insights into the development of the informants' sojourn experiences. Additionally, shopping with consumers (SWC) was used to observe, comprehend and illuminate the actual consumption experiences and practices (Otnes, McGrath, & Lowrey, 1995). Because the researcher is also female, young adult and German, it was possible to take advantage of researcher-participant congruity (Otnes, McGrath, & Lowrey, 1995) to quickly establish rapport with the informants. Extensive field notes were taken after each shopping trip, which generally lasted between one to two hours. Further data was collected to supplement the main findings using a netnography (Kozinets, 2002) of the three au pair Facebook groups and through personal messages (email, Facebook, text-messaging) between the researcher and participants.

Triangulation was ensured by employing multiple methods as well as through the independent analysis of the data by the researcher, supervisor and co-supervisor and the subsequent establishment of relevant and recurring themes. Data analysis of the transcripts and field notes was iterative and undertaken based on the principles of the hermeneutic circle (Spiggle, 1994). Data was first open-coded before more focused coding was employed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The data collection and analysis process were continued until theoretical saturation was reached and no new insights could be discovered.

1.5. Contributions

The contributions this thesis makes are three-fold. First, this thesis integrates research on personal brandscapes and consumer acculturation, which has so far been largely overlooked in consumer research. It therein highlights the importance of personal brands and consumer-brand relationships formed prior to, during and post-sojourn. Second, it provides a variety of managerial implications for marketing practitioners, retailers, and youth and student travel agencies. Third, the use of a longitudinal research design to explore the sojourn experience pre, during and post has implications for methodology.

1.6. OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

Following this introduction, Chapter Two evaluates the academic and non-academic literature pertinent to the topic of this thesis. Firstly the chapter elaborates on key literature on brandscapes and the second part focuses on consumer acculturation. Chapter Three elaborates on the research approach used to investigate the topic. Chapter Four presents the findings

accumulated during data collection, presented in three different sections which are each based on one of the research questions. Chapter Five discusses the findings, presents the theoretical, practical and methodological contributions, limitations, recommendations for future research and the final conclusions.

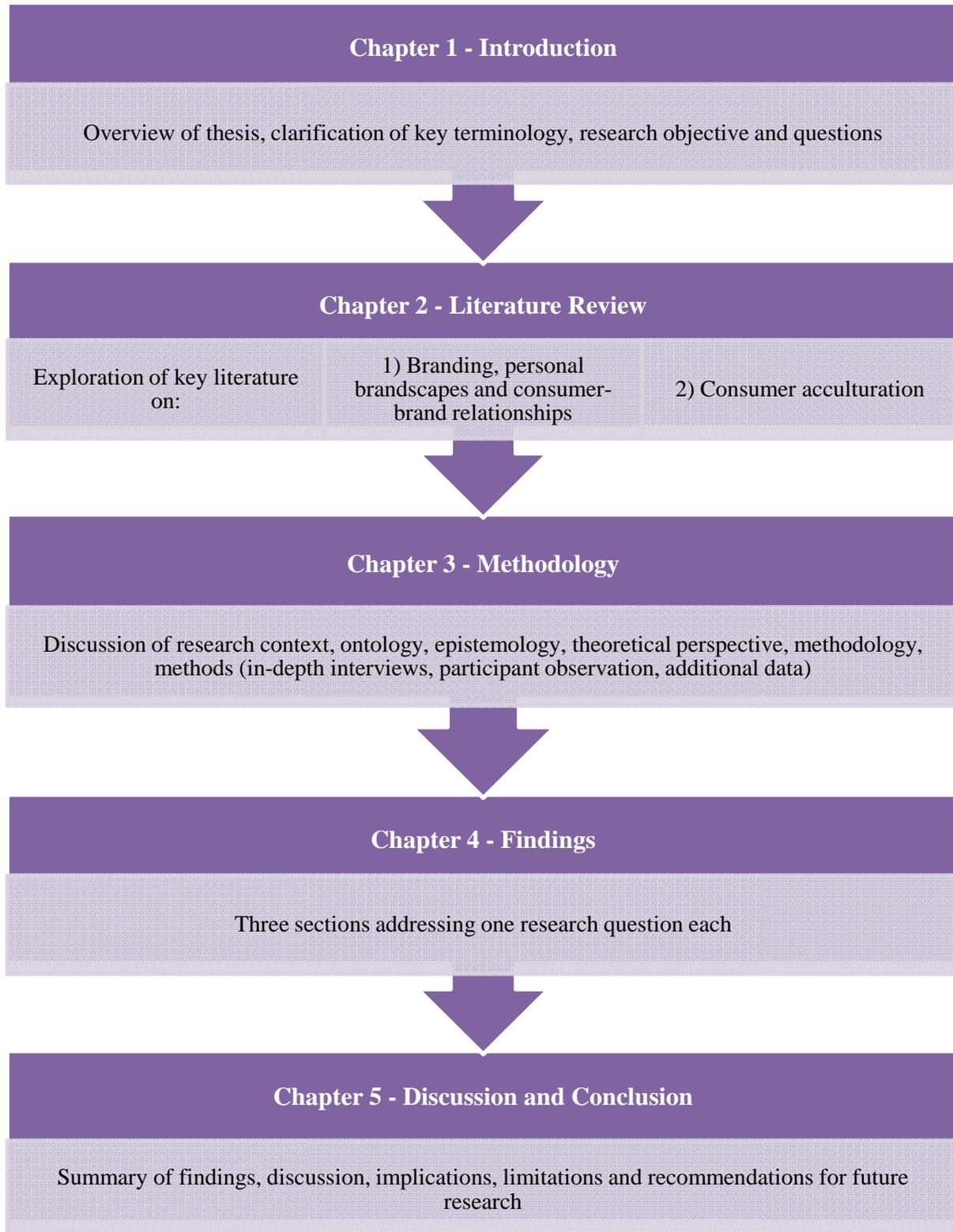


Figure 1: Thesis Outline

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview

Due to the plethora of brands available in today's global world, the experience of the natural landscape has shifted to an experience of branded landscape or brandscape. To cope with the totality of brands available, consumers create their own mental marketplaces of preferred brands – perceptual spaces referred to as personal brandscapes (Biel, 1991, 1993; Cristol & Sealey, 2000; Fournier, 1998; Mendez, 2011; Sherry, 1998b). Research on consumer-brand relationships has found that consumers' identity concerns are facilitated in mundane and trivial everyday brand behaviours which in turn provide meaning to a person's life (Ashworth, et al., 2009; Escalas & Bettman, 2009; Fournier, 1998, 2009; Kleine, et al., 1993; Reimann & Aron, 2009). Consumers' personal brandscapes and the brand relationships thus formed allow for the navigation through everyday life with the assurance that these brands will provide them with the essential tools to resolve arising life themes. After a brief definition of the term 'brand', the first part of this literature review covers research on total brandscapes, retailscapes and personal brandscapes as well as consumer-brand relationships.

Consumers' perceptual brand networks might not be readily available when moving to a foreign country: The constant rise in global citizenship, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism due to blurred borders and non-existing boundaries has led to the investigation of permanent immigrants' consumer acculturation (Appadurai, 1990; Askegaard, et al., 2005; Lyons, et al., 2012; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1989, 1994). However, consumers increasingly undertake temporary cross-border exchanges ranging from international exchange semesters for work placements abroad to gap year voluntourism (Lee & Woosnam, 2010; Lyons, et al., 2012). This type of temporary encounter or sojourn with the local culture requires transitory acculturation to the host country whilst knowing that a return to the home country is expected and imminent. Therefore, the second part of this literature review will focus on acculturation, consumer acculturation and the arising research stream of postassimilationism. The various types of acculturating groups will be addressed before focussing on the distinction between home and host country and lastly, acculturation agents. The overall literature review will set the stage for the following chapters by conceptually framing existing research around the three research questions.

PART I – BRANDSCAPES

2.2. Brands Defined

Historically, the word ‘brand’ is of Germanic origin and related to the German word ‘brand’ or Old Norse ‘brandr’, meaning ‘to burn’ (Blackett, 2003, p. 5; OxfordDictionaries, 2011). The first authors to formally define ‘brand name’ were Gardner and Levy (1955):

“A brand name is more than the label employed to differentiate among the manufacturers of a product. It is a complex symbol that represents a variety of ideas and attributes. It tells the consumer many things, not only by the way it sounds [...] but, more importantly, via the body of associations it has built up and acquired as a public object over a period of time.” (Gardner & Levy, 1955, p. 35)

Nowadays, a variety of definitions exist for the term brand but the predominant definition is the characterisation by the American Marketing Association’s (AMA) (2011):

“A name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. The legal term for brand is trademark. A brand may identify one item, a family of items, or all items of that seller. If used for the firm as a whole, the preferred term is trade name.”

In today’s developed economies, consumers have a vast amount of choices with regard to potential brands they could use to fulfil a need or satisfy a want. Not only do many different companies manufacture similar products, but additionally those companies have various features and characteristics, making it harder than ever for consumers to choose the ‘right one’. “The development of branding has in many cases led to the creation of new ‘branded environments’” (Moor, 2007, p. 65) and the experience of branded landscapes rather than natural landscapes. This emphasis on branded environments builds a bridge to the next section on brandscapes. However, to be able to fully comprehend this term, literature on the underlying concepts of atmospherics and servicescapes needs to be reviewed briefly first.

2.3. The Different Scapes

2.3.1. Atmospherics and Servicescapes

The term servicescape was coined by Bitner (1992) and is defined as the manmade, built environment as opposed to the natural or social environment. The intention of this constructed physical surrounding or space is to facilitate commercial exchanges between organisations and consumers (Bitner, 1992; Kozinets et al., 2002). Bitner (1992) derived her definition from the limited stream of research, at the time, conducted on atmospherics, a term

based on Martineau's (1958) belief that retail outlets possess a distinctive personality and Kotler's (1974) conception of ambient influences (Aubert-Gamet & Cova, 1999; Houliez, 2010; Kozinets, et al., 2002; Sherry, 1998c; Venkatraman & Nelson, 2008). Since then, studies on atmospherics and servicescapes have been intertwined and jointly allowed researchers to investigate and understand the effects of the built environment on consumption behaviour.

Bitner (1992) recognised that "particularly in Marketing, there is a surprising lack of empirical research or theoretically based frameworks addressing the role of physical surroundings in consumption settings" (Bitner, 1992, p. 57). In her early work on 'servicescapes' she found that consumers' experiences in marketplaces are based on three categories of tangible service evidence, namely people, physical cues and process (Bitner, 1992; Sherry, 1998c; Venkatraman & Nelson, 2008). Expanding and elaborating on Bitner's (1992) conceptualisation, Sherry (1998a) focused on the built environment of the marketplace by describing it as a continuum or being placed along two dimensions. The first dimension depicts the malleability or tractability of the marketplace which ranges from the natural or primordial environment to the cultural or humanly designed and built environment. Moving from the natural to the cultural end of the continuum, the marketplace grows more artificial and plastic. The second dimension portrays the material or tangible quality of the marketplace, ranging from physical to ethereal or metaphysical consumption sites. Moving along this continuum from physical to ethereal presents the "shift from an emplaced "somewhere" to an unplaced "nowhere", their local geography becoming less charted as we proceed" (Sherry, 1998a, p. 338). He further suggested four types of scapes in his work to illustrate the combination of the two dimensions and their fragmentations:

1. **Landscape:** natural, physical marketplace, i.e. brandfests, wilderness (J. Allen, Massiah, Cascio, & Johnson, 2008; Arnould, Price, & Tierney, 1998; McAlexander & Schouten, 1998)
2. **Marketscape:** cultural, physical marketplace, i.e. retail- or home-based servicescapes
3. **Cyberscape:** cultural, ethereal marketplace, i.e. direct marketing online (Venkatesh, 1998)
4. **Mindscape:** natural, ethereal marketplace, i.e. individual values, meanings (to be elaborated on later in this literature review)

Kozinets et al. (2002) concisely portrayed the interplay between those dimensions and retail themes in a figure (see Figure 2) as depicted below.

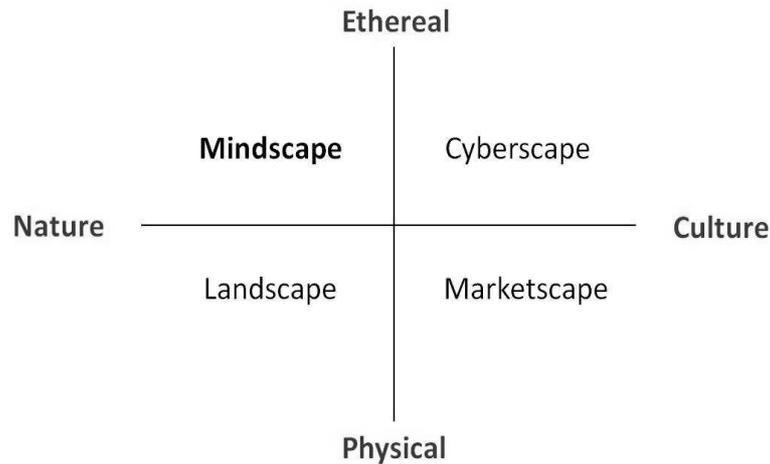


Figure 2: Marketplace Dimensions and Retail Themes

[Adapted from Kozinets et al. (2002)]

The above figure, based on Sherry's (1998a) work as well as Bitner's (1992) conceptualisation of the term servicescape, enhances consumer research by elaborating on the ever-increasing influence of commercial spaces designed and constructed by marketers. However, furthering the understanding of how those designed and built spaces enable consumers to produce meanings, personally significant experiences and purposes for themselves by engaging in the 'servicescape' has only been allowed by the "cross-pollination of ideas and constructs between ['atmospherics' and 'servicescapes']" (Venkatraman & Nelson, 2008, p. 1012). Specifically, Sherry (1998b) was the first to investigate the hyper retail environment for one brand and therein, coined the terms emplacement and brandscape. The former, emplacement, is derived from a strategy called meaning displacement by McCracken (1988) and implies that "culture instantiates the mundane [...] by encoding its folkways in holographic fashion into the material vehicles of social life, to be recovered discontinuously, and often outside conscious awareness [...]" (Sherry, 1998b, pp. 111-112). The emphasis of emplacement is placed on the meanings inherited in brands for consumers and how those brands and their meaning are able to bridge the gap between real and ideal perceptions. This notion is closely connected to brandscapes which will be further elaborated on in the next section.

2.3.2. Total Brandscape and Retailscapes

As previously mentioned, Sherry (1985) coined the term brandscape which literally means brand and landscape, or branded landscape. However, the first author to define the meaning of the word brandscape in detail was Biel (1991, 1993; Sherry, 1998c). Brands have

long become ubiquitous, not only in the United States as the author stated at the time (Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver, 2010a). Generally speaking, the overabundance of brands ultimately results in a rich brandscape. Biel (1991, 1993) defines this total brandscape as the totality of brands across the sum of all brands available to consumers. Later, Power and Hauge (2008) rightly added that consumers are increasingly unaware of the preponderance of brands and their influence on consumers' lives, using the example of how Levis and Gillette clothe and clean consumers respectively (Power & Hauge, 2008). Similar to Biel (1991, 1993), the authors state that the experience of the natural landscape is increasingly becoming an experience of brandscape based on the number of brands surrounding consumers in their daily lives, again using the combination of the terms brand and landscape (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989; Power & Hauge, 2008; Sherry, 1998b).

The most-cited definition of brandscape, however, stems from Sherry (1998b) who subsequently described it in a more complex way by defining it as a "material and symbolic environment that consumers build with marketplace products, images, and messages, that they invest with local meaning, and whose totemic significance largely shapes the adaptation consumers make to the modern world" (Sherry, 1998b, p. 112). The author's work is based on a study of Nike Town Chicago, where he investigated the influences of designed environments on brand equity and specifically, the more mystical dimensions of brand identity. Sherry (1998b) found that consumers feel delighted when discovering the greater significance of a company's attention to detail, for example by creating a branded retail outlet (hereafter called *retailscape*) which ultimately leads to the shaping of relationships with brands. In his example of Nike Town Chicago, consumers are invited and drawn in to enhance their brandscape by engaging with this diverse environment (Sherry, 1998b). Similarly, Diamond et al.'s (2009) study of the American Girl Place flagship store, also in Chicago, found that this *retailscape* enables the co-creation of brand meaning by consumers rather than dominating and constraining it. They state that the "emplaced enactment of gender and family binds consumers to the brand and enriches the experience of other consumers" (Diamond, et al., 2009, p. 126), focussing on Sherry's (1998b) definition of emplacement. The connection with a brand through emplaced enactment can result in the feeling of belongingness to a certain brand community in which consumers feel emotionally connected to each other (Cova, Pace, & Park, 2007; Diamond, et al., 2009; Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001; Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001) introduced the term brand community and defined it as "a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of the brand. [...] it is marked by a

shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility” (Muñiz & O’Guinn, 2001, p. 412).

Closely related to this research, Thompson and Arsel (2004) developed the construct of the ‘hegemonic brandscape’. The authors investigated how global brands structure the expressions of cultural heterogeneity and consumers’ corresponding experiences of globalisation (the intersection of local cultures and global brands). Shifting the central focus of a merely consumer centric perspective to the inclusion of hegemonic influences of global brands on local competitors and the meanings consumers obtain from experiences with those global servicescapes, Thompson and Arsel (2004) formulated the following definition of hegemonic brandscape: “A hegemonic brandscape is a cultural system of servicescapes that are linked together and structured by discursive, symbolic, and competitive relationships to a dominant (market-driven) experiential brand” (Thompson & Arsel, 2004, p. 632). Keeping in line with Thompson and Arsel’s (2004) focus on a global world but taking the individual consumer more into consideration is Salzer-Mörling and Strannegård’s (2007) research in which they define brandscape as “a culture or a market where brands and brand-related items such as signs and logos increasingly dominate everyday life” (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård, 2007, p. 412) and in which consumers use brands as aesthetic expressions but also as markers of identification. For the authors, the term brandscape encompasses the social, economic and cultural landscape in which brands are produced and consumed and where they are infused with ideology and meaning by consumers’ experiences (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård, 2007; Sherry, 1998b; Thompson & Arsel, 2004). Even though the above authors focussed predominantly on total brandscapes or retailscapes, they all included some aspect of meaning inheritance imposed on a brand by its consumers. This leads on to the next section where the prime focus will be on the consumer and his or her perception and inclusion of brands into their so-called personal brandscape.

2.3.3. Personal Brandscape

In the context of repositioning a brand, Cristol and Sealey (2000) define brandscape as the “landscape for a traveller in the marketplace” (Cristol & Sealey, 2000, p. 141). Taking a purely consumer-centric perspective, the authors further divide brandscape into two counterparts:

1. **Passive brandscape:** Landscape of all brands of which the consumer is aware (a general view on the overall branded landscape as can be seen, for example, in a supermarket (similar to total brandscape))

2. **Active brandscape:** Landscape of all relevant brands in appropriate categories; “that is, brands with the potential to be in the customer’s purchase decision consideration set, now or in the future, due to currently existing customer perceptions” (Cristol & Sealey, 2000, p. 141)

To cope with the totality of brands available (the passive brandscape), consumers select an active brandscape in which to live. This active brandscape is created of all brand categories carried in a consumer’s mind (Cristol & Sealey, 2000) and has recently been referred to as mental marketplace of consumers (Mendez, 2011), which is similar to Fournier’s (1998) introduction of the personal brandscape and related to one of Sherry’s (1998a) four servicescapes as outlined earlier (the mindscape). In this context, the definition of mindscape by Maarten Jacobs, a researcher focussing on psychological and social aspects of landscape, nature and wildlife, appears relevant in providing a greater understanding of the term. He places mindscape in the realms of inner reality rather than physical or social reality and defines the term as “the landscape as people experience it and one that is very personal in meaning. It is the landscape produced by imagination and meaning-giving processes. Mindscape is a system of essentially individual values, judgements, feelings and meanings that are related to the landscape. It exists in the minds of individuals” (Jacobs, 2004, p. 29).

Even though the four aforementioned terms essentially describe the same phenomenon, the term personal brandscape will be used throughout this thesis as it reflects best how a perceptual place, the consumer’s mind, is furnished by brand symbols, from the brands consumers frequently use to those that are adjacent to them, for example their favourite brands (evoked set) opposed to brands they would never buy (inept set). The set of brands prevalent in a consumer’s mind allows the creation of a mental picture of their selves and gives others an idea of who they are and how they might behave (Cristol & Sealey, 2000; Fournier, 1998; Power & Hauge, 2008). Discussing possessions and their influence on individuals, Belk (1988) was the first consumer behaviourist to identify how possessions define people and remind them of who they are. Whereas Belk (1988) took a broad perspective on possessions in general, Biel (1993) specified how brands in particular “not only furnish the environment in which I live, but they also enrobe me, and by doing so, help define who I am” (Biel, 1993, p. 68). Brands package meaning, thereby creating a feeling of security and assurance, for example for visitors in a new city or foreign country, and acting as a shortcut to make choices easier and eliminate the need to undergo a feature-by-feature analysis of category alternatives. This branded security blanket, as the researcher terms it, makes it easier for consumers to navigate through a rich total brandscape, especially when

temporarily moving to a foreign country. The notion of creating personal ties and relationships with brands and how those influence many aspects of a consumer's life will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

Summarising this section, it has been established that the totality of all brands available to consumers, for example in a supermarket setting, can be called total brandscape. Further, many studies have focussed on branded environments, (flagship) brand stores and brandfests which can be combined under the term retailscapes as they ultimately concern the physical (retail) setting in which brands are promoted. However, in this research the personal brandscape is a prime focus, balancing concepts of a mental marketplace, active brandscape and mindscape. Specifically, brands that are most prevalent in a consumer's mind are of key interest.

2.4. Consumer-Brand Relationships

The focus of this thesis is on the individual consumer who enters an unfamiliar total brandscape and needs to adjust his personal brandscape by additionally navigating through retailscapes. Fournier's (1998) seminal article on brand relationships in the *Journal of Consumer Research* was the first paper to specifically focus on consumer-brand relationships and has been cited over 4,500 times. Fournier (1998) intended to counter the scarcity of "empirical research concerning relationships formed at the level of the brand" by developing "a solid conceptual foundation from which brand relationship theory can be cultivated and to illustrate portions of this framework as a way of demonstrating utility of the consumer-brand relationship idea as a whole" (pp. 343-44). Her main research question focussed on whether, how, why and what forms of ongoing relationships consumers seek and value with brands. Informed mainly by research on brand loyalty, Fournier (1998) looked at the brand as relationship partner similar to relationships facilitated in the interpersonal domain and established a typology of consumer-brand relationship forms based on three in-depth life history case studies with female consumers. Her 15 consumer-brand relationship forms can be grouped under four distinct relationship types (marriage, friendship, "the dark side", and temporally oriented relationships) which are comparable to person-person or consumer-consumer relationships. The brand marriage is the relationship type that has been studied most frequently in consumer behaviour.

In her original work, Fournier (1998) emphasised the need to recognise that brands as relationship partners must provide some sort of benefit for the consumer; otherwise, a

relationship will not be sought. However, those benefits are often only visible once a consumer picks a brand, from the vast amount available in the total brandscape, and enters into a relationship with the brand by placing it in his or her evoked awareness set or personal brandscape. McEwen (2005) picks up the notion of the total brandscape viewing it as a dating dance floor where brands struggle to be noticed by consumers to be invited to a first dance or date. He visualises the pathway to be taken to establish a strong consumer-brand relationship. An adapted version of his graphic is depicted in the following figure.

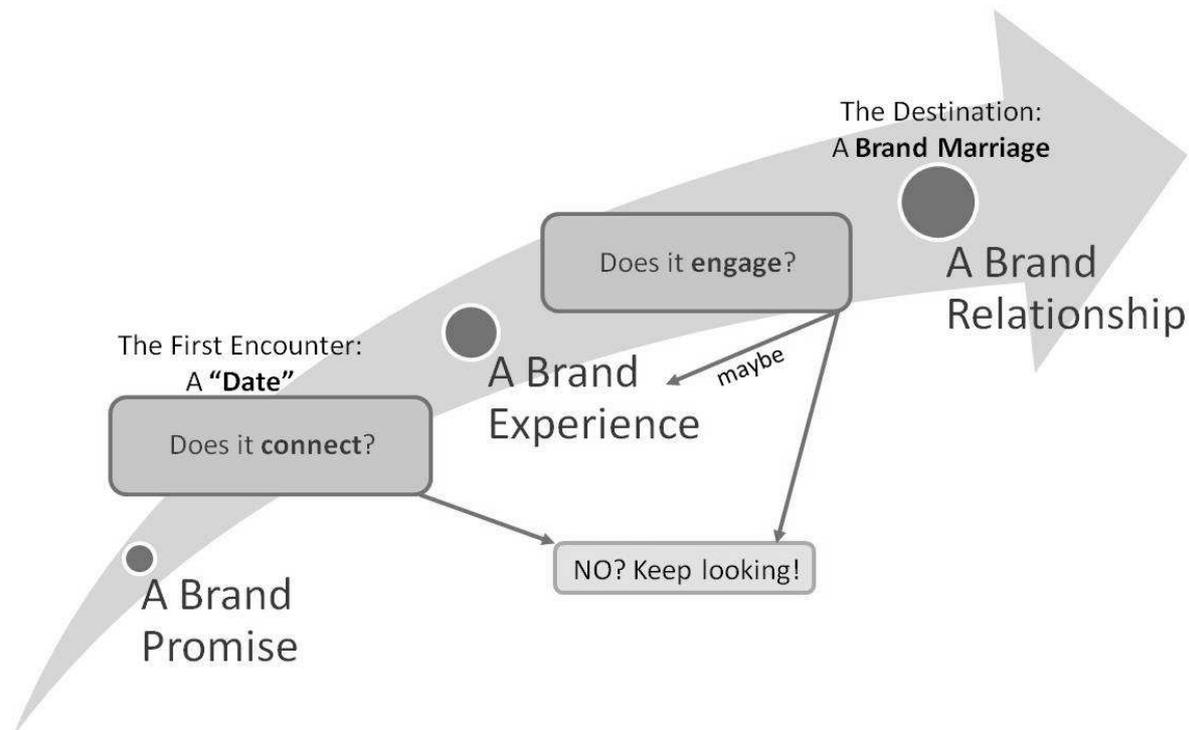


Figure 3: The Consumer-Brand Relationship Path

[Adapted from McEwen (2005, p. 25)]

Figure 3 shows that a first date with a brand can lead the consumer to take on the brand's promise and convert it into a full brand experience through going on second and third dates. If the brand can further manage to engage the consumer time and time again, a brand marriage and therein a strong, lasting brand relationship can be established, which is grounded in trust, commitment, alignment and mutuality – indicating the two-way or give-and-take concept of a relationship. Similar to Fournier (1998), McEwen (2005) acknowledges that the brand must deliver benefits to the consumer to continuously engage him or her in the relationship. If the brand does not deliver to its initial promise, the consumer will 'keep looking' for a more suitable partner on the 'dating dance floor' resulting in the divorce from or 'de-friending' of the brand (McEwen, 2005). To counter a possible divorce or separation,

brands will need to be able to live up to consumers' expectations. However, if consumers engage with brands on a relational level and one or more of those expectations are not fulfilled, the consumer-brand relationship form will ultimately change or vanish once and for all, resulting in the placement of brands in the inept awareness set.

A state-of-the-art handbook on consumer-brand relationships is started off by Fournier (2009) herself with a chapter called "Lessons learned about consumers' relationships with their brands". The key idea to this section is the revision and continual strong emphasis on three core tenets, namely the purposiveness, multiplexity and process-orientation of consumer-brand relationships (Figure 4).

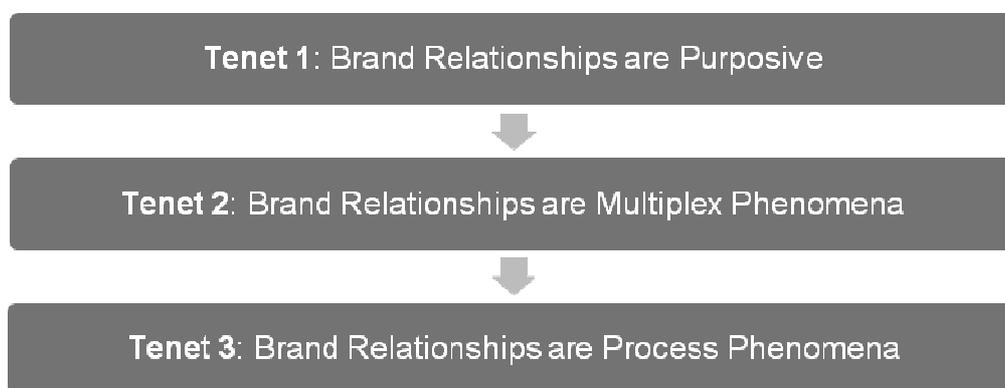


Figure 4: Brand Relationship Tenets

Overall, mundane and everyday activities "constitute the bulk of daily life" and mundane everyday consumption in particular "occurs while and as an integral part of negotiating these daily life-tasks" (Kleine, et al., 1992, p. 411). Fournier (1998) posits that brand relationships are purposive because they can add and structure meaning in a person's life, change self-concepts, help resolve life themes and deliver on important life tasks and relationships. Strong consumer-brand relationships may add significant meaning to the lives of consumers who engage in them. Further, the second tenet argues that different facets exist that facilitate and distinguish people's brand relationships. Fournier (1998, 2009) supplied 52 different facets, firstly in a compendium but then further arranged them in a brand relationship map using real brands in the US. Utilising those facets, she found that brands can serve as realised extensions of a consumer's sense of self, further rewarding a sense of guidance, nurturance, security, stimulation, assistance and social support in difficult life situations. This finding broadens Belk's (1988) early understanding of how possessions can be used to extend the self to now include brands as extensions of self. Lastly, 'relationships as

process phenomena' emphasises that there are different processes through which relationships form and evolve. The nature of consumer-brand relationships is that they are dynamic and interdependent and move through different stages such as initiation, growth, maintenance, and decline (Fournier, 1998).

Mainly the first tenet has been widely studied, which indicates that "brand relationships are meaning-laden resources engaged to help people live their lives" (Fournier, 2009, p. 5). The author clearly emphasises that strong consumer-brand relationships develop only through the support consumers receive from 'their' brand in their lives. This notion has been picked up by other authors in the handbook as well as in various other research papers. For example, focussing on consumers, brands and the self, Escalas and Bettman (2009) found that consumers use brands for purposes of self-construction, social integration, self-differentiation, and self-presentation. Additionally, Reimann and Aron (2009) provide an in-depth account of self-expansion theory and the inclusion of brands in the self to establish a more robust theory of brand relationships. The authors define self-expansion quite literally by stating that it is "the central human motive of the desire to expand the self by acquiring resources, perspectives, and identities that enhance one's ability to accomplish goals" (Reimann & Aron, 2009, p. 66). This implies that consumers purchase brands not only for their useful attributes but also to develop their selves to cope with life tasks.

All of the above authors note that relationships are important mechanisms through which individuals expand their selves. This is not only the case for relationships between people but also between consumers and brands which play a central part in every consumer's daily life (Reimann & Aron, 2009). A quote taken from Fournier's (1998) seminal article appears appropriate for entering into this research: "*Although it may seem rather contentious to assert that deeply rooted identity concerns are reflected in something as mundane and trivial as everyday brand behaviours, it has been suggested that it is within this level of ordinary experiences that the meanings most central to life are contained*" (Fournier, 1998, p. 365-66). As the focus of this research is to investigate how personal brandscapes shift when adjusting to an unknown total brandscape, looking at the mundane everyday consumption (Kleine, et al., 1992, 1993) and brand behaviour of consumers seems most relevant.

In addition to brand-self-connections in everyday life, increasing interest has been placed on brand love as one of the possible connections between consumer and brand. Brand love in Fournier's (1998) paper was described as the feeling of deeply missing a brand when not available and was characterised "as irreplaceable and unique to the extent that separation anxiety was anticipated upon withdrawal" (p. 364). Further, brand love was also facilitated by

feelings of warmth and affection, passion, infatuation and even selfish, obsessive dependency, all traits that can be found in the different consumer-brand relationship forms established by Fournier (1998). Furthering the theoretical field of consumer-brand love, Ahuvia, Batra and Bagozzi (2009) introduced the notion of loved objects (LO's) and their importance to and connection with consumers. Based on in-depth interviews with 69 educated professional, the authors found that all but two respondents loved something aside from other people. Similar to the previously mentioned academics, the authors connected loved objects with the study of the self (Ashworth, et al., 2009; Escalas & Bettman, 2009; Fournier, 1998; Reimann & Aron, 2009). Relationships with loved objects either arise due to the integration of an object within the self and expansion of the self through the newly found loved object or through a process of emergence from the self (Ahuvia, et al., 2009). The authors concluded their work by stating that

“the people and things we love are part of ourselves. We think of them the same way we think about ourselves, we act toward them as we act toward ourselves, we experience pride in their achievements and shame in their failures, our relationships with them help define our identity, and we take responsibility for their well-being” (Ahuvia, et al., 2009, p. 353).

This quote is in line with the above quote where Fournier (1998) states that consumers' identity concerns are deeply rooted in “something as mundane and trivial as everyday brand behaviours” (Fournier, 1998, p. 365). However, the previously illustrated literature has primarily focussed on the first three types of brand relationships, namely marriages, friendships and “the dark side”. Only recently did Fournier herself focus on another relationship type - the temporally oriented relationship, termed fling (Fournier & Alvarez, 2010). Fournier and Alvarez (2009) found that individuals temporally obsess with and are excited about flings with brands which “open up a creative space in consumers' daily lives where people establish object relations that allow them to experiment playfully with different senses of self” (Fournier & Alvarez, 2010, p. 4). Brands acting as transitional objects serve as a defence system against anxiety “and operate as soothing, comfort mechanisms in times of loneliness, deprivation or depressive moods, thus suggesting a role for brand flings as coping mechanisms when the anxious self is primed” (Fournier & Alvarez, 2009, p.5). Focusing on brands as transitional objects helping consumers adjust in a foreign setting will be a key concentration in this thesis due to the limited time period of sojourners' stays abroad.

In conclusion, the theoretical field of consumer-brand relationships is continually advancing to provide managers with practical implications to utilise when introducing or

maintaining a brand. It has been shown that consumers can have deep and meaningful relationships that can change self-concepts and help resolve life themes which may even result in brand love. It will be interesting to see how consumer-brand relationships, and subsequent perceptions of self, change and shift when temporally living in a foreign country and therein, a relatively unfamiliar total brandscape.

PART I – BRANDSCAPES – SUMMARY

This section has focused on brands, different brandscapes and consumers' relationships with brands. Firstly, reviewing and conceptualising past research on brandscapes, a concept derived from atmospherics and servicespaces, revealed that *personal* brandscapes are understudied and need further attention. Next, literature on consumer-brand relationships provided valuable insights into how consumer-brand relationships form and can be sustained over time. Most consumers possess a branded security blanket that he or she has grown up, bonded and created a long-lasting relationship with. Therefore, it will be interesting to investigate what happens when this branded security blanket is not readily available in another country-specific context. Literature on (consumer) acculturation needs to be reviewed to be able to provide the bigger picture of sojourners' temporary mobility.

PART II – CONSUMER ACCULTURATION

2.5. (Consumer) Socialisation

To comprehend how consumers learn to become effective consumers in the marketplace, literature on consumer socialisation needs to be reviewed first. Socialisation can be regarded as the general development of socially relevant behaviour to participate effectively in a social environment (O'Guinn, et al., 1985; Parsons & Bales, 1955; Peñaloza, 1989; S. Ward, 1974). In a paper titled “Consumer Socialisation” in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, Ward (1974) reviewed the predominant definitions of the term socialisation at that time and found that many authors had defined socialisation holistically, referring to it as “the whole process by which an individual develops, through transaction with other people, his specific patterns of socially relevant behaviors and experience” (Zigler & Child, 1969, p. 474). However, Ward (1974) established that a more circumscribed view had also been taken by looking more closely at ‘learning’, especially the acquisition of skills, knowledge and dispositions which enable individuals to acquire an understanding of social roles and behaviours associated with them. Overall, socialisation refers to developments and processes which affect not only present but also future or eventual behaviour of an individual (S. Ward, 1974).

The particular subset of socialisation processes which is most relevant to this thesis is the concept of consumer socialisation. Ward (1974) coined the term which refers to the “process by which *young people* acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their effective functioning as consumers in the marketplace” (S. Ward, 1974, p. 2). Ward’s (1974) definition of consumer socialisation has been cited in various areas, particularly in consumer behaviour and consumer psychology research contexts (Carlson, Grossbart, & Stuenkel, 1992). For example, Peñaloza (1989) extended Ward’s early definition by adding that “consumer socialization focuses on normative processes and outcomes of consumer learning within one society” (Peñaloza, 1989, p. 115), implying that it needs to be broadened to consumer acculturation to be applicable in a multi-country context. This will be explained in depth in the second part of this literature review as it is a crucial concept for this thesis.

Built on Parsons and Bales’ (1955) and Ward’s (1974) early work, Churchill and Moschis (1979) as well as Moschis and Moore (1979) identified five types of variables that influence individual’s consumer learning:

1. **Socialisation Agents:** person or organisation (for example family, peers, school, etc.) that has strong influential power due to frequency of contact, control over punishments and rewards, and primacy
2. **Learning Processes:** mechanisms through which socialisation agents influence the learner, broken down into three categories: modelling, reinforcement, and social interaction
3. **Social Structural Variables:** factors (for example sex, birth order, socioeconomic status, etc.) helping the learner to locate him/herself within a social environment
4. **Age or Lifecycle:** person's lifetime span during which learning occurs, indexing a person's cognitive development or life cycle stage(s)
5. **Content of Learning / Learning Properties:** variety of consumer-related behaviours and cognitions that encompass the concept of consumer behaviour (for example attitudes, brand preference and loyalty, etc.)

Since the publication of this early conceptual model of (consumer) socialisation, various studies have addressed the particular influence of the first type of socialisation agents such as parents, siblings, peers and the media individually, thereby providing greater insight into how they each influence young consumers' consumption behaviour and consumer learning. In his earlier study on consumer socialisation, Ward (1974) had also focussed on children's learning of consumer behaviour and how this can be derived from parents and peers. Parents teach children basic, rational, goal-oriented and necessary aspects of consumption whereas peers show each other expressive or affective features of consumption (Churchill & Moschis, 1979; S. Ward, 1974). Churchill and Moschis' (1979) paper further found that television encounters indirectly affect and influence the acquisition of consumer-related properties. Other studies have found that frequent television exposure positively affects children's brand recognition and brand consciousness (Nelson & McLeod, 2005; Valkenburg & Buijzen, 2005) and that from the age of nine years onwards, children have as much knowledge of advertising slogans as their parents (Dotson & Hyatt, 2000; Roedder, 1981).

In addition to the previously discussed socialisation agents, Moore, Wilkie and Lutz (2002) were the first authors to establish that individual brands, particularly those in the packaged consumer goods domain, can also act as socialisation agents due to intergenerational influences (IG). Families "jointly consume, shop for, and comment on favoured brands" (Moore, et al., 2002, p. 18) and the long-term impacts of brand choice as accrued through intergenerational influence are felt into adulthood. However, the authors also

noted that once young adults leave the family home, other influencers such as a spouse, roommates and peers become prevalent. Those influencers “help shape daily living” and “discussions with new influencers foster the introduction of additional options and categories for consideration” (Moore, et al., 2002, p. 30). In addition, altered marketplace experiences can occur when young adults pursue a physical move to a new marketplace (Moore, et al., 2002). In this thesis, participants will not only be living in a foreign country, hence a different marketplace, but will also be living with and working for a family unit which brings with it its own new (intergenerational) influences.

Following Peñaloza’s (1989) call to transfer consumer socialisation to consumer acculturation by placing more emphasis on a multi-cultural context, the second part of the literature review will evaluate work on consumer acculturation agents similar to socialisation agents, thereby encompassing the country-specific context. In particular, prior work on consumer acculturation has not explicitly considered how brands can be used as acculturation agents; given the importance of brands as socialisation agents as established by Moore et al. (Moore, et al., 2002), this omission seems surprising and warrants further research. Overall, as a variety of concepts in consumer acculturation are drawn from early works on consumer socialisation, it was necessary to review this area of research first.

2.6. Acculturation Defined

Acculturation is not a new phenomenon. It has been studied for over 80 years by researchers in anthropology, sociology and psychology. However, consumer researchers’ focus on acculturation has been relatively recent. The earliest definition of the term acculturation was coined by the Subcommittee of Acculturation in 1936: “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, et al., 1936, p. 152). The prime focus of this definition was on culture change which not only occurs for the moving population but also for the one that is being moved to.

2.7. The Path to Postassimilationism

Anthropologists and sociologists have had constant discussions about the terms acculturation and assimilation and which term to use. Consumer research further introduced ‘consumer acculturation’ to the mix and started to challenge traditional models of

assimilation and acculturation. This resulted in the introduction of a new research stream termed postassimilationism. The following section outlines the key literature in the field before moving on to more precise aspects of consumer acculturation.

2.7.1. Early Acculturation Processes

Gordon (1964) pinpointed the recurring ambivalence around the terms acculturation and assimilation, noting that anthropologists are more likely to use the term acculturation and sociologists are in favour of assimilation (Berry, 1980, 1997; Gordon, 1964). Gordon (1964) related this distinction back to sociologists Park and Burgess' (1921) statement that assimilation refers to "the process by which the culture of a community or a country is transmitted to an adopted citizen" (Park & Burgess, 1921, p. 734). The possible interchangeability of acculturation and assimilation is apparent in the subsequent addition to Park and Burgess' (1921) definition of assimilation, describing it as "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life" (Park & Burgess, 1921, p. 735). Gordon (1964), a sociologist himself, used the term assimilation, based on the definition above, to describe "encounters between ethnic groups and the cultural negotiation process to find common grounds" (Ogden, Ogden, & Schau, 2004, p. 3).

Assimilation and acculturation have various aspects in common, for example fusion, sharing experiences and incorporating those changes in a common cultural life (M. M. Gordon, 1964) which makes their clear distinction all the more difficult. Undertaking an analysis of the assimilation process based on the hypothetical case of people from "Mundovia" immigrating to "Sylvania" – both imagined countries used to prove his point – Gordon (1964) came up with an assimilation process involving seven major variables which make up sub processes and can be thought of as facilitating a particular aspect or stage of the assimilation process. To simplify this process, Gordon (1964) proposed seven types of assimilation (see Table 1).

Subprocess or Condition	Types or Stages of Assimilation	Special Term
Change of cultural pattern to those of host society	Cultural or behavioural assimilation	Acculturation
Large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of host society, on primary group level	Structural assimilation	None
Large-scale intermarriage	Marital assimilation	Amalgamation
Development of sense of people-hood based exclusively on host society	Identificational assimilation	None
Absence of prejudice	Attitude receptional assimilation	None
Absence of discrimination	Behaviour receptional assimilation	None
Absence of value and power conflict	Civic assimilation	None

Table 1: The Assimilation Variables

The above stages of the assimilation process can occur in varying degrees and do not necessarily become apparent in every permanent immigrant. Displaying the first model to present the different processes of assimilation, Gordon (1964) provided a better understanding of assimilation from a sociological stance. His framework has advanced to become the principal conceptual guiding scheme to study consumer subcultures (Peñaloza, 1994). However, over the years this traditional assimilation model has received criticism from various researchers (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983b) resulting in a new research stream called postassimilationism which will be elaborated on shortly.

Moving away from assimilation as the overarching theme, Berry (1987; 1997) used acculturation as the key idiom in his cross-cultural research studies and referred to assimilation as only one of four acculturation strategies (Berry, 1997a). He developed a conceptual framework in which he posited four acculturation strategies (or modes of acculturation), namely integration, assimilation, separation/segregation and lastly, marginalisation. When immigrants opt to use the integration strategy, they usually tend to maintain some degree of cultural integrity “while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network” (Berry, 1997, p. 9). Next, as mentioned previously, assimilation implies that immigrants do not maintain their cultural identity to any degree but rather seek daily interactions and engagement with other cultures. Thirdly, separation or segregation is apparent when individuals wish to avoid interaction with others and clearly separate from the host culture by tightly holding onto their original culture. Lastly,

marginalisation is prevalent when on the one hand, little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance is achievable, for example due to forced movement, and on the other hand, immigrants have little interest in interacting with others. The latter is often a result of discrimination and exclusion, leaving immigrants to pursue a life on the ‘margin’ of the host culture (Berry, 1992, 1997). This conceptual framework or model has since been regarded as the traditional acculturation model; however, it too has received criticism from consumer behaviour researchers.

Picking up Berry’s (1980) proposed acculturation strategies, Jun et al. (1993) focused on the different modes of acculturation as they acknowledged that every individual who is adapting to a new culture possesses and uses unique modes of acculturation which need to be understood by researchers in order to study acculturation in different cultural contexts. Using personal consumption as a focus in their study, the authors found that cultural identification and level of acculturation are the determinants of the modes of acculturation. In total, they established five modes of acculturation, namely separation, integration, antinomy, assimilation and frustration. Those modes of acculturation are similar to Berry’s (1980; 1997); however, the inclusion of antimony as a pre-mature state and frustration as a negative state shows advances in the model. Having established that a constant discussion has been underway to differentiate assimilation from acculturation, the predominant term used in consumer behaviour for the overarching adaption to another country is acculturation. Focussing primarily on consumer acculturation in this thesis, the following section presents a review of the key literature in this area.

2.7.2. Consumer Acculturation

In his award-winning conceptual paper entitled “Still crossing borders: Migration, Consumption, and Markets” in a special issue of *Consumption Markets & Culture*, Marius Luedicke (2011) evaluated 14 studies that have contributed to and influenced the field of consumer acculturation research most since 1981. A summary of these 14 studies can be found in the following table (Table 2).

Author(s)	Year	Journal	Participants	Acculturating Type	Contribution(s)
Hirschman	1981	The Journal of Marketing	Jews and non-Jews in the USA	Immigrants, Locals	Consumption innovativeness due to heritage / ethnic background
Wallendorf & Reilly	1983a, 1983b	Advances in Consumer Research, Journal of Consumer Research	Mexican-Americans	Immigrants	Culture of origin versus culture of residence, “over-assimilation” to internalised but outdated Anglo-American cultural style
Saegert, Hoover, & Hilger	1985	Journal of Consumer Research	Hispanics and Anglos in the USA	Immigrants, Locals, Ethno-culture	Mexican-Americans prefer familiar stores and are more price conscious
Desphande, Hoyer, & Donthu	1986	Journal of Consumer Research	Hispanics and Anglos in the USA	Immigrants, Locals, Ethno-culture	Consumer subcultures, ethnic identification
O’Guinn, Lee, & Faber	1986	Advances in Consumer Research	Hispanics in the USA	Immigrants, Ethno-culture	Paths of least resistance, consumer acculturation via mass media
Peñaloza	1989	Advances in Consumer Research	Mexican-Americans (conceptual paper based on studies investigating Hispanics)	Immigrants, Ethno-culture	Functional assimilation and cultural rejection in consumption practices, consumer acculturation
Mehta & Belk	1991	Journal of Consumer Research	Upper-, middle-class Indians living in Bombay or the USA	Immigrants (in the USA), Locals (in India)	“Hyperidentification” with native context
Peñaloza	1994	Journal of Consumer Research	Mexicans in the USA	Immigrants	“immigration does not necessarily lead to assimilation” resistance
Oswald	1999	Journal of Consumer Research	Haitian migrants in the USA	Immigrants	Culture swapping
Peñaloza & Gilly	1999	Journal of Marketing	Hispanics, Mexican-Americans, other Latinos	Immigrants, Ethno-culture	Marketers serve as bicultural mediators, marketers’ adaptation to cultural characteristics and needs of foreign consumers

Thompson & Tambyah	1999	Journal of Consumer Research	Expatriates from various countries (i.e. US, Germany, Australia) in Singapore	Expatriates (Sojourners)	Cosmopolitanism, tensions and conflicts of trying to be cosmopolitan (home vs. host)
Lindridge, Hogg, & Shah	2004	Consumption, Markets & Culture	South Asian women in Britain	Immigrants	Post-modern ethnic families, households and society, negotiation and navigation of cultural and consumer behavioural borders
Askegaard, Arnould, & Kjeldgaard	2005	Journal of Consumer Research	Greenlandic migrants in Denmark	Immigrants	“Transnational consumer culture”, “Hyperculture”, “Pendulism”
Üstüner & Holt	2007	Journal of Consumer Research	Turkish women in a squatter camp outside Ankara	Migrants	“Shattered identity projects”

Table 2: 14 Key Consumer Acculturation Studies

[Based on Luedicke (2011)]

In his insightful review of the consumer acculturation literature, Luedicke (2011) split his findings into two waves. The first wave describes the access of immigrants' consumption patterns as studied by academics such as Wallendorf and Reilly (1983b). These two authors found that Mexican-American immigrants do not necessarily assimilate to the actual American culture but rather 'über-assimilate' ('over-assimilate') to an outdated Anglo-American culture (Luedicke, 2011; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983b). Eight years later, Mehta and Belk (1991) published their work on personal attachment to items during identity transition. They found that anti-assimilation can occur when immigrants fully adopt the 'new' culture but also use special possessions from their 'old' cultural context as means of 'hyperidentification' with their former culture (Luedicke, 2011; Mehta & Belk, 1991). This hyperidentification can take the form of taking part in traditional events, preparing traditional meals or wearing traditional clothes from the old country, which would not have been part of the consumer's daily life before the move to the new country. Desphande, Hoyer and Donthu's (1986) built their research on the earlier work of Hirschman (1981) to assess behavioural divergences between dominant groups and ethnic immigrants and also between consumers of the same cultural background to extend our knowledge of 'ethnic identification'. Lastly, O'Guinn, Lee and Faber (1986) defined consumer acculturation as a process that "may take multiple, simultaneous and less direct paths than previously modelled" (O'Guinn, et al., 1986, p. 579) and emphasises the dynamic nature of the acculturation process. According to Luedicke (2011), this first wave of consumer acculturation research established the importance of hyperidentification and über-assimilation and also accentuated the notion of the acculturation process not progressing as linearly as anticipated by earlier anthropologists and sociologists.

The second wave of consumer acculturation research investigates various studies focussing on consumer acculturation experiences and predominantly features Lisa Peñaloza who published three of the 14 influential studies (Luedicke, 2011). Using both socialisation and consumer socialisation as bases, Peñaloza (1989) found that consumer acculturation includes processes of consumer learning within a multicultural context and is defined as "the general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country" (Peñaloza, 1994, p. 33). In particular, Peñaloza (1989, 1994) studied the movement and adaptation of Mexican immigrants to and in the United States, attempting to advance the research stream beyond the primarily posed question about the degree of assimilation to American culture – again, picking up on the discussion about acculturation versus assimilation (Peñaloza, 1994).

Following up on Peñaloza's (1989) advancement to the consumer acculturation literature, Oswald (1999) studied Haitian immigrants to the United States and specifically, their consumption and understanding of clothes and accessories from the 'old' and 'new' cultures. She found that acculturation outcomes are unstable and not fixed. Rather, immigrants use consumption as a means to "swap" between two cultures and their multicultural identities (Oswald, 1999). Consumers constantly move back and forth between those two cultures and change their identities according to the cultural realms they are confined to at the time. Building on the above two studies, Askegaard, Arnould and Kjelgaard's (2005) found that Greenlandic immigrants in Denmark move between multiple identity positions rather than taking on a single identity (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Askegaard & Özçaglar-Toulouse, 2011; Luedicke, 2011). They, too, established that it is not as easy as assuming that consumers simply adopt a new identity or keep their old identity since consumers create multiple identities to fit into each group they belong to.

However, Üstüner and Holt (2007) found significant differences from Askegaard et al. (2005). Investigating Turkish migrant women in the setting of squatter camps outside of Ankara, the authors found that 'shattered identity projects' can occur when no sufficient financial, material and social resources are at hand, which would allow them to take part in the 'new' culture (Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Their study emphasised that consumers need to retreat to their old identity in the case of insufficient means allowing them to participate in the new culture. Overall, researchers in the first wave started to question traditional assimilation and/or acculturation models to some degree. However, it was the second wave of researchers who called for an advancement of consumer acculturation theory.

2.7.3. Postassimilationism

As previously mentioned, a few consumer researchers broke with the "earlier consumer research that accepted both the acculturation, or 'melting pot', model and the phenomenological reality of ethnic categories" (Askegaard, et al., 2005, p. 160) and introduced an advance to the field called Postassimilationist Consumer Research, which challenges the model of gradual assimilation of immigrants. Wallendorf and Reilly (1983a, 1983b) were the first to challenge Gordon's (1964) assimilation model as they found that it lacked relevance to situations where people move voluntarily. The authors supplemented this claim by stating that the model portrayed a process of cultural assimilation which is constrained and mandated structurally and rather characterises cultural assimilation caused by involuntary change where resistance to the 'new' culture dominates. Based on their study of

the cultural assimilation of voluntary Mexican-American immigrants in the American Southwest, they found that the immigrants have assimilated not simply to the American life per se but rather to their internalised perception of it. Furthermore, the authors conclude that the assimilation process is not a linear progression as suggested by previous researchers but rather a dynamic process. A few years later, this was acknowledged by authors Jun, Ball and Gentry (1993) who found that an increasing number of researchers have now recognised “that acculturation is a multidimensional concept incorporating cultural identity, language usage, religion, and social activities” (Jun, et al., 1993, p. 76).

Peñaloza (1989) was the first author to explicitly confront and negate the traditional assimilation and acculturation models of Gordon (1964) and Berry (1980). She showed that acculturation does not lead to assimilation as suggested but that assimilation is rather part of a continuous process. In her study, consumers were not shedding their traditional home culture attributes but rather incorporating traits and characteristics from both cultures in their daily lives, thereby portraying themselves as border consumers interacting with two cultures simultaneously. By establishing that consumers maintained rather than assimilated their transcultural identities the author provided an advance to Berry’s (1980) original acculturation model. Based on her research, she posited the following four acculturation outcomes: assimilation, maintenance, resistance and segregation (Peñaloza, 1989, 1994). Resistance as an acculturation outcome is the main distinction from Berry’s (1980) model as it moves beyond the more passively constructed ‘marginalisation’ strategy (Berry, 1980; Luedicke, 2011; Peñaloza, 1994). In her study, Mexican immigrants disliked and resisted American material values and consumption practices, thereby demonstrating an underlying criticism of the American culture.

Similar to Peñaloza’s (1989, 1994) findings, Oswald’s (1999) participants did not shed their former identities completely. In her study, she focussed on the performative model of consumer ethnicity, which is based on hyperassimilation (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983b) and situational ethnicity (Stayman & Deshpande, 1989). The author implies that a sense of ‘plastic’ marketable ethnicity exists which leads immigrants to use goods to create a new identity and “wear their ethnicity as a kind of garment that can be purchased, sold or discarded, or traded as the situation demands” (Oswald, 1999, p. 314). The Haitian participants in her study “suspend and postpone assimilation indefinitely, straddling the boundaries between several cultures at once [...] [and] navigate an uneven path between both worlds, culture swapping as they go” (Oswald, 1999, pp. 311, 315). Again, Gordon’s (1964) and Berry’s (1980) initial understanding of the acculturation process is refined by

emphasising that assimilation cannot be regarded as a one-off event but rather takes place in conjunction with other processes over time.

The more recent work to question the traditional models is by Askegaard et al. (2005). Through the investigation of the consumer acculturation of Greenlandic immigrants in Denmark, the authors tested and advanced the postassimilationist model of ethnic consumer behaviour beyond the North American context. They found that the acculturative processes in the Danish cultural context differ from those in the previous studies (Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1989, 1994) as, for example, only a few of the Greenlandic participants appeared comfortable with a ‘plastic’ notion of ethnic identity. Further, challenging the notion of culture swapping to some extent, the authors found that regular boundary crossings, and therein acculturation experiences, do not allow consumers to establish clear-cut boundaries between their home and host country any more. Overall, Askegaard et al. (2005) kept assimilation and integration in their interpretation of the acculturation outcomes but further added ‘hyperculture’ and ‘pendulism’ as additional modes of acculturation. Hyperculture is defined as consuming hyped commercial elements of the host culture rather than the actual traditional and authentic elements, similar to ‘hyper assimilation’. It emerges as a result of blending carefully selected aspects of the host culture with the home culture in a conflict-free way (Jafari & Goulding, 2008). The other position not found in any other model, pendulism or oscillating pendulum, refers to the experiences of alienations and attractions of both the home and host culture. In their study, Askegaard et al. (2005) state that pendulism “involves maintenance and assimilation, but the term stresses the oscillation and the consequent existential problems connected to persistent biculturalism” (Askegaard, et al., 2005, p. 167). By replacing Peñaloza’s (1989, 1994) introduction of maintenance and resistance with hyperculture and pendulism, Askegaard et al. (2005) were the latest authors to advance the traditional assimilation and acculturation models.

Berry (1980)	Jun et al. (1993)	Penaloza (1989, 1994)	Askegaard et al. (2005)
Assimilation Integration Segregation Marginalisation	Assimilation Integration Separation Antinomy Frustration	Assimilation Maintenance Segregation Resistance	Assimilation Integration Hyperculture Pendulism

Table 3: Modes of Acculturation Revisited

Summarising this section, the above table (Table 3) outlines the advances of Berry’s (1980) traditional acculturation model through three key research studies. Assimilation and, for the most part, integration and segregation / separation are the three elements of the

different models of acculturation outcomes or modes of acculturation that remain the same. However, with the increase of studies relevant to postassimilationism, the latest study by Askegaard et al. (2005) addresses contemporary shifts and the resulting acculturation process most appropriately. In concluding this section, it needs to be noted that the above mentioned studies on consumer acculturation focus primarily on immigrants rather than any other type of acculturating group. To broaden the research field, other acculturating groups must be investigated; therefore, the next section defines and explains the various groups in more depth.

2.8. Acculturating Groups

Berry and Sam (1997) were the first authors to provide a framework of so-called acculturating groups (Berry & Sam, 1997). By establishing those differentiated acculturating groups, the authors were able to evaluate how the psychological stress of acculturation processes differs for each group. Without going into too much detail on the stress outcome since it lacks direct relevance to this thesis, it is, however, necessary to establish an understanding of each group's characteristics to position this research in one type of the acculturating groups. The authors noted that five different types of acculturating groups exist, namely: 1) Immigrants, 2) sojourners, 3) refugees and asylum seekers, 4) indigenous people, and 5) ethno-cultural groups. More detail will be provided on the first two groups as well as one additional group: tourists.

2.8.1. Immigrants

The most-studied of the aforementioned acculturating groups are immigrants. Especially in consumer behaviour and consumer acculturation research, many authors have focused on people permanently and voluntarily moving to a host country. As previously elaborated on, Luedicke (2011) broke the 14 key studies of consumer acculturation down into two waves. The 14 studies consist predominantly of Journal of Consumer Research papers (nine of 14 papers) focussing on immigrants, such as Wallendorf and Reilly's (1983a, 1983b) early work on Mexican immigrants in the United States and Oswald's (1999) research paper on Haitian migrants in the US. Other papers have also mainly investigated immigrants in the United States (Desphande, et al., 1986; Hirschman, 1981; Mehta & Belk, 1991; O'Guinn, et al., 1986; Peñaloza, 1994; Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999; Saegert, et al., 1985). More recent papers have focussed on immigrants from and to non-North American countries, such as Lindridge et al.'s (2004) study on South Asian women in Britain, Askegaard et al.'s (2005) research on

Greenlandic migrants in Denmark, and Üstüner and Holt's (2007) paper on Turkish migrant women in a squatter camp outside Ankara. Further consumer behaviour studies not included in the 14 key papers but also focussing on immigrants' consumer acculturation are Luedicke and Giesler's (2009) investigation of Turkish immigrants in Germany, Sutton-Brady, Davis and Jung's (2010) exploration of consumption among Koreans in Australia and Chytкова's (2011) recent paper on female Romanian immigrants in Italy.

2.8.2. Sojourners

However, only *one* the 14 key consumer acculturation studies identified by Luedicke (2011) focuses on another type of acculturating group: sojourners (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999) – short-term visitors living temporarily, between 6 months to 5 years, in a host country for specific reasons (Berry & Sam, 1997). Essentially, the sojourner becomes a “human bridge” and “mediator between cultures” (L. Brown, 2009, p. 504). Sojourners include international students, diplomats, guest workers and missionaries. Next, the four key studies on sojourners foundational to this thesis will be briefly reviewed.

First, Thompson and Tambyah (1999) investigated how affluent expatriates from various countries acculturate in Singapore, using phenomenological interviewing. The participants were stationed at this location for a fixed period of time where they were included in special local cultural practices, events and rituals only when specifically invited by a member of the local community. Due to the transient nature of the visit and the time and effort commitment to their professional positions, it was nearly impossible for the expatriates to develop long-lasting friendships with locals and other expatriates based on shared histories or experiences. However, to be able to fully understand sojourners' consumer acculturation, one needs to look at the mundane everyday consumption, which “refers to those activities which constitute the bulk of life – preparing meals, relaxing, or getting to work - [and which] occur while and as an integral part of negotiating these daily life-tasks” (Kleine, et al., 1992, p. 411). This also refers back to Fournier's (1998) notion that mundane and trivial everyday brand behaviour is able to form meanings most central to consumers' lives and helps develop deeply rooted identities. This provides room for further investigation which has been superficially investigated in an exploratory research study by Rahman and Cherrier (2010).

Second, Rahman and Cherrier (2010) explored how international tertiary students in Australia acculturate to an unfamiliar brandscape. Studies in the area of education have focussed more closely on international exchange or ‘overseas’ students who have been defined as “a sojourner who lives in a foreign country and has to achieve specific academic

objectives within a defined, and limited, period of time” (J. L. Cox, 1988, p. 179). Even though Rahman and Cherrier’s (2010) study is exploratory as contact with participants was only made once at any given point of their stay in Australia, the study will be used as a starting point for this thesis as it provides preliminary insights into a) sojourners’ mundane consumption and b) brandscapes in conjunction with consumer acculturation. However, as the participants in their study lived in a multicultural student setting, they experienced not only the local culture but also a mix of various diverse cultures. Investigating au pairs who stay in a host family and who are regarded as an integral part of it will provide greater insights into the mundane everyday consumption of sojourners and thereby, extend knowledge on this type of acculturating group.

Lastly, two studies published recently provide further valuable insights into the sojourner realm. Bardhi, Eckhardt and Arnould (2012) investigated the relationships affluent, mobile global nomads form with possessions. The participants in their study were constantly on the move for work purposes; hence they appropriated possessions for their use-value and immateriality on a temporal and situational basis. Global nomads appear to be “detached from possessions, and they relate to objects in a more flexible way” (Bardhi, et al., 2012, p. 518), forming liquid or fluid rather than solid, firm or lasting relationships with possessions. The authors explicate that serial relocations, short-term international travel and deterritorialisation lead to a diminished interest in ownership and the eschewing of attachments that inhibit the freedom of movement. This thesis aims to gain a deeper understanding of the form of relationship that first-time, rather than serial, sojourners form with material objects. Another study, by Figueiredo and Uncles (2014), recently explored the same subset of sojourners, the globally mobile elite or in the authors’ words, the “frequent-flying, fast-lane, professional elites who move across nations and resettle multiple times” (p. 1). Investigating the consumption practices, lifestyles and experiences of this group, the authors observed that these consumers have found ways to manage their temporal frameworks in mobility.

Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999) study as well as the aforementioned papers by Bardhi et al. (2012) and Figueiredo and Uncles (2014) explore a specific subset of sojourners and illustrate how these consumers deal with their constant mobility. The consumers in their studies are similar in the sense that they are constantly on the move, able to shift to foreign countries due to the cultural, social and economic capital they have accumulated over the time of being mobile. However, cosmopolitan consumers often unwillingly retain close emotional ties to home (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999) while constantly mobile global

nomads form rather liquid relationships to cherished possessions (Bardhi, et al., 2012) and display a greater sense of flexibility with regard to consumption due to being able to sequence, schedule and coordinate activities (Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014). All four studies provide a basis for this thesis in the sense that they have investigated the acculturating group of sojourners, despite primarily focusing on the affluent and globally mobile elite. However, few consumer research studies have focused on the ‘consumers of tomorrow’, or Generation Y, who sojourn across borders temporarily for educational purposes (for exception see Rahman & Cherrier, 2010) but who do not yet possess the same forms of capital as the ‘global elite’ (economic, social, cultural) (Bourdieu, 1986).

2.8.3. Tourists

Literature in the fields of both consumer behaviour and tourism has placed great emphasis on how countries have the ability to “function as an umbrella brand. This potential is a result of [a country’s] power to boost recognition, exposure and credibility of national brands in international markets by generating synergies that favourably enhance consumers’ purchase decisions” (Gnoth, 2002, p. 262). Brands can be regarded as national treasures, allowing consumers to feel a sense of belonging to and being part of a national community (Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver, 2010b). However consumer researchers have only recently focussed their attention on tourists’ consumption of (global) brands whilst travelling. Bengtsson, Bardhi and Venkatraman (2010) investigated how brand meanings for two global brands (McDonald’s and Starbucks) differed for 29 American students in the home and host country (China). The participants were all students at the same institution in the US going on a short-term, 10-day trip to China for academic purposes. Data was collected utilising personal diaries prior to departure, photo-taking during the trip and in-depth interviews after the return home (based on the diary data and a photo-elicitation method). Using the same sample and data set, Bardhi, Ostberg and Bengtsson (2010) addressed “the role of food in boundary crossing and maintenance processes in the context of short-term mobility” (Bardhi, et al., 2010, p. 133). Bardhi and colleagues’ participants are clearly tourists, where the relationship between tourist and host is transitory and usually non-repetitive (Berno & Ward, 2005; C. Ward, 2008). Consequently, “a shift in personal and cultural outlook is less likely in the mass and business tourist whose contact with and immersion into the local culture is often limited” (L. Brown, 2009, p. 505). This is in contrast to the sojourn where adjustment to the local cultural norms tends to, and is expected to, occur to some extent (L. Brown, 2009).

As this review of the literature on acculturating groups reveals, most of this work has focussed on permanent immigrants rather than one of the other groups. Just four studies have focussed on sojourners, only *one* of which has begun to look at the conjunction of brandscapes and consumer acculturation in the context of young sojourners. Thus, a study of German au pair sojourners in New Zealand has the potential to offer deeper insights into this understudied type of acculturating group. Further, integrating the work on personal brandscapes and consumer acculturation has the potential to advance both marketing and consumer research. To set the stage for understanding how young sojourners make the move between Germany and New Zealand, the literature on home and host culture will be reviewed next.

2.9. The Facets of Moving

Moving always means that a place is left behind for various reasons when people choose or are forced to reside elsewhere. To comprehend the differences between old and new countries, the following section will shed light on the ‘Home versus Host Country’ or ‘Culture of Origin versus Culture of Immigration/Residence’ debate (Askegaard, et al., 2005; M. M. Gordon, 1964; Jun, et al., 1993; Lindridge, et al., 2004; Luedicke, 2011; Peñaloza, 1989, 1994; Redfield, et al., 1936; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983a).

Trying to establish common terms for the old and new countries of residence for immigrants had already been a task in the early days of acculturation research. Already in 1936, Redfield et al. (1936) stated that so-called culture-carriers (immigrants) enter the space of the receiving group (locals in the ‘new’ culture) (Redfield, et al., 1936). In 1964, Gordon found that “meetings in the modern world are likely to take place under a variety of circumstances: colonial conquest, military occupation, re-drawing of national boundaries [...], large-scale trade and missionary activity, technical assistance to underdeveloped countries, [...] and voluntary immigration which increases the ethnic diversity in the host country” (M. M. Gordon, 1964, p. 60). The emphasis here is placed on the host country or host society that missionary sojourners temporarily move to (O’Guinn & Faber, 1985; O’Guinn, et al., 1986). Stressing the importance of host is based upon the association with a host being welcoming and displaying a caring attitude towards the guests. Moreover, guests are usually granted extraordinary rights and appreciation, thereby portraying the host and the guest in a positive light (Luedicke, 2011). However, up to this point, the home country or home society had been largely neglected as it was regarded as more important to understand immigrants’

motivations to move to a new country and the resulting behavioural changes in the new place of residence.

To address this gap, Wallendorf and Reilly (1983a) examined the distinction between culture of origin and culture of residence (also referred to as culture of immigration). The authors stated that immigrants are fully immersed in the dominant culture (of residence) when they no longer exhibit the separate cultural patterns acquired in the culture of origin (M. M. Gordon, 1964; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983a). Also emphasising the importance of culture, Peñaloza (1989, 1994) talks about culture of origin and culture of immigration. She specifically uses the term 'consumer culture' which is defined as "a system composed of individuals who share specific values, skills, and knowledge relevant to engaging in consumer behaviour" (Peñaloza, 1989, p. 113). A different consumer culture can pose a challenge to immigrants when arriving in the culture of immigration as consumption knowledge and cultural divergences in consumption-related values might prove too distinct from the culture of origin. Rather than calling it culture of residence or host country, Jun et al. (1993) referred to the new place of residence as 'host culture', emphasising the importance of 'culture', similar to Wallendorf and Reilly (1983a). The authors found that people who possess a strong connection to their home culture will keep their cultural identification with the traditional culture whereas permanent immigrants who move voluntarily want to identify themselves with the host culture (Jun, et al., 1993). Additionally, Berry (1997) characterises the old country of residence as society of origin and the new country of residence as society of settlement. His viewpoint is that "a complete study of acculturation would need to start with a fairly comprehensive examination of the two societal contexts: that of origin and that of settlement" (Berry, 1997, p. 16).

To find the appropriate terms for old and new country, Oswald (1999) introduced the notion of culture swapping which constitutes the movement of immigrants between two cultures to fit in. Underlying this phenomenon is code switching, an occurrence where immigrants constantly switch cultural codes to negotiate everyday border crossings between the home and host culture (Oswald, 1999). However, Askegaard et al. (2005) subsequently criticised the notion of culture swapping, labelling it problematic in today's global world. Regular boundary crossings and acculturation experiences due to increased travel opportunities have eliminated clear-cut borders (Askegaard, et al., 2005). Luedicke (2011) also finds fault with Oswald's (1999) definition, positing that her use of the terms home culture and host culture is reductionist. Instead he suggests that Peñaloza's (1989, 1994) use of culture of origin and culture of immigration describes the potential underlying cultural

diversity more accurately. Luedicke's (2011) point regarding the appropriate terminology for immigrant acculturation research is certainly valid since immigration is usually permanent. Given that this thesis studies temporary sojourners, the terms home and host culture appear to be appropriate. Au pairs are residing in the host country for a fixed period of time and intend to return to their home country afterwards. They are staying in New Zealand hosted by a welcoming family which introduces the au pair to the local culture. Conversely, due to the knowledge about their foreseeable return home, using the term 'home culture' also appears most appropriate. In conclusion, Table 4 provides a summary of the above studies:

Source	Old	New
Redfield et al. (1936)	Immigrants = culture carriers	Locals = receiving group
Gordon (1964)	Home country	Host country
Wallendorf & Reilly (1983)	Culture of origin	Culture of residence or immigration; also dominant culture
Peñaloza (1989, 1994)	Culture of origin	Culture of immigration
Jun et al. (1993)	Home culture	Host culture
Berry (1997)	Society of origin	Society of settlement

Table 4: The Home/Host Debate

The key consumer acculturation studies (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1989, 1994; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983b) described movement to a culture known to the immigrants. For example, immigrants from Haiti and Mexico (Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994) grew up knowing and learning about the US culture due to its geographical closeness as well as US prevalence in television and pop media. In another study, Greenlandic immigrants to Denmark were familiar with the culture to some degree as Greenland is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark to which many younger Greenlanders move for educational purposes (Askegaard, et al., 2005). Those and other studies are based to some extent on immigrants' familiarity with the culture of immigration or host culture, due to the geographical closeness, popular mass media dominance or political dependence. Jun et al. (1993) described those studies as evaluating the moving from collective cultures, such as Asia or Latin America, to more individualistic cultures, such as the US. In this thesis, au pair sojourners are moving from a predominantly uniform, homogenous and hegemonic German culture to diverse and culturally plural New Zealand, thereby reversing the decision made by permanent immigrants in previous consumer acculturation studies. In the context of this thesis, pluralism, plural societies or cultural plurality refers to many people from different backgrounds residing in the same geographical area, and thereby creating a multicultural setting (Berry, 1992, 1997; Berry, 1997a). Despite New Zealand being a multicultural

marketplace, deeper structural differences exist. Wilk's (1995) concept of structures of common differences explains how cultural differences can be promoted rather than suppressed, and how diversity can be celebrated rather than submerged or deflated. Basing their investigation of the "coconstitutive relationships between globalization and everyday consumption" (Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006, p. 246) on structures of common difference (Wilk, 1995) and glocalisation (Bauman, 1998b; Robertson, 1992), Kjeldgaard and Askegaard (2006) focussed on the global youth market in particular. They found that universal youth culture traits do exist, but only in conjunction with localised contextual differences. Thus an examination of how young German sojourners cope with and adapt to the local (youth) culture in New Zealand, in particular their relationships with local and global brands in a foreign marketplace, has the potential to move the field forward.

2.10. Acculturation Agents

To understand who and what has an influence on young sojourners' acculturation process, it is necessary to review literature on acculturation agents. Consumer acculturation agents or forces can be defined as "those individuals or institutions who serve as sources of consumer information and/or models of consumption behaviour" (Peñaloza, 1989, p. 15) which is similar to the definition of socialisation agents discussed in Part I of this literature review. An in-depth description of the four most prevalent consumer acculturation agents was given by Peñaloza (1989). Overall, those four acculturation agents or forces either relate to the home culture or to the host culture which implies that those two represent the two overarching acculturation agents (Lindridge, et al., 2004; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1989, 1994).

Firstly, one's family is regarded as "a coping social structure in which previous patterns of consumer behaviour can be preserved as well as new consumption patterns learned" (Peñaloza, 1989, p. 15). Reliance on the family to find a job, a place to stay and help in coping with a new situation make the family a key acculturation force (Peñaloza, 1989, 1994). However, participants in this thesis will move without their families, similar to Rahman and Cherrier's (2009) informants but contrary to Thompson and Tambyah's (1999) participants. Global nomads or the global elite (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014) are constantly on the move because of their jobs and oftentimes take their families with them. Participants in this thesis will move by themselves to live with and work for another family in a foreign country.

Secondly, peers or friends in both the home and host culture can influence the immigrant's acculturation process and outcomes greatly. Social networks comprising people from the home culture help immigrants to not lose their sense of belonging to that culture whereas local peers or friends in the host culture possibly facilitate the acculturation process, especially with regard to integration and acceptance (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Lindridge, et al., 2004; Peñaloza, 1989, 1994). In this thesis, au pairs might befriend other au pairs from their home culture which allows a unique bridge between home and host as a) other German au pairs are peers found in the host culture but b) they are from the same home culture.

Thirdly, building on O'Guinn et al.'s (1985; 1986) work, mass media (including popular TV, movies and music) plays a key role in acquiring consumption information. O'Guinn, Faber and Rice (1985) tried to address the lack of knowledge regarding the ways in which immigrants in the US learn how to behave as consumers. People permanently immigrating to the US must learn how to consume and in particular, which goods and items they should desire and why. O'Guinn et al. (1985) acknowledged that some sort of understanding exists with regard to immigrants' direct contact with individuals and institutions in the culture of immigration. However, in their view, previous studies have placed most emphasis on the importance of schools, churches and the work place as agents of socialisation and acculturation but have not recognised the increasing influence of popular films and television (O'Guinn, et al., 1985; O'Guinn, et al., 1986). Building on work in the area of childhood socialisation, O'Guinn et al. (O'Guinn, et al., 1985) established that adolescents as well as adults can learn and model behaviour from watching television shows and popular American movies and also gain knowledge about appropriate societal values (O'Guinn, et al., 1985; O'Guinn, et al., 1986). Therefore, when immigrants arrive in the host culture they are already familiar with some customs and behaviours (Lindridge, et al., 2004; O'Guinn, et al., 1985; O'Guinn, et al., 1986; Peñaloza, 1989). Conversely, having access to mass media in the language of the home culture acts as an acculturation force as immigrants feel like they are not losing the connection with their roots, making the integration and assimilation in the host culture easier (Lindridge, et al., 2004; Peñaloza, 1989). The focus of previous studies on this type of acculturation agents were traditional media; however, in the 21st century, new media plays a crucial part in every consumer's live, particularly that of Generation Y consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, it appears appropriate to use social networks, such as Facebook, for the recruitment of participants and for gaining further insights into their experience based on implementing a supplementary netnographic approach.

Lastly, as briefly mentioned by O'Guinn et al. (1985; O'Guinn, et al., 1986) institutions such as churches, schools and retail businesses also act as acculturation agents. Studies in the US context have found that whereas church services held in a language and within a community of the home culture are preferred, schools in the host culture are regarded as the predominant source of contact with the US culture (Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994).

Considering the two acculturation agents (home and host, including their four variants) as not all-encompassing, Askegaard et al. (2005) introduced a third acculturation agent termed transnational consumer culture. The authors described this force as “transnational set of cultural ideas and practices” (Askegaard, et al., 2005, p. 165) predominantly evoked by access to global consumer choices, global and local mobility as well as a general global cultural economy. In their study of Greenlandic immigrants in Denmark, this transnational consumer culture was mainly derived from US sources available in and to both cultures and which provided young consumers with general ideas about fashion, music, arts, etc.. This shows that global influences prepare immigrants for travel abroad. In the context of this thesis, the German au pairs might have a sense of transnational consumer culture derived from US sources as well. However, it is of interest to investigate how helpful those impressions are for their acculturation in New Zealand.

Challenging all of the three acculturation agents (home, host, and transnational consumer culture), Luedicke (2011) called for consumer research to consider the hitherto neglected power of further outside acculturation agents such as neighbours, sales personnel, co-workers or fellow brand enthusiasts who might exert some influence in subtle ways. Additionally, he suggested that even though acculturation agents have been merely regarded as passive influencers, they can be active influencers by imposing beliefs and values upon the immigrants. Thus he called for the investigation of “non-agentic, systemic forms of influence that potentially affect acculturation experiences in important ways” and particularly for the exploration of “material acculturation agents” (Luedicke, 2011, p. 236). In response, this thesis will explore if and how brands and/or consumer-brand relationships are able to act as additional acculturation agents and which other acculturation forces impact on the acculturation experience. Important to highlight here is Luedicke's (2011) understanding of agents as “active influencers” (p. 233). He describes acculturation agents as influencing acculturation and affecting experiences and repeatedly refers to acculturation agents as ‘influencers’ and this definition will be adopted in this thesis.

PART II – CONSUMER ACCULTURATION – SUMMARY

The second part of this literature review has focussed on the specifics of consumer acculturation. Contemporary consumer research has primarily focussed on permanent immigrants rather than one of the other types of acculturating groups. Based on the conceptual account of consumer acculturation studies, it was found that sojourners are a less studied consumer group in consumer behaviour research. However, they do portray valid attributes particularly in light of the prevalence of constant physical movement and relocation in today's world, making it interesting and necessary to investigate this group further. Additionally, it appears that the influence of acculturation agents, especially on young sojourners, needs to be reconsidered. This thesis will explore if and how brands and consumer-brand relationships facilitate a type of outside acculturation agent and will further investigate the impact of host others on the sojourning young adult.

2.11. LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

Having presented two separate sections in this literature review, it is necessary to combine them to address the overarching research objective and subsequent research questions guiding this research. This thesis combines research on personal brandscapes with studies of consumer acculturation. Personal brandscapes will be investigated in the context of mobility, utilising Fournier's (1998) theoretical framework of consumer-brand relationships. Studies of sojourners by Thompson and Tambyah (1999), Rahman and Cherrier (2010), Bardhi et al. (2012) and Figueiredo and Uncles (2014) are also used as basis for this research. Rahman and Cherrier's (2010) study provides useful foundations with regard to the combination of personal brandscapes and consumer acculturation, but it has only taken a one-off, exploratory look at international exchange students' experience of a global brandscape in a multicultural setting (Rahman & Cherrier, 2010), leaving room for further research and in-depth investigation. Particular focus will be placed on the mundane, everyday consumption and the relationship with brands of young sojourners in mobility. This thesis aims to elaborate on Moore et al.'s (2002) conceptualisation of brands as socialisation agents by transferring it to temporary mobility and movement, particularly living with and working for another family and the resulting new influences this shift brings with it.

This research explores how the different acculturation agents and forces influence au pairs' mundane consumption and brand behaviour. Answering Luedicke's (2011) call to include additional outside acculturation agents in the acculturation process, this thesis

investigates if and how mundane brands and consumer-brand relationships act as (Peñaloza, 1989)acculturation agents in mobility. In line with Luedicke's (2011) call, this thesis will further explore how the (temporary) relationships formed during the sojourn impact on the acculturation process and how shared production and consumption aid the acculturation and re-acculturation process for young sojourners as well as their home and host counterparts.

Additionally, focussing on a less studied type of acculturating group, namely young sojourners, this thesis aspires to broaden the field with regard to this consumer group. In a globalised world where temporary travel and cross-border exchanges are essential to achieve personal and professional goals, sojourners, and particularly young sojourners, are of great relevance to marketing theorists and practitioners alike. Previous consumer acculturation research has focussed predominantly on more permanent immigrants, providing useful insights for marketing strategy. However, the same would be applicable for sojourners and particularly young sojourners as the consumer force of tomorrow. Whereas young consumers edging towards leaving the family nest have recently started to receive attention in family research (Marchant & O'Donohoe, 2014), how their mundane consumption changes and shifts after actually leaving (and returning to) the family home to temporarily live abroad has not been investigated. Based on the gaps identified before, the overall broad objective of this thesis is as follows:

To explore additional acculturation agents and forces for mobile, young sojourners.

To address this objective, the following three research questions will be addressed in detail in separate sections in the findings chapter:

Research Question 1

- How does sojourners' mundane everyday consumption of their personal brands change?

Research Question 2

- How does the gifting (of material items) facilitate the sojourn experience?

Research Question 3

- How does the shared production and consumption of food aid the sojourners' acculturation and re-acculturation process?

To address the above three research questions in the findings chapter, it is essential to elaborate on the research methodology implemented in this thesis. The next chapter will provide great detail on the research context, ontology and epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. Following the presentation of the data collection and analysis process in Chapter Three, Chapter Four will then be used to present the findings for each of the above research questions. Chapter Five presents a concise discussion of the main findings, concludes this thesis and provides the theoretical and practical implications of this thesis and some suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overview

Using Crotty's (1998) model (see Figure 5), this chapter details the research methodology employed for this thesis. Firstly, the research context for this study is illuminated. Then, the adopted ontological, epistemological, and theoretical perspectives are explained to justify the methodological approach. Next, participant selection and recruitment is elaborated on before outlining the data collection methods and analysis. This section of the dissertation concludes with an evaluation of the quality of the data and a consideration of the ethical issues that arose.

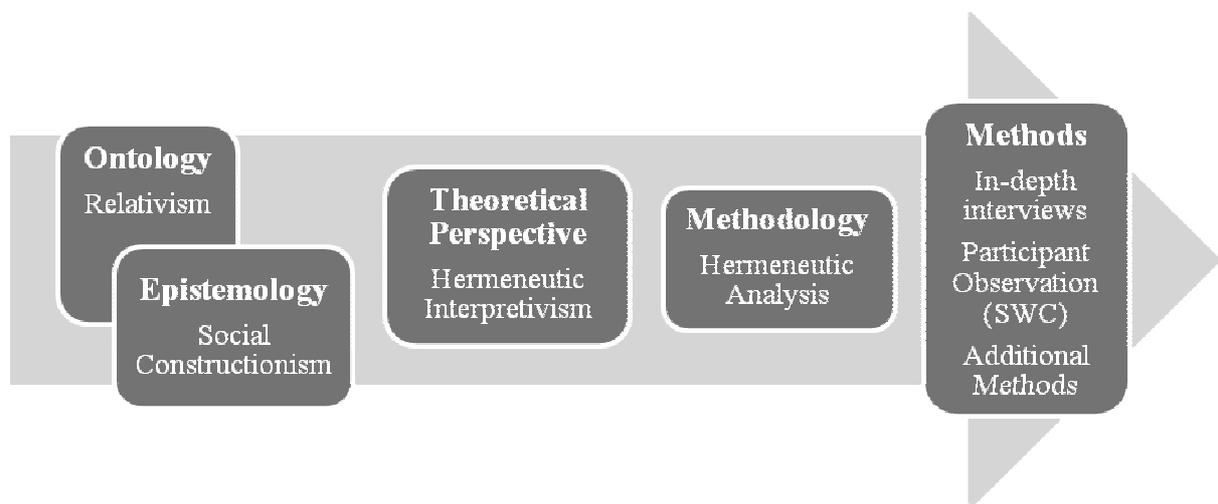


Figure 5: Qualitative Approach in this Study

[Adapted from Crotty (1998)]

3.2. Research Context

This study utilises the context of German au pair sojourners in New Zealand. The following section will explain why this context was chosen for this research. The role of the au pair within the family and duties, tasks and expectations associated with it will also be elaborated on.

3.2.1. Young Sojourners

In a world of incessant change, immobility is no longer a realistic option for consumers, who instead, are and need to be consistently 'on the move' (Bauman, 1998a; Sheller & Urry, 2006). More specifically, transnational mobility demands the transformation

of young adults' education and social life (Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006) to meet the employment requirements for graduates "competing in a global market with an increasingly educated population" (Wiers-Jenssen, 2008, p. 102). Past consumer behaviour research has addressed the temporary border-crossing of employed, part-time graduate students (Bardhi, et al., 2010), affluent expatriates (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999) and global nomads or the global elite (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014). However, few consumer research studies have focused on young adult consumers emerging from the family nest (for exception see Marchant & O'Donohoe, 2014), the consumers of tomorrow or Generation Y, and in particular those who sojourn across borders temporarily for educational purposes (for exception see Rahman & Cherrier, 2010) but who do not yet possess the same forms of capital as the 'global elite' (economic, social, cultural) (Bourdieu, 1986). Young adult consumers increasingly undertake these short-term interactions with foreign cultures to establish their individualized life paths (Bauman, 1998a; Hannam, et al., 2006; Wiers-Jenssen, 2008). For these younger consumers, short-term travel abroad is nowadays regarded as a rite-of-passage into adulthood and student or work life (van Gennep, 1960) in addition to establishing high-profile curriculum vitas (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003). The quest to find an appropriate job often involves a temporary stay in another country, for example through an international exchange semester, overseas internship or experiences gained during an overseas experience ("OE"), also called 'gap year', which includes voluntourism (an alternative form of tourism where cultural exchange is experienced through the engagement in work to help others), backpacking and working holidays (L. Brown & Graham, 2009; Larsen, et al., 2011; Lyons, et al., 2012; O'Reilly, 2006; UNWTO, 2010). Even though computer-savvy Generation Y is not as affluent as global elite sojourners studied in consumer behaviour (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999), young sojourners are more flexible and adventurous. Due to their age and often lack of responsibilities (i.e. caring for a family of their own) it is easier for them to live, work and travel in another geographical setting and culture than their home country (UNWTO, 2010).

3.2.2. Youth and Student Travel Market

Worldwide youth travel is steadily increasing, from approximately 190 million international youth trips in 2010 to predicted 300 million youth trips in 2020. In 2010, those youth trips accounted for 20% of the total international travel of 940 million trips (WYSE, 2012) and it is expected that youth travel will overtake business travel by 2015 (WYSE, 2014). The youth and student travel market overall accounts for 187 million international

arrivals and a gross market value of USD 165 billion annually, thereby underscoring the economic significance of young consumers' global intercultural exchanges (WYSE, 2012). In addition, "the youth travellers of today form the basis of Global Tourism tomorrow" (WYSE, 2012, p. 8). The youth and student travel market is broken down into five categories: language travel, higher education, work experience, backpackers, and volunteers. The average stay in the foreign country in those categories is more than 50 days, where spending ranges from USD 1,000-6,000. Travellers in this market range from 15 to 30 years, sojourn mostly solo/independently and are oftentimes first-time sojourners (WYSE, 2012).

As mentioned before, gaining work experience abroad is crucial in today's competitive job market and often also a requirement for acceptance into specific university degrees. Specifically focussing on the work experience category, this comprises au pairs, working travellers, interns, trainees, and camp counsellors (WYSE, 2012). In this thesis, specific emphasis is placed on au pairs for reasons which will be explained further along in this section. In particular, this study explores young female German au pairs in New Zealand: Key statistics for both Germany and New Zealand need to be reviewed to prove the relevance of the context of this thesis.

Germany is the second largest European tourism market for New Zealand, with the UK being the largest. Moreover, Germany is the largest non-English speaking market in Europe for New Zealand. In the financial year 2012/2013, during which most of the data for this thesis was collected, almost 4,000 Germans arrived to stay long-term or permanently in New Zealand. A further almost 67,000 short-term visitors from Germany arrived in the same year (StatisticsNZ, 2013). Additionally, a further almost 50,000 Germans were granted a Germany Working Holiday Scheme Visa, which allows them to work and travel in the country for up to twelve months, between 1 July 2008 and 30 November 2013 by Immigration New Zealand. The number of visas granted under this category is steadily rising. In the financial year 2012/2013 alone, Immigration New Zealand approved almost 11,000 applications under this scheme which allows young Germans (between 18 and 30 years), not only to travel but also work in New Zealand (ImmigrationNZ, 2013). Over the past few years, Tourism New Zealand, "the organisation responsible for marketing New Zealand to the world as a tourist destination" (TourismNewZealand, 2014), has focused particularly on this steadily growing German youth sector (TourismNewZealand, 2013). Many of the young Germans venturing to New Zealand temporarily for work and travel, particularly young women, work and live as au pairs in Kiwi families to immerse themselves into the local

culture, improve their English and earn money for further travel in New Zealand (AuPairWorld.net, 2011; IAPA, 2011).

3.2.3. Au Pairs

Responding to calls to review the way in which families are viewed (for example Coontz, 1997; Amber M. Epp & Price, 2008), Barnhart, Huff and Cotte's (2014) research on childcare and elderly care found that "contemporary constructions of family can include paid service providers [which] challenges traditional distinctions between consumers and producers and highlights the fluid, contextualised nature of family" (p. 1694). In a previous study, Huff and Cotte (2013) particularly focussed on the choice of market-based childcare services from the parents', or more precisely, mother's perspective. In their research, they categorised childcare broadly into four areas: "licensed daycare facility/center; licensed or unlicensed home-based care; live-in or live-out nanny; and a family member (e.g., grandparent, sibling)" (Huff & Cotte, 2013, p. 83). Opting for a live-in non-family member to provide care for the children in the form of a nanny, a mother chooses "an individual who will necessarily have an intimate and, in the case of only children, dyadic relationship with her charges" (Scheftel, 2012, p. 254). Psychologists Cancelmo and Bandini (1999) explain how live-in nannies "who, by their physical proximity and intimate involvement in family functions are inevitably drawn into the family dynamics" (p. xiii), including the participation in the everyday struggles of family life. Cancelmo and Bandini (1999) term this combined living arrangement 'extended familial space', which is both a real place, the household, and a symbolic place where members form emotional connections to each other, the family (Cancelmo & Bandini, 1999; Hogg, Folkman Curasi, & Maclaran, 2004). To provide around-the-clock care for the children, an increasing number of families opt for an au pair as live-in caregiver, which is promoted by various au pair agencies as "help [to] relieve your family of everyday stress and to get to know a different culture all at the same time" (AuPairWorld.net, 2013). In this thesis, au pairs essentially take on the role of the main caregiver in the extended familial space, resulting in their influence on parent-children and sibling-sibling dynamics as well as taking on, and perhaps challenging, the mother's role of homemaking (R. Cox & Narula, 2003) and intensive mothering (Macdonald, 1998).

Unlike backpackers (Larsen, et al., 2011), gap year volunteers or voluntourists (Lyons, et al., 2012) and most tertiary international exchange students in the same age range (L. Brown & Graham, 2009), au pairs stay with and work for a host family in a fixed location where they need to integrate and adjust to the family's customs, routines and mundane

activities which may ultimately result in personal change. Au pairs are primarily hired (after being carefully selected through a rigorous application process) to fulfil any household duties concerning the children. However, advertisements usually describe this in-home childcare service to prospective host families as “having another son or daughter in the house on a temporary basis” who “helps you through your daily routine by providing childcare support that's integrated into the family structure” (AuPairWorld.net, 2013). As prospective au pairs are promised that they will live within the host family, become a big sister (or big brother) for the host family’s children, improve language skills, gain an insight into the host culture and lifestyle of the host country (AuPairWorld.net, 2013), they expect integration into the host family as a family member. Because au pairs live with and take part in family activities, such as shared meal times, it is assumed that they do become embedded not just into the household, but also in some way into the collective identity of the family as this is “constructed from day-to-day activities like eating together” (DeVault, 1991, p. 39). Moisio, Arnould and Price (Moisio, Arnould, & Price, 2004) establish that “food plays a role in the production and negotiation of family and family member identities” (p. 364). This is echoed by Cox and Narula (R. Cox & Narula, 2003) who found that through eating practices, families can integrate or exclude the au pair, give her independence or “treat her like a child” (p. 341).

Numbers on how many au pairs are employed worldwide are hard to obtain. On AuPairWorld.net alone, an online platform allowing au pairs and host families to get in contact directly without the need for an intermediary, 289,680 au pairs and 75,600 host families had registered in 2013 (AuPairWorld.net, 2014). For New Zealand, Auckland-based Au Pair Link represents the largest au pair agency with an estimated 1,000 placements per year (Du Chateau, 2013). However, three other large agencies (Dream Au Pair, New Zealand Au Pair Association and Playschool Au Pair) provide their services in New Zealand with multiple smaller agencies not registered with the International Au Pair Association (IAPA, 2014). In the UK, it is estimated that in excess of 100,000 au pairs work at one time (Carroll, 2012). Research on au pairs in the UK has been conducted in anthropology and predominantly investigated the ambitions of Eastern European au pairs in London and the treatment of those young sojourners by their British host families. Especially prior to the inclusion of various East European countries into the EU, the primary aspiration for prospective au pairs from those countries was to gain a visa to visit the United Kingdom (Búriková & Miller, 2010). However, Búriková and Miller (2010) established that even after the integration of for example Slovakia into the European Union, only “few au pairs ever

decide to come to London specifically to experience this pseudo-family integration” (p. 34) but rather “to get away” and they see this temporary employment as “a means to come to London, to spend some time in this exciting metropolitan environment that they have heard so much about” (p. 35).

For this study, Germany and New Zealand were chosen as they are as geographically distant as possible but both are developed, Western countries. In addition, based on survey data acquired by the International Au pair Association, Germany is the number one country from which au pairs depart to stay in another country. New Zealand has in turn significantly improved its position to place eight in 2010 on the list of global destinations for au pairs therefore, indicating the growing interest of international au pairs in the country (IAPA, 2011). Further, families in New Zealand increasingly seek au pairs as caretakers for their children: For example, in 2011, approximately 450 Kiwi families used the internet platform *aupair-world.net* to find a suitable au pair (D. Obijon, personal communication, February 1, 2012). In New Zealand, families employing an au pair might be eligible for 20 hours government funding for early childhood education (ECE) (MinistryofEducation, 2013), making it an attractive and affordable option for many families, even those on benefits and not just “for the rich at all” (Du Chateau, 2013). In a recent popular media publication, New Zealand mothers discussed the advantages of employing German au pairs: New Zealand mother particularly valued the flexibility and reliability of German au pairs (Du Chateau, 2013). One mother explained the ground rule for establishing a good relationship with any au pair: “they have to be treated as a family member” (Du Chateau, 2013, p. 19). This is in stark contrast to the vagabond-like treatment of Eastern European au pairs in the UK as portrayed by Búriková and Miller (2010) and therefore, provides another valid ground for studying German au pairs in New Zealand as their power situation resembles that of an equal member of the family.

Barnhart, Huff and Cotte (2014) call for further research on family consumption and in particular, non-traditional constructions of family with prime focus on live-in caregivers. The aim of this thesis is to address this call by investigating live-in au pairs. Investigating au pairs who stay in a New Zealand host family and who are regarded as an integral part of it will provide greater insights into the mundane everyday consumption of sojourners, and thereby extend knowledge on this type of acculturating group. Further, as au pairs are incorporated into the host family essentially as a family member, their encounter with New Zealand’s brandscapes is inevitable, for example through grocery shopping in local supermarkets to prepare meals for the host family’s children. In turn, their personal

brandscape might shift in order for them to acculturate to the local environment. It is of prime interest in this thesis to investigate how this shift influences consumer-brand relationships. Further insights into this acculturating group might shed light on the impact a temporary sojourn has on home and host others due to the acculturation and re-acculturation of au pairs in two different cultural settings.

3.3. Ontology and Epistemology

“The philosophical discipline ontology contains hypotheses about what is, and what is not, real. [...] Reality may be much richer and much fuller of relations than one usually thinks or seems to think” (Naess, 1992, p. 124). In general, ontology is concerned with the nature of existence, the structure of reality as such and therefore ultimately with the study of being (Crotty, 1998).

Researchers are challenged to take an ontological stance, a position regarding the nature and essence of social things (Mason, 1996). The main distinction is made between realists on one side and relativists on the other, including various shades along this continuum. Realists propose that only one truth exists, referring to it as reality (Crotty, 1998; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Relativists reject this idea and suggest that there are multiple constructed realities: what is considered real is relative to each individual and the socio/historical context he or she is rooted in (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Naess (1989b) introduced the term *gestalt* (German for “essence” or “whole”) ontology “to take better care of some important phenomena usually denoted by terms such as *holistic thinking*.” (p. 461). In practice, researchers espousing a *gestalt* ontology view “a difference between contents of the real and the abstract structures of the real” (Naess, 1992, p. 125) with the core focus of the *gestalt* ontology being on the ‘difference’. Naess (1992) goes on to contend that *gestalt* ontology reminds individuals that something that is spontaneously experienced is highly complex. Aiming to clarify some of Naess’ (1989, 1992) terminology, Diehm (2006) says that particular circumstances, past and present, that shape spontaneous experiences can involve “any number of things” (p. 25), from the people who are experiencing something with an individual, to places where the experience occurs, to the individual’s own knowledge and previous encounters with the particular experience. Diehm (2006) emphasises Naess’ (1989; 1992) contention “that the qualities experienced are reality itself, and that we have access to them via various modes of relation” (p. 25). Naess’ (1989) conclusion for spontaneous experiences in a *gestalt* ontology

is “that our life experience is not of ‘things in themselves’ (Ding an sich, Kant), not ‘things for me’ (Ding an mich). Life experience is the experience of gestalts” (p. 136). Therefore, the ontological stance taken in this study is based on Naess’ (1989; 1992) concept of the gestalt ontology as “the whole is more than the sum of its parts, or the sum is externally related to the parts of the sum” (Naess, 1989a, p. 135). The researcher as well as participants in this thesis can be regarded as gestalt entities experiencing gestalts, or the whole of the experience, rather than particulars or merely parts of the experience. As Coate (2005) stated: “A better formulation of the gestalt maxim would be, “the part is more than a part”, or, “there is no spontaneous experience of the part merely as a part”.” Since ontology is concerned with the nature of existence, for this thesis, it is assumed that all things are related to one another and it depends on the viewer of these things to determine parts of an entity. The preceding discussion could be concisely summed up by a quote by Naess (1992): “Because of the different background, past experiences, mental capacities, two persons *have access* to different parts of (an indefinitely rich) reality” (p. 128). As can be seen in the following discussion of the epistemology, an important aspect of the philosophical grounding for this thesis is the focus on culture and thereupon dependant (and differing) experiences and backgrounds.

The epistemology of a study is concerned with providing philosophical grounding to decide what types of knowledge are possible (Crotty, 1998). Furthermore, it states what is regarded as knowledge or evidence in the social world, its possibilities, scope and general basis (Mason, 1996). In choosing an epistemological stance, the researcher identifies, explains and justifies his or her philosophical grounding (Crotty, 1998). Different ways exist of approaching the research process, dependent on how the researcher views the world, either from an objectivist, constructionist or subjectivist standpoint. Objectivism assumes that understandings and values are considered to be objectified in the people under study and objectivists recognise and discover meaning that is inherent in objects (Crotty, 1998). At the other end of the continuum, subjectivists assume that meaning is imposed on the object by the subject and therefore, the object makes no contribution to the generation of meaning – meaning comes from anything but an interaction between subject and object (Crotty, 1998). The constructionist epistemology lies in between the two extremes of objectivism and subjectivism and supposes that the truth cannot be discovered but “comes into existence in and out of [the] engagement with the realities in [the] world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Not one subjective or objective truth is waiting to be ascertained, but multiple truths need to be constructed through the interaction of individuals or communities with the world (Crotty,

1998; Esterberg, 2002). Constructionism can take many forms; however, the two more common forms are constructivism and social constructionism. Constructivism focuses on the individual's unique understanding of meaning. In social constructionism, culture is seen as source for human thought and action and therefore, all meaningful reality is socially constructed (Crotty, 1998).

For this thesis, a social constructionist epistemological stance was adopted because consumer acculturation was studied as a two-level phenomenon that occurs both at the individual and the group level. Even though the participants in this thesis moved to a foreign country temporarily by themselves, they all stemmed from the same culture and had the same cultural background and therefore understandings. In social constructionism it is assumed that certain symbols are meaningful and important because they have been inherited at birth and learned through infancy and childhood in the culture in which individuals were born. Navigating everyday life, people depend on their culture to direct behaviour and organise experiences. As the informants' interpretation of the world and their constructions of knowledge are embedded in the culture and society they were raised in (i.e. Germany) (Crotty, 1998), this approach helped understand the shift in their personal brandscape when moving to New Zealand temporarily – another culture where thoughts and emotions are socially constructed by its members. The following quote by Crotty (1998) summarises the key reason why social constructionism was chosen as the underlying epistemology for this study: Social constructionism “emphasises the hold our culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see things [...] and gives us a quite definitive view of the world” (Crotty, 1998, p.57, 58).

3.4. Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective of a study is the philosophical stance that lies behind the chosen methodology. Moreover, it is the view of the human world and social life within that world based on individuals' fundamental assumptions (Crotty, 1998). In this study, an interpretive theoretical perspective was adopted. Interpretivism aims to understand the construction of meaning within a social phenomenon through social constructions such as consciousness, language, shared meanings, tools, documents and other artefacts (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Klein & Myers, 1999). Therefore, interpretivism is the key theoretical perspective informing constructionism. In line with relativist ontology, it suggests that individuals construct their own view of reality, which implies that multiple realities can exist

for one single phenomenon. Interpretivism attempts to understand those individual social realities and searches for historically situated and culturally derived interpretations of the social world (Crotty, 1998).

The interpretivist theoretical perspective has resulted in three main types of research: symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. The latter is typically concerned with the process of understanding and interpreting meaning (Bleicher, 1980; Klein & Myers, 1999; Myers, 2004). *Verstehen* (or understanding) has been acknowledged to be of critical importance in human science, contrary to concepts of *Erkennen* or *Erklären* (knowing and explaining) in scientific experiments (Crotty, 1998). Generally speaking, the primary concern of understanding in hermeneutics is comprehending the meaning of a text or text-analogue (e.g. human artefacts, actions, cultures, organisations) with the underlying key objective of what people do, say and why (Myers, 2004). Hermeneutics implies that individuals can gain an understanding of the text that goes beyond the author's understanding. Thus, the audience or readership plays an integral part in the interpretive process as they make sense of the findings based on their pre-existing understandings (Crotty, 1998). Lastly, similar to epistemological standpoints ranging from objectivist over constructionist to subjectivist, hermeneutics can take different forms ranging from pure (objectivist), over critical (social constructionist) to postmodern (subjectivist). Therefore, studies undertaken in the realms of social constructionism should consequently utilise critical hermeneutics as a philosophical stance (Myers, 2004).

This research adopted a philosophical stance of hermeneutic interpretivism to explore personal brandscape shifts of young sojourners temporarily living in an initially unfamiliar brandscape. The meaning of consumer-brand relationships for sojourners was investigated through evaluating texts and text-analogues derived from methods such as in-depth interviews and participant observation. Hermeneutic interpretivism appeared most suitable in this research context as it has the ability to uncover intentions, meanings, values, feelings and beliefs that are hidden in the text (Crotty, 1998).

3.5. Methodology

The methodology of a study refers to the research design that shapes the choice as well as use of particular research methods, linking them to the desired outcomes. It can also be seen as the underlying strategy or plan of action to develop an understanding of the topic under investigation (Crotty, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) add that the methodology

provides a sense of vision or the path a researcher wants to take. The subsequently chosen methods go hand in hand with the methodology, furnishing the means for bringing this vision to reality (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A variety of methodologies exists and the most appropriate one needs to be chosen with regard to the theoretical perspective or philosophical standpoint a researcher takes.

Hermeneutics can be treated as both a theoretical perspective and a mode of analysis (Bleicher, 1980; Myers, 2004). In line with hermeneutic interpretivism, the most suitable methodology for this thesis is hermeneutic analysis. To understand how social reality is created, hermeneutic analysis utilises text and text-analogues (as described above) to derive an understanding of meaning (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). All data derived from the multiple methods is treated as text to comprehend the meaning imposed by the participants.

Of contemporary relevance to hermeneutic analysis are the papers by Spiggle (1994) and Klein and Myers (1999), which are both based on seminal interpretations of hermeneutics by Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur (Bleicher, 1980; Crotty, 1998; Klein & Myers, 1999; Myers, 2004; Spiggle, 1994). Most important to all of these studies is the hermeneutic circle. Crotty (1998) described how the hermeneutic circle has evolved and been shaped by various researchers, whereas the inherent meaning never changed. Overall, the hermeneutic circle describes the understanding of “the whole through grasping its parts, and comprehending the meaning of parts through divining the whole” (Crotty, 1998, p. 92). Klein and Myers (1999) prioritise the hermeneutic circle as the most important of their seven principles for interpretive research as it suggests that the constant movement back and forth from the whole to its parts and back again allows for the greatest understanding of meaning. Underlying this meta-principle are the other six principles which include contextualisation, interaction between researcher and their subjects, abstraction and generalisation, dialogical reasoning, multiple interpretations, and the principle of suspicion – as depicted in Table 5 (based on Klein & Myers, 1999).

Principle	Explanation
Hermeneutic Circle	Suggests that all human understanding is achieved by iterating between considering the interdependent meaning of parts and the whole that they form. This principle of human understanding is fundamental to all the other principles.
Contextualisation	Requires critical reflection of the social and historical background of the research setting, so that the intended audience can see how the current situation under investigation emerged.
Interaction between Researchers and Subjects	Requires critical reflection on how the research materials (or “data”) were socially constructed through the interaction between the researchers and participants.
Abstraction and Generalisation	Requires relating the idiographic details revealed by the data interpretation through the application of principles one and two to theoretical, general concepts that describe the nature of human understanding and social action.
Dialogical Reasoning	Requires sensitivity to possible contradictions between the theoretical preconceptions guiding the research design and actual findings (“the story which the data tell”) with subsequent cycles of revision.
Multiple Interpretations	Requires sensitivity to possible differences in interpretations among the participants as are typically expressed in multiple narratives or stories of the same sequence of events under study. Similar to multiple witness accounts even if all tell it as they saw it.
Suspicion	Requires sensitivity to possible “biases” and systematic “distortions” in the narratives collected from the participants.

Table 5: Seven Principles for Interpretive Research

[Based on Klein & Myers (1999, p. 72)]

In this research, each of the seven principles was implemented and integrated to provide the “whole story” of the social construction under study through reading the text and text analogues with the principles in mind. Using Klein and Myers (1999) principles allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the topic through not only considering them at the beginning of the research process but also continuously revisiting each one throughout the duration of the study. Whereas Klein and Myers’ (1999) seven principles can be regarded as an underlying path or strategy to undertake research, Spiggle’s (1994) formulation of seven operations were regarded as more useful in the data analysis phase as they depict the mechanics of analysis and therefore will be discussed further along in this chapter.

3.6. Methods

The first stage of the research approach involved identifying and reviewing the relevant literature, academic and non-academic, from various fields to be able to set the research into context and position it theoretically. Throughout the thesis, the researcher continued to review the relevant marketing literature. In addition, the relevant literature in other disciplines (psychology, sociology and anthropology) was consulted throughout the entire research process. Continuously reviewing relevant literature permitted the researcher to not only stay up-to-date with theoretical advances but also allowed for the inclusion of new theoretical findings from other areas, thereby constantly ensuring the topicality of the research as well as following the hermeneutic analysis by applying the hermeneutic circle at every stage of the research process. The following sections will illuminate the research design, participant recruitment, data collection and analysis.

3.6.1. Research Design

A longitudinal design was utilised because “longitudinal social research offers unique insights into process, change and continuity over time in phenomena ranging from individuals, families and institutions to societies” (Elliott, Holland, & Thomson, 2008, p. 228), Although prevalent in anthropology, community studies, education, psychology, health and increasingly, sociology and policy studies (Elliott, et al., 2008; Saldaña, 2003), longitudinal studies are far less common in consumer research. The potential of longitudinal research to generate depth, quality and a variety of understandings whilst also providing flexibility “for development and innovation to take place throughout the entire research process” (Elliott, et al., 2008, p. 235) makes it a particularly effective approach for examining consumer acculturation because it is a *process*. Consequently, rather than relying on one-off interview snapshots, this thesis adopts a longitudinal research design that encompasses all stages of the sojourn (as depicted in Figure 6).

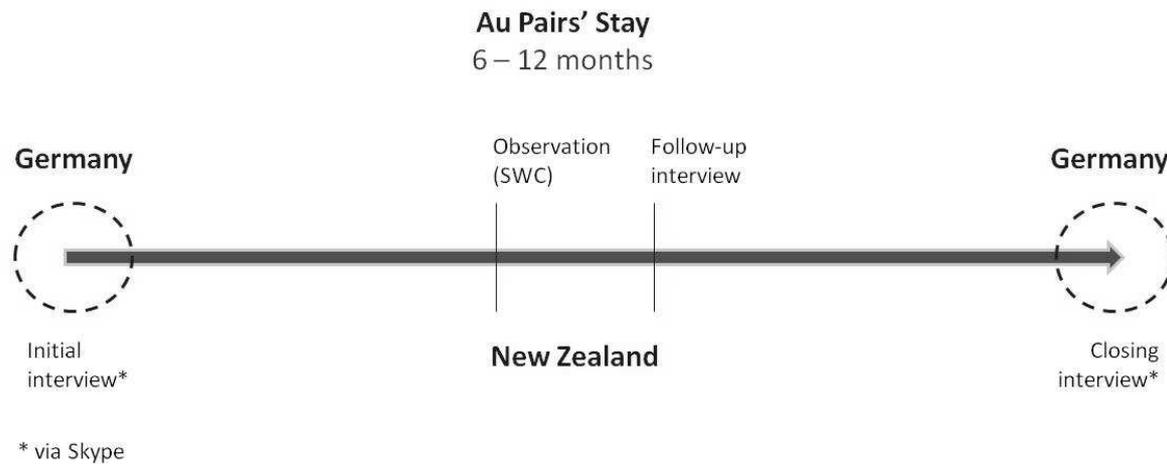


Figure 6: Data Collection Process

Data was collected over a period of 20 months, from March 2012 to October 2013. Participants' stays in New Zealand ranged from three to 12 months. Eleven participants were recruited prior to their stay in New Zealand. The other informants were recruited upon arrival in New Zealand, relatively early on in their sojourn. Follow up interviews were conducted throughout the informants' stay. Some participants took part in the observation process, which was also conducted during the sojourn. Lastly, many au pairs were interviewed upon their return to Germany to capture their experience of re-acclimating in their home country.

Overall, this multi-method research approach utilised a combination of in-depth interviews, observation, field notes, personal messages, and netnographic data over a fixed but long period of time, which allowed the researcher to fully comprehend all facets of the au pair experience (Belk, et al., 1989), including the development and shift in personal brandscape as well as relevant insights into the consumer acculturation of young sojourners. Data derived from all of the above-mentioned methods were regarded as text and text-analogues in line with the chosen theoretical perspective of hermeneutic interpretivism and hermeneutic analysis as methodology.

3.6.2. Participant Selection and Recruitment

Because this study is concerned with developing an understanding of young sojourners' shift in personal brandscapes, purposive sampling was used to select research participants (Esterberg, 2002; Fournier, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Rahman & Cherrier, 2010; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Participants were selected according to their potential to provide good insights into this phenomenon and to shed light on the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2003, 2011). Overall, participants had to fulfil the following criteria:

- Between 18 to 30 years
- Female
- From Germany originally
- Au pair
- Intending to, or already working and living within a New Zealand host family

Participants were selected based on their gender because female informants have been recognised as exhibiting more and deeper interpersonal relationships and brand involvement than male participants (Fournier, 1998). Additionally, more specifically for this particular context was the predominance of female over male au pairs. The vast majority of au pairs are women and until 1993, men were not even eligible to work as au pairs, at least not in the UK (R. Cox, 2007).

Permission was gained to join three au pair groups on Facebook that were specifically created for au pairs in New Zealand: “Au[pair]ckland”, “Au Pair Neuseeland 2012”, and “Au Pair Neuseeland Sommer 2012”. Whereas the first group was for international au pairs in Auckland, the latter two groups were specifically founded for German au pairs embarking on their sojourn to New Zealand in 2012. The researcher placed an advertisement in all three groups which asked potential participants to either “Like” the post or send a private Facebook message. Those who had “liked” the Facebook post were then contacted via private Facebook messages.

Over 70 prospective and current au pairs responded to the advertisement placed within these specialty groups. Of those, 21 respondents were selected of whom ten were already working and living within a host family in New Zealand. The other eleven respondents were in the final stages of planning their overseas experience. The final two participants were recruited using snowballing. In total, 23 participants from middle class families (nuclear, single-parent, blended), ranging from 18-26 years, from rural and urban towns throughout Germany took part in this research (see Table 6). The New Zealand host families consisted of single parent households, nuclear families, extended families as well as blended families. Au pairs had to take care of between one to four children in their families, with two families having a child with disabilities. The families of all participants lived on New Zealand’s North Island, primarily in Auckland; however, some participants stayed in families in Wellington and Hamilton and surroundings.

Pseudonym (age)	Host Family/ies	Time spent with Host Family
Anna (19)	parents, 3 children (1 disabled)	12 months
Celina (22)	1) parents, 1 child, 2) single mother, 2 children	1) 6 weeks, 2) 10 months
Christina (18)	parents, 2 children	12 months
Clarissa (19)	parents, 3 children	10 months
Henriette(18)	1) parents, 3 children, 2) parents, 2 children	1) 2 months, 2) 4 months
Jacqueline (18)	parents, 3 children	12 months
Jasmin (18)	1) parents, 4 children, 2) grandparents, 1 child, 3) single mother, 2 children	1) 5 months, 2) 3 weeks, 3) 1 month
Jessica (20)	single mother, new partner, 4 children	12 months
Karina (18)	parents, 2 children	10 months
Klara (22)	single mother, new partner, 2 children	9 months
Larina (19)	parents, 2 children	11 months
Linda (20)	1) parents, 2 children, 2) parents, 2 children	1) 4 months, 2) 3 months
Lotta (19)	parents, 3 children	12 months
Melanie (18)	1) parents, 2 children, 2) parents, 2 children	1) 2.5 months, 2) 5 weeks
Nadine (19)	parents, 2 children	12 months
Natalie (26)	parents, 1 child (disabled)	6 months
Sabine (23)	1) parents, 3 children, 2) parents, 2 children	1) 7 weeks, 2) 10 months
Sabrina (20)	parents, 1 child	8.5 months
Saskia (19)	parents, 3 children	7 months
Tanja (19)	parents, 1 child	11 months
Tina (19)	parents, 2 children	12 months
Tinka (18)	parents, 2 children	6 months
Vera (19)	parents, 3 children	12 months

Table 6: Participant Details

Throughout the study, six au pairs changed host families at least once for reasons ranging from irrevocable differences to unemployment of one of the adults in the household and therefore loss of financial means but gain of time. Two au pairs went back to Germany early as immersion into and adaptation to the local host proved too difficult and stressful; also they could not find a family arrangement that they felt comfortable in. Even though those particular cases did not allow for a longitudinal following, they present valuable insights and represent the reality of au pair experiences for many young women worldwide.

All participants received the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (see Appendix D) and had to sign the Participant Consent Form (see Appendix C) before the commencement of

data collection. Both forms were approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) on 19 December 2011 for a period of three years (Reference Number 7753/2011) (see Appendix B). A koha or thank you gift was presented to all participants. Participants received a gift voucher to the value of up to 100NZD, depending on the degree of commitment to this research. For interviews conducted post return to Germany, participants were sent a koha in the form of their favourite sweets from New Zealand.

3.6.3. Data Collection Methods

As briefly outlined under research design, this longitudinal study employed a combination of different methods to fully comprehend the shift in personal brandscapes and the consumer acculturation of (young) sojourners. Multiple semi-structured in-depth interviews were used in conjunction with participant observation (SWC) to explore this less studied group. Table 7 provides an overview of the stages and data collection methods each participant was involved in.

Pseudonym (age)	Pre (Skype)	During (Interview 1)	During (SWC)	During (Interview 2)	Post (Skype)
Anna (19)	x	x	x	x	x
Celina (22)		x	x		x
Christina (18)	x	x	x		x
Clarissa (19)	x		x		
Henriette(18)	x				
Jacqueline (18)	x	x			x
Jasmin (18)		x			x
Jessica (20)		x			x
Karina (18)		x	x	x	
Klara (22)		x	x		
Larina (19)	x				
Linda (20)		x			x
Lotta (19)	x		x	x	x
Melanie (18)	x	x			
Nadine (19)		x	x	x	
Natalie (26)		x			
Sabine (23)		x	x		
Sabrina (20)	x	x			x
Saskia (19)		x			x
Tanja (19)		x			
Tina (19)	x	x			
Tinka (18)	x		x		x
Vera (19)		x			

Table 7: Participants, Data Collection Stages and Methods

In total, 11 participants were interviewed via Skype prior to their sojourn. In New Zealand, 19 participants took part in face-to-face interviews, whilst 11 participants were also interviewed post return to Germany, again via Skype. Eight of the 23 participants also took part in the participant observation in the form of shopping with consumers (Lowrey, Otnes, & McGrath, 2005; Otnes, et al., 1995), which will be elaborated on shortly. As can be seen in Table 7, five informants only participated in one stage of the data collection. Attrition in the form of dropping out of this study was expected as the longitudinal research design demanded participants' long-term involvement (Elliott, et al., 2008; Saldaña, 2003). However, six informants participated in all three stages of the interview process (prior to, during and post return) and four of these participants also took part in the observation process. The six participants listed in Table 8 represent the main cases for this study.

Pseudonym (age)	Pre (Skype)	During (Interview 1)	During (SWC)	During (Interview 2)	Post (Skype)
Anna (19)	x	x	x	x	x
Christina (18)	x	x	x		x
Jacqueline (18)	x	x			x
Lotta (19)	x		x	x	x
Sabrina (20)	x	x			x
Tinka (18)	x		x		x

Table 8: Main Participant Cases

The above six informants (Anna, Christina, Jaqueline, Lotta, Sabrina, and Tinka) constitute the basis for this longitudinal research, supplemented by 17 additional participant accounts collected at various stages (see table xx) to prevent possible distortion as a result of missing cases (Elliott, et al., 2008). Further data was collected online in the form of a netnography of the three au pair Facebook groups as well as through private messaging (email, Facebook) with some of the participants. The following sections elaborate on all three of the applied methods in more detail.

3.6.3.1. In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews are repeated face-to-face conversational encounters between researcher and informants directed towards gaining a better understanding of the informants' perspectives on their own lives, different experiences and situations, all expressed in their own words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). An underlying social constructionist epistemology implies an inevitable interaction between interviewer and interviewee whereby meaning is co-constructed (Charmaz, 2011; Esterberg, 2002; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). In-depth interviews can take the form of one of two extreme options, structured or unstructured, or a compromise between those two – semi-structured (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). This study employed a semi-structured, one-on-one in-depth interview data collection method to gain rich insights into the expected shift in personal brandscape when moving to a foreign country temporarily. Semi-structured interviews require a certain number of fixed questions which are used as a flexible guideline throughout the interview as the interviewees' answers direct the dialogue (Cavana, et al., 2001). An interview guide (see Appendix A) was created for the first stage of interviews with a number of initial questions, which provided probing cues to gain a deeper understanding by uncovering the participants' opinions and underlying principles (Cavana, et al., 2001). The reliance on an interview guide for semi-structured interviews enables some structure and guidance but also provides flexibility for respondents to freely express their perceptions. Further, semi-structured interviews ensure that the

researcher does not limit the potential research outcome but rather maintains consistency with the underlying philosophies that provide the grounding for this study (Bryman & Bell, 2003). By undertaking multiple interviews with participants before, throughout and after their sojourn in New Zealand, the researcher was able to identify changes, paradoxes, and similarities across the different perspectives provided through the participants' responses.

First, interviews conducted prior to participants' sojourns were carried out using Skype. Interviews were scheduled either via email or via private Facebook message. A day and time that suited the participants was chosen, taking into consideration the time difference between Germany and New Zealand (between ten and twelve hours). As mentioned before, eleven interviews, which ranged from 30 to 90 minutes, were conducted pre-sojourn. Most of these interviews were conducted in English. However, many informants used German when they could not express themselves well enough in English and a few informants preferred to conduct the full interview in German, which was then transcribed and translated into English. Questions for the initial interviews concerned the decision-making process for becoming an au pair (and why in New Zealand), anticipated experience, preparation and organisation prior to the sojourn. The use of Skype did not appear to present an issue for the participants. The video function was used for all interviews and most participants Skype regularly with their friends so were therefore accustomed to using this form of virtual communication. It appears that for this research, the use of Skype provided a comfortable interview setting, allowing participants to express their feelings freely as they were in familiar surroundings. Some of the participants in this research were already in New Zealand when they were recruited; however, it was at the beginning of their sojourn. Questions in those interviews were along the same lines as mentioned above but also included probing on how they experienced their first few days with and adjustment to the host family and specifically, their consumer-brand relationships with mundane FMCG brands. In addition to gaining a better understanding of this stage of the sojourn, the initial pre-interviews were also used to build rapport with the participants.

Second, interviews were conducted during the sojourn with 19 participants of whom eight had already been interviewed pre-sojourn. Three participants were interviewed twice: first, early on in their stay and then again closer to their departure. Interviews took place at a date, time, and place convenient for the participants. Locations for interviews ranged from University grounds to coffee shops, parks and the researcher's home. Interviewees preferred not to be interviewed at their host family's residence to be able to speak freely about their experiences. At this stage, interviews ranged from one to over two hours. Again, most

interviews were conducted in English. The follow up interviews in New Zealand were concerned with the adjustment to the local host environment and all its facets (see Appendix A for interview guide).

Lastly, eleven informants took part in a follow up interview post-sojourn via Skype: Six of those had also been interviewed prior to and/or during their sojourn, therefore representing the six longitudinal cases. In addition, the other five interviewees had participated in interviews during their stay in New Zealand. All post interviews were conducted in English and lasted between one to two hours. For the follow up interviews post return, the interviews incorporated questions on re-acculturation and adjustment in the home country and within the home family.

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber and the researcher herself. Six interviews were conducted purely in German: Those interviews were transcribed in German by the researcher herself as well as a contracted German-born international student at the University of Auckland who signed a transcriber confidentiality form (see Appendix E). All six interviews were then translated into English by the researcher.

3.6.3.2. Observation – “Shopping with Consumers”

In addition to in-depth interviews, observation provided further insights into the lived experience of sojourners (Angrosino & Rosenberg, 2011; Gram, 2010). Observation in social research focuses on the behaviour and experiences of individuals in authentic real-world settings to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon (Goulding, 2002). Most observers try to enter the field without preconceptions or specific hypotheses to gain rich insights into a particular research area (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Researchers undertaking observations enter the field under study taking on the role either as participant observers or non-participant observers (Cavana, et al., 2001).

In this study, participant observation took place in the form of shopping with consumers (SWC) (Lowrey, Otnes, & Ruth, 2004; McGrath & Otnes, 1995; Otnes, et al., 1995; Silberer & Wang, 2009). This data collection method involves the participant observer entering the field with the informants and becoming part of the social life under investigation through accompanying participants on their shopping trip to a supermarket or specialty store (Britten, Jones, Murphy, & Stacy, 1995; Cavana, et al., 2001). Through physically being at the point-of-purchase with the participant, the researcher is able to be fully immersed in the retail setting and systematically observe the dimensions of that setting as well as actions, relationships and interactions (Mason, 1996; Silberer & Wang, 2009). Using an unstructured

observation method requires the researcher to record everything that is observed and of possible relevance to the research topic (Britten, et al., 1995; Cavana, et al., 2001). The researcher compiled notes whilst undertaking observations and converted them into proper field notes after each shopping trip. Combining the SWC method with in-depth interviews is the basis for one of the advantages of this multi-method approach: In-depth interviews alone do not allow for the observation of participants' actual behaviour, whereas the sole observation of behaviour does not verify or clarify possible questions. Therefore, the combination of these two methods is highly appropriate when studying a topic related to choosing brands and everyday consumption (Lowrey, et al., 2005; McGrath & Otnes, 1995; Otnes, et al., 1995). Further, SWC supports and improves trust and rapport which is crucial between researcher and participant. Creating a less academic space for engagement with the participant made the activity more enjoyable. As participants were the guides of the shopping trip and explained their behaviour as it occurred, the researcher was able to gain in-depth insights that are not possible through solely interviewing participants (Gram, 2010; Lowrey, et al., 2005; Otnes, et al., 1995). However, a potential change in the shopping behaviour of participants might occur due to the presence of the researcher. It was anticipated that this would be overcome through researcher-participant congruity; because the researcher is also a German young adult female, who moved to New Zealand over six years ago, she was able to quickly establish rapport with the informants (Otnes, et al., 1995) which further allowed for in-depth discussion that would usually occur between friends.

Eight accompanied shopping trips were undertaken with ten participants. One shopping trip was conducted with three informants: Lotta brought two other German au pairs (Klara and Sabine) to the shopping trip. They were later interviewed by the researcher, therefore becoming part of the sample. One other participant, Christina, also brought another German au pair along to the participant observation; however, as she did not consent to participate in this research, her data will not be used. Shopping trips were conducted at a supermarket conveniently located for the participants, either in central Auckland or the suburb where the au pair lived. Supermarkets were all 'regular' supermarkets, not discount or bulk-buy supermarkets. For five au pairs, the accompanied shopping trip was the first time they had visited a supermarket in New Zealand. One participant had been to a local supermarket before and the remaining four participants would regularly do the grocery shopping for the host family. Therefore, the level of expertise and familiarity with New Zealand supermarkets and brands varied across SWC participants, ranging from complete novices to more experienced shoppers in the host country.

SWC trips lasted between 30 minutes to over two hours. The only instruction participants were given was to talk the researcher through their shopping experience by verbally elaborating on any thought processes that were taking place internally. Most participants discussed their shopping behaviour, brand preferences, and cultural similarities and differences in the shopping process freely, requiring little probing. However, specific items were probed directly, particularly items found in the personal care aisle. Again, researcher-participant congruity allowed for more open discussions of sensitive items such as female personal care products. Novice shoppers elaborated more on the product, brand, and supermarket differences between New Zealand and Germany whereas more experienced shoppers discussed their host family's consumption patterns in greater detail. The route through the supermarket was determined by the participants; however, most SWC trips followed the same path: starting from the produce section, moving through the deli area and then passing through each aisle, stopping whenever items were picked up or discussed.

Throughout the participant observation, the researcher took brief notes whenever possible. Following some shopping trips, the researcher expanded on the field notes or recorded her thoughts which were then transcribed verbatim. In total, 30 pages of concise field notes were compiled. Those observation notes were primarily used to discuss certain phenomena with the participants at the next follow up meeting, either through the presentation of the field notes or through the incorporation of observation insights into the semi-structured interview guide.

3.6.3.3. Additional Data

In addition to both in-depth interviews and the SWC method, the researcher was also able to collect data using a netnography (Kozinets, 2002) of the three au pair Facebook groups ("Au[pair]ckland", "Au Pair Neuseeland 2012", and "Au Pair Neuseeland Sommer 2012") she had gained permission to join. Data was collected using the NVivo 10 web browser extension "NCapture" which can extract content from social networking sites. The content that was collected from the Facebook groups included files, wall posts and comments as well as some photos. The user generated files are particularly important for this research as they include collaborated information on for example gifts for the host family and essential products to pack for New Zealand. Despite the vast amount of data that was collected using a netnography, the information collected on Facebook will only be used to supplement interview and observation data if necessary.

As the researcher formed a close relationship with many of the participants, frequent updates on their experience via private Facebook messages or email were common. Contact was maintained with many informants throughout and after their stay in New Zealand, resulting in a vast amount of informal data. Information received in this way is seen as part of the data collection process and will be used to strengthen arguments build through interview and observation data when applicable.

3.6.4. Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis were iterative in this research. The researcher commenced the initial stage of the data analysis process by reading through the interviews line by line to carefully identify any themes that appeared to be of interest. At this stage of open coding the researcher worked intensively with the data to develop as many themes as necessary to capture different possible angles that the participants could have been elaborating on (Esterberg, 2002; Hopkinson & Hogg, 2006). This process played a great part in allowing the researcher to immerse herself in the data. Thus, attaining familiarity with the data helped the researcher ensure that her research is thorough and rigorous (Esterberg, 2002). To assist the organisation of the vast amount of data collected utilising different methods, the computer-based text analysis package NVivo 10 was used as a category management tool. Data were stored and managed within NVivo through the creation of relevant folders and nodes.

Following the initial open coding process, particular attention was paid to recurring themes and patterns throughout all transcripts, which were subsequently grouped into relevant categories as part of the axial coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1991). Due to the overlap of data collection and analysis, comparable incidents found in new transcripts were either coded directly into the applicable categories or, if necessary, sub-themes were created. Further along the analysis, coding became more focused and compatible themes shifted into higher-order concepts (Hopkinson & Hogg, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1991), eventually leading to several key constructs created through the process of constant comparison and adaptation. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data and the plausibility of interpretations, findings were presented to and discussed with the researcher's supervisor who evaluated the analysis and was able to offer valuable suggestions.

Overall, the hermeneutic circle was followed through the data analysis phase, going from the whole to its parts and back to the whole (Crotty, 1998; Klein & Myers, 1999; Spiggle, 1994). As previously mentioned, Spiggle's (1994) conceptualisation of analysis was

taken into account in this study. Spiggle (1994) posited that researchers “organize data, extract meaning, arrive at conclusions, and generate or confirm conceptual schemes and theories that describe that data” (p.493) by utilising the following seven operations throughout the analysis phase: categorisation, abstraction, comparison, dimensionalisation, integration, iteration and refutation (Spiggle, 1994). These seven categories were utilised in the following ways to aid the initial open and subsequent axial coding stages, not necessarily in the order listed below:

Operations	Explanation
Categorisation	Involves naming, or giving labels to, instances of the phenomenon found in the data” (Spiggle, 1994, p. 493), along the lines of open coding. Relevant units of data were labelled and classified, focussing on changes, tensions and paradoxes that were evident. Broad categories that were created included consumer-brand relationships in temporary mobility and the role of the au pair within the host family.
Abstraction	“Groups previously identified categories into more general, conceptual classes” (Spiggle, 1994, p. 493). Abstraction involved early stages of axial coding of categories to establish “more concrete instances found in the data that share certain common features” (Spiggle, 1994, p. 493).
Comparison	Places emphasis on the going back and forth between “differences and similarities across incidents within the data currently collected” (Spiggle, 1994, p.493) and data to be collected. Also referred to as constant comparison, all passages categorised under the same label were constantly compared to others under the same label to ensure consistency and detect deviations (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This stage is closely related to the iteration stage.
Dimensionalisation	Occurs when a category has previously been identified and needs to be broken down. The researcher explores “its attributes or characteristics along continua or dimensions” (Spiggle, 1994, p. 494). For example, in this thesis, the researcher categorised passages under the category “Reasons for becoming an au pair”. The dimensions of this passage included, but were not limited to, “experience another culture”, “enjoy working with children”, “break after school”, and “realise individualised self project”. Those dimensions were then exposed to further axial coding.
Integration	“Require[s] the mapping of relationships between conceptual elements” (Spiggle, 1994, p. 495). Axial coding plays the most important part at this stage, based on initial axial coding conducted at the abstraction stage. Here, the researcher began “integrating the theory by noting in the data that certain conditions, contexts, strategies, and outcomes tend to cluster together” (Spiggle, 1994, p. 495). Whereas categorisation breaks the data into passages, integration brings related codes back together.
Iteration	Involves “moving through data collection and analysis in such a way that preceding operations shape subsequent ones” (Spiggle, 1994, p. 495). Using multiple semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to adapt the guiding questions constantly. Firstly, the follow up interviews with individual participants were based on knowledge derived from the initial interviews. Secondly, analysis of interviews provided grounds for the selection of new participants. Lastly, participant observation was guided by the findings from the analysis of preceding interviews. Overall, the researcher went back and forth between passages or categories in each interview but also between the entire set of interview transcripts and observation field notes.

Refutation	“Involve[s] deliberately subjecting one’s emerging inferences – categories, constructs, propositions, or conceptual framework – to empirical scrutiny” (Spiggle, 1994, p. 496). In this thesis, the researcher located negative incidents which depicted a deviance from the emerging conceptual ideas and explored those further. For example, one negative case was uncovered with relevance to the reliance on familiar brands in mobility: Tanja was the only participant who did not actively search for familiar branded products.
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Table 9: Spiggle's (1994) Seven Operations for Data Analysis

The above mentioned seven stages established by Spiggle (1994) were used to analyse the vast amount of data and make sense of it before moving into the interpretation which will be elaborated on in the findings chapter. Before concluding this section, for the iterative data analysis phase, the perception process of exposure, attention and interpretation needs to be acknowledged: whereas the researcher provides interpretations of the findings in Chapter Four, the interview transcripts of communication with participants already represent interpretations of their understanding of the au pair sojourn experience. The participants in this thesis would have assigned meaning to certain stimuli that have occurred under specific situational instances based on their individual characteristics. Therefore, the verbal accounts of their sojourn experience represent the meanings they have assigned to it. Once the researcher has analysed the participants’ interpretations, another layer of meaning is imposed – the meaning that the researcher would associate with the findings. Hence, the creation of the ‘final’ interpretations presented in Chapter Four is a creative act by the researcher and the participants.

3.7. Evaluating Data Quality

Whereas quantitative research relies on measures such as reliability and validity, qualitative research focuses on ensuring trustworthiness of the collected data. Researchers must endeavour to convince inquirers that the findings of the qualitative research are worth paying attention to. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that in order for qualitative research to be considered trustworthy, a high degree of transparency in the research process needs to be ensured. Therefore, a set of criteria has been established to support the evaluation of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.7.1. Credibility

Credibility is concerned with the accurate representation of the social phenomenon under investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Taking a social constructionist epistemological stance, understanding of the social phenomenon emerges from the interaction between

researcher, participants and data. Ultimately, it is the credibility of the construct the researcher arrives at that ensures its acceptability to others (Bryman & Bell, 2003). To guarantee that data remained credible, in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim and possible inconsistencies double-checked with the participants. In addition, triangulation, a multi-method approach to overcome problems of validity and bias, was employed to further ensure credibility. In-depth interviews and observations were used in conjunction with each other to help overcome the deficiencies or limitations of each method by compensating it with the benefits of the other method (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Minichiello, 1995; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). In this thesis, the combination of multiple methods allowed for the validation of the findings by exploring them from different vantage points (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Minichiello, 1995). Triangulation was additionally ensured by using member checks.

3.7.2. Transferability

The transferability criterion refers to the ability to apply the findings of a study to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As this research is concerned with the exploration of the experience of young au pair sojourners it requires the intensive study of a rather small group of people. Therefore, the degree to which findings are generalisable and transferable is limited. However, it is important to appreciate that it was not the researcher's intention to aim for the outcome to be generalisable but rather to provide a starting point for further research into consumer behaviour in for example other types of mobile consumers (immigrants, expatriates, etc.) and mundane consumption and consumer-brand relationships in mobility.

3.7.3. Dependability

Whereas reliability is used in quantitative research, dependability assesses the degree of stability and consistency in the research processes of qualitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With regard to this thesis, the researcher ensured consistency by the integration of tools such as the interview guide. The interview guide gave all participants the opportunity to respond to the same topics while still allowing the researcher to maintain a degree of flexibility. As previously mentioned, the researcher gathered data from multiple sources using two main and further additional research methods. Theoretical saturation was reached once information from all sources had become reliably repetitive and emerging constructs were regarded as relatively robust, also contributing to the dependability of this thesis.

3.7.4. Confirmability

Confirmability ensures that the researcher does not allow personal values and views to influence the process of the study and the findings derived from it (Bryman & Bell, 2003). However, complete objectivity in this study was impossible as research was conducted using a social constructionist epistemology where the researcher is regarded as an integral part of the interpretation process. Nevertheless, it will be apparent that the findings are predominantly based on the participants' views reflected through their responses or actions. To prevent or limit biasing the findings, the researcher initially acknowledged personal preconceived notions due to her heritage and paid constant attention to not letting those preconceptions influence the research process. In addition, continuous assessment, feedback, advice and direction from the supervisor ensured the confirmability of the findings. Regular peer-debriefings with the (non-German female) supervisor and (German male) co-supervisor were carried out during the data collection and analysis process to ensure confirmability.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

Given that social research is conducted for, by and about people, researchers need to consider ethical issues surrounding a study (Esterberg, 2002). The ethical codes set out by the University of Auckland were followed in this research. Ethics Approval was granted in the provisional year (19 December 2011) by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) (Reference Number 7753/2011) (see Appendix B). The two main considerations in this study were the receipt of informed consent and the maintenance of the confidentiality of participants.

Ethics were considered prior to conducting the research and were taken into account during and after the research. Informed consent was gained from each participant prior to participating in the research by providing a Participant Consent Form (see Appendix C). This form was signed by each participant if they agreed to take part in this research (Cavana, et al., 2001). In addition, this form explained the nature and purpose of this research; however, if questions appeared at the time of the interview or observation, the researcher was able to answer them by verbally rephrasing or restating the purpose of the research (Cavana, et al., 2001). Further, a Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix D) provided the participants with detailed information about the research agenda and requirements of informants.

The information given by the participants as well as any details about the participants were treated as strictly confidential since guarding the participants' privacy is the primary

responsibility of any researcher (Cavana, et al., 2001; Mason, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, the third party transcribing audio recorded interviews and field notes was required to sign a confidentiality form (see Appendix E). Participants' names were changed to pseudonyms to protect their identity. Participants' contact details were kept in a safe place separate from the interview transcripts and field notes (Esterberg, 2002) to further disguise and safeguard their identity. Finally, the findings were constructed in a manner that does not allow for misinterpretation or distortion of the data (Cavana, et al., 2001).

3.9. METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

The third chapter of this research has demonstrated the theoretical underpinnings of this research. Utilising a relativist ontological stance, it was appropriate to use social constructionism as underlying epistemology. Meaning is socially constructed in the context of this study, which also implies that the theoretical perspective would adapt interpretivism. As this study implements multiple methods, hermeneutic interpretivism as theoretical perspective as well as hermeneutic analysis as methodology allows viewing all collected data as text and thereby, unifies the data analysis process for texts and text-analogues. In-depth interviews, SWC and additional data help the researcher to explore how young sojourners' personal brandscape might shift when temporarily living and working in a foreign country. In addition, this chapter has provided more information on the research context as well as the recruitment and selection of participants.

CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS

4.1. Overview

This chapter of the thesis presents the interpretations of the data to address the three research questions posed earlier. Data excerpts are interpreted with the assistance of the relevant literature, organised by research question.

Research Question 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does sojourners' mundane everyday consumption of their personal brands change?
Research Question 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the gifting (of material items) facilitate the sojourn experience?
Research Question 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the shared production and consumption of food aid the sojourners' acculturation and re-acculturation process?

4.2. SECTION I – SOJOURNERS' CONSUMPTION OF PERSONAL BRANDS

This first section of the findings chapter addresses the first research question that was posed in the beginning of this thesis:

How does sojourners' mundane everyday consumption of their personal brands change?

This question focuses on how *mundane everyday consumption* and *personal brands* change when consumers temporarily relocate to a host country and shift back to their home upon completion of the sojourn. Research on consumer-brand relationships has found that consumers' identity concerns are experienced even in mundane consumption and trivial everyday brand behaviors which in turn provide meaning (Ashworth, et al., 2009; Fournier, 1998, 2009; Kleine, et al., 1993). However, "much of the emphasis in consumption has been on the extraordinary, the conspicuous" (Marshall, 2005, p. 69) with "most brand research to date tell[ing] us about brands that stand out in people's lives" (Coupland, 2005, p. 106). Only

limited research has been conducted on the mundane, ordinary everyday consumption (of brands) (Coupland, 2005; Holttinen, 2014; Kleine, et al., 1993) and no particular focus has been placed on ordinary brands in (temporary) mobility. In this section, the focus is on the mundane everyday consumption of primarily personal care and cosmetics brands and, additionally, food brands. This section thereby also addresses Luedicke's (2011) call to investigate outside acculturation agents.

This first section of the findings firstly discusses the expectations of young sojourners prior to the sojourn, elaborates on the exposure to a different brandscape in the host country, then explores the ties to home personal brands and the reasons for the reliance on the familiar and lastly, illuminates their experimentation with locally available brands. As this research will show, while personal home brands may appear to be mundane everyday products on the surface, at a deeper level, they function in important ways to maintain the self, identity and physical appearance, stabilise, provide comfort and security and let sojourners connect to the past, child self and the home. In addition, what might have appeared to be a mundane choice in the home country can become a critical and complex anchor in the host country. However, it will also be illustrated how young sojourners form close, temporary ties to local brands and local instantiations of global brands. Those relationships are important for the formation of the present, sojourning self based on local artefacts in the form of brands.

4.2.1. Prior Expectations

It is necessary to first elaborate on the sojourners' prior expectations and their subsequent recognition of the various differences between home and host. Data from interviews conducted prior to the sojourn show that young sojourning au pairs had not previously thought about their relationship with particular personal care and cosmetic brands and products but had given some thought to their relationship with certain food brands. When asking about personal care brands, detailed probing was necessary to uncover how they anticipated coping with possibly not being able to acquire the same cosmetic brands and products. Not many of the participants had given this much thought, which is consistent with Mehta and Belk's (1991) reasoning of why their Indian informants only displayed photographs of deceased elderly relatives compared to the U.S. informants' display of multimember family photographs. They found that consumers living in the United States, away from family members, greatly emphasised having photographs of their absent family members in contrast to consumers living in India with extended family who did not place much emphasis on having family photographs. However, upon geographical separation from

the family unit, multimember family portraits become favourite possessions and crucial to the extended self of Indian migrants. Applying this reasoning to the au pair participants sheds light on why they did not critically engage with the separation from personal brands during the pre-interviews when still in Germany because those items were available to them on a daily basis. In addition, those personal brands were used routinely, which is based on the principle of “rhythms and temporalities in everyday life, rarely noticed or reflected upon” (Ehn & Löfgren, 2009, p. 99). The invisibility of mundane brands in everyday life in the home household (Coupland, 2005) also contributes to the lack of attention to those brands prior to the sojourn. The mundane consumption of personal brands and practices surrounding their use was not something most participants had thought about prior to their sojourn. Anna (19) explained how she predominantly uses one particular brand, L’Oreal, for shampoo and face wash:

I use L’Oreal and I think it will also exist in New Zealand or not? [...] Yeah, but I think L’Oreal, I have good experiences for example with my hair shampoo and all over the world, Italy something, I don’t know. Yeah, so I think that won’t be a problem. [...] I, I’m, for my hair and for my face I’m, I know what I need and so I’m, yeah, I don’t think that it will change my [shampoo].

As was the case for many of the participants, Anna had previously travelled for holidays mostly within Europe and with family or friends and was always able to find products by L’Oreal. She acknowledged the global reach of this brand and anticipated that she would be able to find products that she was familiar with. In addition, she did not expect that she would change her hair and face products despite not knowing for sure if similar, or the same, products were available. Anna’s account is representative of many of the other au pairs’ in the sense that she had not previously put much thought into which personal care and cosmetic items would be available in the host country. Again, the immediate availability of personal brands in the home country, whilst still residing in it, does not trigger separation anxiety or necessitate the creation of coping strategies. This is also portrayed in the following answers by Jaqueline (18):

So have you thought about if you can find the same brands over here?

I haven’t think about it much [laughs] because I don’t know what New Zealand has for brands, what is typical there, I don’t know.

Do you think some of the brands you have in Germany you will find over here as well?

I think things like Adidas or Nike [body wash] I will find there too because I think they’re all over the world. But for example, WellaFlex, I’m not sure, I can’t believe

that I will find it down there. [...] I have no problem with using another brand because I think it's good to try something new.

Again, participants at this stage of the research required more detailed probing with regard to their preferred personal care brands. Jaqueline explained the concern of many of the au pairs which is the unavailable knowledge about the foreign brandscape. However, like Anna, she expected to find global brands such as Adidas or Nike but was uncertain about finding other less popular and global ones. Overall, she was not particularly concerned about the prospect of not being able to find familiar brands as she was willing to try out and use other products. This sense of open-mindedness and adventure was echoed by many other participants: Tinka (18) said: *“I am not taking anything because I can buy everything there. And shampoo and body lotion just takes up too much space and it's also not really light. [...] And then I just have to find something and if I don't find something... well, I will definitely find something to wash my hair with”*. Henriette (19) pondered: *“I don't know what I'm going to take, I've always taken the shampoo which smells the best.”* Many participants expected that they would find an equivalent product in New Zealand and did not seem as concerned with the availability of familiar personal care and cosmetic products as with the suitability of the host family, language barriers, work hours, and so forth. One participant, Sabrina (20) even had a stronger view on (not) using familiar brands when sojourning abroad:

So I don't have any special things. I would say it's not important because I go to another country and I have to be open minded because I don't expect that much because yeah, it's not important. And I will make some new experiences and so I don't want to have all the German things there and I don't want to live like here, like at home.

For Sabrina, it was initially *“not important”* to have the same products while abroad because she did not want to live *“like at home”*. Whereas the previously mentioned au pairs had not given much thought to the availability of familiar personal care brands, Sabrina expressed her concrete aim to live the life of a local and elaborated on her anticipated immersion into the local culture to which the use of unfamiliar local products and brands belongs. Her aim is in line with what global nomads aspire to: global nomads value *“flexible,” “light”, or “virtual”* (Bardhi, et al., 2012, p. 521) possessions over material objects to permit fluid nomadic mobility. In addition, global nomads actively engage in local consumption practices as a means to embed themselves into the local culture and *“enhance local cultural capital that enables [them] to operate in a new environment”* (Bardhi, et al., 2012, p. 523). Engaging in local consumption practices was the aim of all of the au pair

participants who were open-minded and adventurous in their approach to pursuing this sojourn experience, particularly before they had left Germany and were preparing for this experience abroad. This became particularly evident when informants were asked about their expectations about unfamiliar food brands. The au pairs seemed to look forward to trying out local food products and portrayed an adventurous self with regard to unfamiliar foodstuffs, as explained by Lotta:

Yeah, yes, very excited because I think it's very nice to get to know more, more different food and I am not, I think I eat everything so I have no problem to eat some new things. But yeah, I think from some traditions, some foods are not my thing but I don't know, I will see it and then I will try it, of course!

Lotta acknowledges that there might be foods that she will not like; however, she is open to and actually excited about trying out “*different food*”. Her statement portrays a clear sense of adventure that was not evident in participants’ early accounts on personal brands where they expected to find similar or the same branded products in the host country. This adventurous self to try out local food products was echoed by various other participants. For example, Anna talked about how she was looking forward to foodstuffs that are different to what she can purchase in Germany:

I think most things also exist in New Zealand I think, I hope. And I'm also very interested in, yeah, trying new things also to eat because here it's all sort of same thing, you are going to the shop and buying, for example, Haribo gummy bears and also it's always the same. And also when you go to the bakery and, yeah, you also choose the same thing. So I'm very interested in, yeah, to get to know things to eat.

She started her explanation with her hope of being able to find familiar products in New Zealand, then moved on to expressing her desire to “*get to know things to eat*” that she cannot find in Germany. She explicitly talked about changing her routine of purchasing Haribo gummy bears to experience new food products. Like Bardhi et al.’s (2012) and Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999) participants, Lotta and Anna anticipated consuming local host foods to anchor themselves temporarily in New Zealand, thereby distancing themselves from their familiar home food consumption practices.

Further on in the interview with Anna prior to her departure from Germany, she made a general statement about her expectations for the sojourn experience, which relates to the above excerpt: “*I think that's also important, when you go for one year in another country, that you can say not only 'I have to have these things and when I don't have them it's over'.*” This was also echoed by Larina during an interview prior to her sojourn: “*I think you knew*

there aren't the same things like here in Germany so you had to be open to try new things." Both participants acknowledged that they might not be able to find familiar foodstuffs; they expected, and positively anticipated, a change in available food products. This was somewhat similar to statements made prior to the sojourn about personal care products and brands but for food brands, the participants needed no extensive probing as they had previously thought about the changes that they might experience. This first section demonstrates the open-mindedness and the adventurous self au pairs possess prior to embarking on their sojourn. The young sojourners aspire "to enhance their self-image as being cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and modern" (Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003, p. 55) through purchasing and using local brands and local instantiations of global brands. When still in the home country, potential issues surrounding the continuous use of familiar personal brands during the sojourn were not critically reflected on due to the immediate availability of those items. Nevertheless, as will be discussed in the next section, issues did arise upon au pairs' arrival in the host country. Whereas deep insights were provided in the above discussion, the next section reveals how the longitudinal nature of this study unravelled additional insights into the sojourners' experiences.

4.2.2. Brandscape Differences

As previously discussed, prior to the sojourn, au pairs were not deeply concerned about having familiar personal brands with them when sojourning abroad. However, even at the very start of their experience in the host country, many informants realised that the local brandscape is indeed different to the home brandscape. Jessica (20) elaborated on how they initially thought they would be able to find the same shampoo in New Zealand:

I didn't come with much shampoo stuff and because I thought you can buy that here. So I went shopping and I thought you find something that looks like your shampoo at home, but it didn't.

Also realising that she might not be able to find familiar branded products in the host country, Tinka's statement goes further to illustrate the feeling shared by many au pairs, saying that she didn't "*really want to buy that*", meaning the locally available personal care and cosmetic brands and products.

I didn't know the prices then, it's just not the time, you think "it's going to be okay, you will find something" but then you really stand there in front of the shelf and you think, "no I don't really want to buy that".

Whereas the young sojourners were open-minded about trying out locally available products and even aspired to being adventurous with them, this research reveals that three factors play a role in sojourners' acknowledgement of the differences in brandscapes. First, familiar personal brands seemed to be of limited availability. Second, global brands use diversified strategies for their branded products which resulted in confusion for the young participants. Third, many au pairs were dissatisfied with local products and local instantiations of global brands available to them in the host country. The following sections will demonstrate and discuss all three of those occurrences in the data to explore the paradox between the aspired-to adventurous self and the actual reserved self of young sojourners.

4.2.2.1. (Un)Availability of Personal Brands

In the early days of their sojourn, most of the informants were unsure about the availability of familiar branded cosmetics and personal care products in New Zealand, as explained by Nadine (19):

I had some cosmetic products with me from Germany, some that I bought in advance and I still had so I brought two packets of toothpaste and conditioner because I just had it at home and thought, "oh right, I'll take it so I don't have to buy something here" because I wasn't sure how much it is, what products they have.

The last sentence of Nadine's statement illustrates two key points. Firstly, unfamiliarity with differing prices and the cost of mundane branded products is a factor in (not) purchasing products in the host country. Differences in prices will be examined further along in this section when discussing pragmatic reasons for relying on familiar personal brands. However, secondly, Nadine's statement of "*I wasn't sure [...] what products they have*" is applicable to many au pairs' accounts and indicates the lack of knowledge of the availability of and access to certain branded products. As mentioned before, many of the au pairs had not previously travelled for an extended period of time but rather holidayed with family and friends in areas or countries close to Germany. This sojourn to New Zealand represents a major life transition, or even a rite-of-passage into independent adulthood (van Gennep, 1960), during which necessary symbolic capital in the form of cultural and linguistic capital will eventually be accumulated over time but is not yet sufficient to cope with an unfamiliar brandscape (Bourdieu, 1986). Like international exchange students studied in sociology, au pairs aspire to accumulate cultural capital "*alongside a desire for excitement, fun and adventure*" (Waters, et al., 2011, p. 456). However, initially, the young participants lacked relevant knowledge about local products and local instantiations of global brands due

to their inexperience with travel, which is in stark contrast to prior consumer acculturation studies on well-travelled global nomads and self-professed cosmopolitans (Bardhi & Askegaard, 2008; Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Upon finishing her face lotion from Germany, Sabrina wondered “*what shall I buy? I don’t know*” which illustrates the lack of accumulated cultural capital by young au pair sojourners. Sabrina had earlier dismissed the idea of relying on familiar branded products (earlier quote by Sabrina: “*I don’t want to have all the German things here*”); however, she was as uncertain as Nadine about which product to purchase because of her unfamiliarity with available brands. In today’s globalised world, mobile consumers of all ages expect access to home products whilst residing in the host country due to the “‘cosmopolitanisation’ of taste” (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 208). Nevertheless, despite the movement of material objects across the globe, certain local brands and local variations of global products are not necessarily readily available everywhere. Therefore, reliance on familiar products due to uncertainty about the availability of branded cosmetic products was a recurring pattern in the interviews. One informant, Vera (19) elaborated more greatly on her feelings about not knowing what products are indeed available:

Actually when I came here I found that I was quite stupid, because I didn’t really think about it [laughs]. So I just brought little, you know, the travelling sizes of everything because I didn’t want to get my suitcase too heavy with all that stuff. I was like, ‘oh, I can buy shampoo over there, I can buy makeup, so I don’t have to bring it’. But I found that I was quite stupid. But my friend, she came in November so I just had to hold on until November, until she came and brought me stuff that I needed.

So why did you think that was stupid initially, that you didn’t bring it?

Because I could have informed myself and found out that it’s more expensive over here. I could have thought about it, and yeah, I should have thought about it because I wouldn’t know the brands here.

Again, like Nadine, Vera had brought some of her personal care and cosmetic products with her to New Zealand. However, she expected to find her preferred shampoo and makeup in New Zealand but eventually realised that she “*was quite stupid*” in assuming that the New Zealand brandscape would be similar or even identical to Germany. She acknowledged that she “*could have informed*” herself about the availability of familiar products to establish prior to her sojourn that not only prices but also brands would be different from Germany. Again, this indicates a major difference to prior research on modern nomads (Bardhi & Askegaard, 2008; Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999) who “build social and cultural capital that makes it easier to navigate in landscapes away from home” (p. 92). This thesis represents an interesting insight

into “potential members of the future ‘global elite’” (Brooks & Waters, 2009, p. 1086) or the next generation of mobile consumers. Whereas global nomads and cosmopolitans have achieved not only a certain affluent lifestyle but have also accumulated sufficient cultural capital to easily transition between foreign brandscapes, young sojourners lack the wealth of economic and cultural capital to effectively function as active members in the local marketplace at the beginning of their first solo sojourn. Understanding how global nomads and cosmopolitans slip into this particular mobile lifestyle is crucial and the findings on young sojourners provide early evidence of how such a way of life might be initiated and created.

Participants acknowledged that many global personal care brands are available in New Zealand. For example, Tanja (19) was able to find the shampoo she had used in Germany: “*I just went into the store when my shampoo was empty and I think I was a bit happy, yeah, like “hey!” [laughs].*” Like the other previously mentioned participants, Tanja had also not thought about the availability of familiar personal brands prior to her sojourn in New Zealand. However, she was able to find the same product and rely on it while abroad which made her feel “*happy*”. A shopping trip with Karina (18) during her second week in New Zealand confirmed that some products are indeed the same in both countries:

She needed shampoo, lotion and a few cosmetic items so we briefly went to the supermarket together in the mall where we had met for the interview. We went straight to the cosmetics section where she right away said that she recognised more brands than she originally anticipated. Those were not necessarily brands she had used in Germany herself but she was familiar with many branded products. (field notes)

Karina had not anticipated finding as many familiar brands in the personal care aisle of the supermarket. Whereas she did recognise many products, most of them were not brands she had personally used before but she was somewhat familiar with their advertisements or home family or friends’ use of the products. Karina recognised the packaging of the products and also the brand logos. This leads to the discussion of the second instance of brandscape differences, namely, global brand strategies pursued by globally active companies.

4.2.2.2. Differentiated Global Brand Strategies

Whereas Karina was surprised at seeing many familiar personal care brands in the host country, this was not necessarily the case for some of the other participants who took part in the shopping with consumers’ method. Various global brands use a diversification rather than standardisation strategy for their global Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) which

includes key elements such as name, logo, and colours (Melewar & Saunders, 1999; van den Bosch, Elving, & de Jong, 2006). Many SWC informants were confused about familiar looking packaging with a different brand name, particularly for one popular Unilever male grooming brand, Lynx (New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, Ireland) or Axe (rest of the world):

We walked into the next aisle, the cosmetics and lotions and stuff, she saw Lynx and then said, "Oh I remember the packaging, it's the same as Axe, so they had the same packaging". She said it took her a while to realise that it's actually the same brand, just a different name. (field notes – Tinka)

For male personal care products, she recognised the shape of the Lynx bottle and the colours but thought it was a copy of Axe, the 'actual' brand. She did not think that it was the same brand. (field notes – Natalie)

On the opposite side, the men's section, she saw Lynx products and recognized the shape of the packaging right away but wasn't sure if it had the same name in Germany. After not being able to think of the brand name I told her it's called Axe in Germany and she then found it weird that the name had been changed as Axe sounds more masculine than Lynx. (field notes – Clarissa)

Tinka thought Lynx simply had the same packaging as the German instantiation of the brand Axe until she realised that it was indeed the same brand. This was also the case for Natalie who went one step further to suggest that this was actually a copy or me-too product of the 'real' brand Axe. Lastly, Clarissa, who was not able to think of the German brand name, found it strange that the brand name was changed to a more feminine version. For her, this did not make any sense and proved to be rather confusing. The same confusion arose for Christina (18), who was happy to find the same razors that she had used in Germany:

She uses Wilkinson Sword razors which are not available here, but the same products are sold under the brand name "Schick" which she thought was very weird as Wilkinson is an English name and the name "Schick" is very German so she didn't understand why the name would have to be changed for New Zealand, an English-speaking country. (field notes)

Christina knew that Schick in New Zealand is the same brand as Wilkinson in Germany but she could not understand why a "very German" brand name was chosen for English-speaking markets. In her opinion, it would be more beneficial to stick with Wilkinson in all markets and use a standardisation rather than a diversification or localisation strategy. Melewar and Saunders (1999) found that local languages have little influence on corporate names and slogans and recommend a standardisation strategy to global companies

to project “a consistent, clear visual structure to a company’s public” (p. 583). A standardised brand strategy for both Axe/Lynx and Wilkinson/Schick would have been preferred by the young sojourners in this study; however, their confusion about the companies’ diversified and localised approach also derives from their lack of sufficient cultural capital at the beginning of their sojourn as explained above. A final example of the confusion about brand names is illustrated by Lotta (19):

Lotta was told in Germany to buy sunscreen over here as the protection level would be higher. Lotta bought Cancer Society sunscreen and found the name funny because she thought if a sunscreen is labelled with “Cancer” that that would not be good marketing. (field notes)

This excerpt is from a shopping trip that was conducted at the beginning of Lotta’s stay in New Zealand. Her English language skills were not as developed at this stage and she was not familiar with any local organisations, leading her to miss the link between the New Zealand Cancer Society and their provision of sunscreen. Here, language appeared to be the barrier to understanding the local brand name rather than a lack of cultural capital. This is an additional interesting finding when exploring how first-time sojourners move on to become global nomads or cosmopolitans as initially, not only limits with regard to cultural and economic capital but also elementary language barriers exist.

Whereas the above analysis is concerned with global brand strategies for personal care and cosmetic brands, some participants experienced differences between German and New Zealand instantiations of food products. Jessica talked about her encounter with the German brand Haribo in New Zealand:

What I really miss here kind of is Haribo as well because even if you can buy it here it doesn’t taste like the German ones. And my kids say that as well. So the other au pairs that have been here and are back in Germany and always send like little packages for the kids for their birthdays with German lollies. And whenever they get one they’re quite excited. They’re like “we’ve got real Haribos, real German Haribo!”

Despite the availability of a limited range of Haribo products in New Zealand since late 2011/early 2012, Jessica as well as the children in her host-family could discern a taste difference from the “*real German Haribo*”. In this case, the packaging and brand name are the same but the branded product does not possess the same taste qualities as the original product from the home country. Haribo, a family-run company founded in 1920 in Bonn, Germany, still produces their German and European product range in their factory in Bonn. The brand has been part of the German culture for almost ten decades and “everyone [in

Germany] probably knows the jingle and can repeat it easily” (Kastner, 2013, p. 170). However, the Haribo product range available in New Zealand is exposed to lengthy import and differing production processes to meet country-specific requirements (such as different ingredients to suit various climates) which might explain the differences in taste. When purchasing a trusted brand such as Haribo, which is closely tied to the home culture, consumers expect the authentic flavour. Authenticity is “vitally important to brands” (S. Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003, p. 21) and quality commitments as well as heritage and pedigree are important aspects of authenticity (Beverland, 2006). The brand name in particular is “a key indicator of quality, and a global image can arguably enhance the brand’s perceived quality” (Steenkamp, et al., 2003, p. 55). However, in the above excerpt, it became clear that the familiar brand name (Haribo) did not meet Jessica’s expectations of the brand and product. Instead, her dislike of the local instantiation of Haribo manifested her close ties to the “*real German Haribo*” further.

The usefulness of a longitudinal study design became evident once again when further insights were revealed during an interview with Jessica upon her return home. Jessica noticed an additional difference between Germany and New Zealand with regard to the global beverage brand Fanta:

I think the most interesting thing when I came back, I think the most shocking thing was to realise that Fanta is yellow here [in Germany] and in New Zealand it’s orange. I don’t know if I realised when I came to New Zealand in the first place, that the Fanta is actually orange in New Zealand but not in Germany. But I went, when I came back to Germany here and I went to the supermarket and I went past the Fanta box and I went back and I thought “is that really Fanta?” And I was drinking Fanta all the time in New Zealand when I went to McDonalds or whatever and it was always orange and I came here and it was yellow and it was like a shock! Because in New Zealand you can buy yellow Fanta but then it’s ‘Ananas’ [=pineapple]. So in Germany we just have the orange yellow Fanta and there’s no pineapple Fanta also. It’s just the orange flavour with the yellow colour and it’s really, I’m still not used to that, it’s so weird.

Jessica found it “*interesting*”, “*shocking*” and “*so weird*” that Fanta, a globally available brand by Coca Cola, had different product variances in both the home and host country. In Germany, Fanta is of yellow colour for the orange-flavoured drink. However, in New Zealand, two variants of Fanta exist: yellow-coloured Fanta for a pineapple-flavoured soft drink and orange-coloured Fanta for an orange-flavoured soft drink. Even after being back in Germany for a few weeks, Jessica was “*still not used to*” those differences. In her case, she detected differences between the two brandscapes upon the return to her home

brandscape. The home and host branded products did not meet her expectations that were based on past experiences and the brand name.

As explained in the previous section, participants were either uncertain about the availability of familiar products or had already established their unavailability. Others were able to find some familiar personal brands but encountered differences in corporate visual identity, for example, brand names, country-specific packaging, product appearance and taste. Lastly, exploring locally available options that were not known to the informants before the sojourn, many participants expressed their dissatisfaction with those items as will be discussed in the following section.

4.2.2.3. Dissatisfaction with the “Local”

Some participants felt fortunate to find their familiar personal brands in New Zealand, despite some of those products possessing different brand names or packaging. However, other participants had to try out locally available options due to the lack of availability of their preferred personal brands as discussed above. Often this resulted in a sense of dissatisfaction with local products and local versions of global brands that are seemingly mundane but assumed critical importance in this liminal period for au pairs. Christina explained her frustration at not being able to find pocket-pack tissues:

And then there were cotton tissues in there [parcel] from my dad because I was so annoyed about the tissues here, because it's just, yes [...] just Kleenex boxes, there are no other tissues. So what do I do if I am out with the little one? Do I take a whole Kleenex box if his nose runs? And then I was just so annoyed about it that they just sent it.

In Germany, pocket-pack tissues are in common use whereas tissue boxes are a rare product. Christina was “*annoyed*” about the products on offer (such as Kleenex), resulting in her asking her family to send cotton tissues to New Zealand. In addition, she also had dissatisfying experiences with the toothbrushes on offer in New Zealand:

I have asked to be sent toothbrushes, because here I have tried 3 or 4 different toothbrushes and got pain in my teeth from all of them so I said “mum, send them please”.

Both statements by Christina illustrate how seemingly mundane items such as tissues and toothbrushes, that participants had not even thought about prior to their temporary sojourn, became quite important to the maintenance of their mundane life during their time abroad. Reasons for their importance will be explained shortly, when discussing the

pragmatic and emotional reasons for relying on familiar personal brands. For Christina, the locally available products and global brands (such as Kleenex) did not meet her expectations but were rather below; this was evident in her use of words such as “*annoying*” and “*pain*”. Despite the display of an initially adventurous self of the participants, experimenting with unsatisfactory local options led to the reliance on familiar personal brands and ultimately, a more reserved self with regard to open-mindedness to unfamiliar branded products. The following excerpts from two interviews with Karina emphasise in more detail the previously discussed change from initially being open-minded, possessing an adventurous self, to then becoming more reliant on familiar personal brands, resulting in the reserved self. The first interview with Karina was conducted in her second week in New Zealand where she stated the following:

My mascara was from Max Factor and the other one is from Maybelline Jade. And, but it's not like I only use those, so if I find another good one I'll buy this. And I also, like the shampoo, if I find another good shampoo which works on me, I don't care what brand it is. It just has to work for me.

Again, similar to many other au pairs, no particular concern about branded cosmetic products was expressed initially. However, following up with Karina towards the end of her stay, two weeks prior to her return to Germany, she reflected on her experience:

I actually said I would buy like the New Zealand brands [before I came]. But [after I arrived] I wasn't really happy with them.

Okay, which ones did you use that you didn't like?

I think there was one, one was the Homebrand, Countdown [supermarket] Homebrand, I didn't like. And I don't remember the other brands but I wasn't happy with them.

Her opinion on using locally available branded products had changed dramatically throughout her sojourn because after initial trials of unfamiliar products she realised that she “*wasn't really happy with them*”. Her initial low expectations of “*it just has to work for me*” were not met. Like other participants, Karina was dissatisfied with the local options available to her, in this case New Zealand supermarket brands. This in turn led to her asking her parents to send her the products she would normally use in Germany. Amongst other branded products, her parents sent Karina Neutrogena face wash and lotion as well as Nivea deodorant and body wash. Both brands, Neutrogena and Nivea, are globally available, even under the same brand name and with a fairly consistent product range. Hannerz' (1996) contended that ““the local” [acts] as a source of cultural continuity, [...] the “global” acts as a

source of change” (p. 9). However, here, the local disrupts and changes routines and consumption practices whereas the global provides stability and continuity in times of change for the young sojourners. Most personal brands discussed by the participants are not necessarily of German heritage but rather belong to global corporations’ portfolios. Thus, those global branded products provide continuity in the local sphere which makes the opposite point to Hannerz (1996).

Overall, this section on the brandscape differences between Germany and New Zealand has established that au pairs initially did not think about the potential challenges of being exposed to a different brandscape but rather generally stated their open-mindedness about trying out unfamiliar products. Most participants presented an (at least aspired-to) adventurous self prior to embarking on the sojourn. However, all of the participants experienced some struggles at the beginning of their sojourn with the lack of availability of familiar personal brands, the often confusing diversified global brand strategies and lastly, the dissatisfaction with local brands or local instantiations of global brands. Those issues triggered the reliance on familiar home personal brands and uncovered a more reserved self, compared to the aspired-to adventurous self, in the participants. Despite still wanting to experience the local host culture (for example in the form of travel), the informants portrayed a reserved self shaped by the reliance on familiar personal brands for pragmatic and highly emotional reasons.

4.2.3. Reliance on Familiar Personal Brands

The participants in this research demonstrated varying levels of reliance on familiar branded personal care and cosmetic products. On the one hand, the reliance on familiar personal brands can be explained through the exploration of more pragmatic reasons such as the variances in price of a particular branded product, participants’ sense of belonging to Generation Y and the specific characteristics associated with individuals of this cohort and lastly, the expected duration of the stay abroad. On the other hand, emotional reasons, which include the maintenance of self, identity and physical appearance, routine, comfort and safety, consumer-brand relationships and the connection to the past, child self and home are also at play for most of the participants. These categories are displayed in Table 10 before each one is elaborated on separately using relevant excerpts from the data.

Reasons for Relying on Familiar Personal Brands	
Pragmatic Reasons	Emotional Reasons
Price Differences	Self, Identity, Physical Appearance
Belongingness to Generation Y	Routine, Comfort, Safety
Duration of Stay Abroad	Consumer-Brand Relationships
	Connection to Past, Child Self, Home

Table 10: Reasons for Reliance on Familiar Personal Brands

4.2.3.1. Pragmatic Reasons

As mentioned before, three main pragmatic reasons for the reliance on familiar brands were found in the accounts of the participants. First, differences in prices for personal care and other branded products between home and host countries became apparent, resulting in the longing for familiar items from home. Second, the ease with which items were sourced from home can be explained by cohort specific characteristics of Generation Y consumers, particularly a close tie to the mother and lack of socialisation to become an independent part of consumer society. Third and last, the duration of the stay abroad appears to influence how dependent consumers are on familiar personal brands. Those three pragmatic reasons are discussed in the following sections.

4.2.3.1.1. Price Differences

Firstly, differences in pricing played a significant role in the participants' decision making processes. Even prior to the sojourn, many informants had gained some knowledge about the price differences in cosmetics and personal care products between Germany and New Zealand. Henriette had been put in touch by her prospective host family with another au pair who informed her about those differences prior to leaving Germany:

One of the girls who is already living in my area told me that I should definitely buy new makeup here [in Germany] and take it with because it would be really expensive in New Zealand and body lotion would be on the same level. And yeah, so I'm definitely going to buy new cosmetic stuff [before I go].

Having this insider knowledge about the pricing in New Zealand, Henriette was able to plan accordingly what she was going to take with her. In her case, another au pair had already discovered some price differences in the New Zealand brandscape and shared this with Henriette to help her be prepared for her sojourn. In addition to personal and direct contact with au pairs already residing in the host country, most of the participants were part

of one or more au pair Facebook groups. In these groups, typical of social media which is “all about sharing and interaction” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 66), tips were provided by and shared amongst current and prospective au pairs for planning the sojourn abroad. Larina (19) was one of the participants who knew about the differences in prices from a Facebook group, explaining “*Many [au pairs] on Facebook, in the group, told [me] that makeup is very expensive in New Zealand*”. Whereas participants are able to conduct some form of general and passive information search on the internet to prepare for the imminent sojourn, social networking sites like Facebook allow for direct interaction and interactivity as seen in Larina’s statement. The early promise of the internet as a many-to-many communication tool (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) has been fulfilled for these sojourners. Social networking sites and the interpersonal connections they provide, for example between au pair Facebook group users, acted as an important socialisation and acculturation agent. “Interactions with peers and narratives that actively exert agency on migrants” portray a new form of active acculturation agent compared to the traditional “largely passive and robust set of discourses (or systems of meaning)” (Luedicke, 2011, p. 233).

Once informants had arrived in New Zealand, they actually realised and felt the differences in pricing that they had already been informed about. Christina was initially open to purchasing locally available make up, but upon discovering the prices in the host country, her opinion changed:

I wouldn't have a problem to buy the ones that are [available] here [in New Zealand], I would have done that but it's just a difference if you pay 25 dollars, converted that's still 17-18 Euros or something. And in Germany, this one cost 4 Euros or something, I think.

She was able to find the same brand for her mascara but not the same product. Nevertheless, she would have purchased this branded product if the price had been acceptable to her. Since this was not the case, she relied on make up from Germany, which was sent to her by her parents. Many informants had various products sent to them some of which, particularly cosmetic items, were requested specifically because of the vast price differences between the two countries. Linda (20) received multiple packages from her mother and specifically asked for mascara to be included in those shipments: “*And my mum had to send me a new mascara because I just thought I won't spend \$25 on a mascara if I can get it for 6 Euros or something.*” On the one hand, the cost for this particular mascara, including postage, was still below the purchase price of the same product in New Zealand, illustrating the significant price differences. On the other hand, Linda did not have to actually pay for the

mascara (or the shipping cost) since her mother had purchased and shipped it for her. Therefore, the mascara from Germany was actually free for Linda. The au pairs' sense of belonging to Generation Y and therefore depending and relying on the home family, particularly the mother, will be elaborated on further in the next section.

For now, focussing further on the issue of different prices for similar or even the same products, Sabine provided a critical reflection on her purchasing behaviour:

Yeah I thought it would be a little bit more expensive, I did expect that, because it's an island. Everything has to be imported. But I didn't think that the price would be like double for the same product, I wouldn't have thought that for a big company like Maybelline or something. I wouldn't have thought that they'd want to have 30 dollars for a mascara, which costs 6 Euros [laughs]. [...] No, well I can find all my cosmetics here, just much more expensive. I'm getting sent some mascara and makeup from home. Because it's cheaper to get it sent over, than to buy it here.

Sabine had previously pondered the reasons behind the price difference and understood that the need to import cosmetic products from all major global brands would increase the sales price; however, it still struck her as incomprehensible that such a great difference exists for the same branded product and that having it shipped by family members is the cheapest option of sourcing familiar branded make up. Sabine's statement of "it's cheaper to get it sent" is similar to Linda's account. Both au pairs asked their mothers to send particular personal make up brands from Germany to New Zealand. The participants themselves would not pay for those shipments as their mothers purchased the products and paid for shipping. This practice of having preferred personal brands shipped to them then resulted in essentially receiving their personal brands for free, not just cheaper. The reasons behind the willingness of parents' to supply their daughters with their preferred personal brands will be discussed in the next section.

Price differences were often related to the unfamiliarity with locally available branded products. During a SWC trip with Tinka, she discussed how she would not mind changing to another brand of make up:

She said if she has to and cannot find the mascara she always uses, she would buy the cheapest one and try it out but she also acknowledged that it's a lot of money and it would be wasted if it doesn't work properly. The cheapest one started at twenty dollars which is definitely more than what she would pay in Germany so she said she will have to see how far she can go with the one that she still has and otherwise she might just have to ask her mum to send her a couple of mascaras because that's still cheaper, or essentially free, than buying the one for twenty dollars and then she wouldn't know how it works, or if it works properly. (field notes)

The price tag of 20 NZD for an unknown mascara that might or might not work as well as her favourite one held Tinka back from purchasing any local cosmetic products. Particularly for young sojourners who have not yet accumulated vast amounts of economic capital, the unwarranted differences in pricing led to the increased shipment of requested personal care products. Cosmopolitans and global nomads in previous studies (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999) have been able to accrue not only necessary cultural capital but also economic capital due to their lucrative overseas work placements. However, the young participants in this research have only recently finished school or were enrolled in a University degree at the time of the data collection which meant that they lacked sufficient economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The little discretionary income that au pairs were able to save was intended to be spent on travel within New Zealand and neighbouring countries rather than on branded products. Both Saskia and Sabine discussed how they would use the income that they had saved:

Saskia: *I saved almost all the money to do travelling over here.*

Sabine: *I just find [cosmetics] so expensive, and then I think "I don't want to spend money on it, I'd rather save it for my travels." I mean I do want to see some more [of New Zealand].*

For the young au pairs, this sojourn represents a time to pursue their own individualized life projects, carve out their future life paths and accrue cultural capital whilst also having fun and being adventurous, escaping from conventions, pressures and expectations in the home country (Brooks & Waters, 2010; King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Lyons, et al., 2012; Waters, et al., 2011; Wiers-Jenssen, 2008). Compared to mature and experienced mobile consumers, young sojourners experienced price differences for branded products between home and host countries as more severe due to their lack of sufficient funds. This is an interesting insight that illustrates yet another difference between established mobile consumers and first-time sojourners. In addition, most participants seemed to happily rely on their parents when it came to the provision of familiar personal brands as illustrated in the following section.

4.2.3.1.2. Belongingness to Generation Y

The previous section on price differences between home and host products and brands has also highlighted another pragmatic reason for the reliance on familiar personal brands: Participants in this study belong to Generation Y and therefore, manifest some of the cohort-specific characteristics such as being trustful, tolerant, well-travelled, supportive of social

causes, technology savvy, well-educated (Ferguson, 2011; Valentine & Powers, 2013) but they are also more reliant on their overprotective and over-supportive helicopter parents than any other prior generation (Alsop, 2008b; Black, 2010; Fingerman et al., 2012). Generation Y consumers have strong relationships with their parents who view them as “trophy kids” and as their pride and joy (Alsop, 2008a, 2008b). Therefore, it came as no surprise that many of the young participants in this study actively asked their parents, and in particular mothers, to send them certain personal brands, as today “age 18 no longer represents emancipation in any real sense” due to the “prolonged transition to adulthood” and subsequent “need for parental support” (Fingerman, et al., 2012, p. 881). This reliance on the parents was evident in Tinka’s account:

Yeah, I always send her a list of what I need. I mean if you keep the parcel under two k[ilo]’s it’s like, I don’t know, three Euros to send over to New Zealand so it’s actually so cheap that it wasn’t really a problem.

But then you had specific brands that you asked for, so the John Frieda shampoo, it had to be that specific one?

Yes, it has to be what I always had in Germany so [my mother] just sent me over that. I didn’t really tell her I wanted that, just, she knew what I always had so she sent over that.

Tinka received parcels from home almost monthly and requested specific items to be sent. However, she did not need to tell her mother which particular branded products she wanted because her mother knew what her preferred personal brands were. This preference for certain particular personal brands might have even been passed down by the mothers to their daughters due to the strong nature of intergenerational influence: Moore et al. (2002) root their work in consumer socialisation studies and establish that mothers are influential in the brand choice of their daughters, even when they have left the parental home, and that the family is “the first and typically the most powerful socialisation agent” (p. 17). This was also the case for Klara, who had received a big envelope from her mother in the mail earlier on the day of the interview:

Yes, today I got a letter from my mum. [...] I told her it’s [make up] very expensive, she was sending me my favourite stuff.

So she knew what you liked?

Yes because we prefer the same things, the same colours, the same “Marke”.

Brand?

Yeah, the same brands, so she knows what I love to have.

Klara’s mother knew what she “love[s]” as they both use the same brands and same colour of make up. This indicates a strong shared self (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005) based

on the familial ties between Klara and her mother, which provided assurance to Klara that her mother would purchase the right brands for her. Most of the au pairs had lived in the family home prior to their sojourn so they were accustomed to the mother undertaking most of the grocery shopping for the family (Hogg, et al., 2004; Lackman & Lanasa, 1993; Thompson, 1996). However, Klara had moved out of the parental home three years before the start of her sojourn. Nevertheless, somewhat surprisingly, she was still happy to fall back into her child self where her mother purchased her favourite personal care brands. Whereas this research only reports on the views and experiences of the young consumers, Hogg et al. (2004) established that empty-nest mothers actively “focus on purchasing for their children or consumption as a way of expressing love” (p. 248). They found that mothers purchased mostly food and items for their children’s new homes because the children had moved out permanently. Conversely, the sojourners’ mothers also purchased food items but further adhered to their daughters’ requests for personal care and make up items. Thus, mothers are able to connect with their children’s new temporary lives abroad and share a part of their sojourn experiences through the purchasing and shipping of care packages that include their daughters’ favourite personal brands.

Whereas the above accounts illustrate how mothers showed their devotion through the shipment of care packages, the following brief answers by Jaqueline demonstrate how mothers happily took on the role of main household provider upon the au pairs’ return to the home:

And have you been grocery shopping since you’ve been back?

No, not really.

So for your shampoo and lotion or deodorant and things like that?

My mother does that for me [laughs].

Jaqueline’s account was not an isolated case as many of the participants in this research relied on their parents, particularly mothers, upon their return home to do the grocery shopping, despite mothers’ “juggling lifestyle” (Thompson, 1996). These participants appeared happy to fall back into their daughter role, letting their child self come through after a period of independence whilst on their sojourn. However, one participant did not want to assume her old role of being the cared-for daughter in her parental home which represents a difference to Jaqueline’s and many others’ accounts.

Interestingly, Tinka had happily relied on her mother’s purchases and shipments of personal brands during her sojourn as seen above. Then, upon her return home, she almost

despised being placed in this old self of being the child and daughter as illustrated in the following quote:

I'm somehow back in that role [of being the daughter] because it just, you don't have to do [the shopping] here because they do it for you but that's what's getting really on my nerves because I'm just really used to doing everything on my own and being independent. But at home it's hard to do that, especially if you're living with your parents

Tinka did not seem to want to let go of the independence she had gained during her sojourn. During the interview (conducted almost three months post-return), she frequently mentioned how she was looking forward to moving out into her own apartment, purchasing her own food and other personal products and being independent again. For Tinka, relying on her parents for the provision of mundane, everyday items post-return appeared to void some of the transformative power of her sojourn. As in Brown's (2009) research on exchange students, Tinka's follow-up interview illustrated how an "international sojourn has the power to effect a growth in intercultural competence, as well as a shift in self-understanding, with long-term implications for personal and professional life" (p. 517).

The preceding accounts highlight the reliance on familiar personal brands for the pragmatic reason of belonging to Generation Y. Strong bonds to the home parents, a sense of entitlement to their attention even whilst abroad and the mothers' devotion to their daughters encapsulate some of the key points of this section. This is in stark contrast to other temporary mobile consumers studied previously as they were more affluent, had previously accumulated sufficient cultural capital and did not rely on their parents due to being more mature and often parents themselves. In addition, the return home, captured through the use of a longitudinal study design, also provides some interesting insights: Tinka's account demonstrates how first-time sojourns allow young sojourners to explore the "fundamental question of what constitutes the self" (L. Brown, 2009, p. 517). As claimed by Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001), personal change is most evident in young sojourners whose socialisation is unfinished. This is another way in which young sojourners differ from established, well-travelled global modern nomads and provides insights into how the shift from a one-time, solo sojourner might culminate in a more permanent life on the move. There appears to be a link between the duration of the stay abroad and the reliance on familiar personal brands which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

4.2.3.1.3. Duration of Stay Abroad

The pragmatic reasons of duration of a stay abroad, price differences, and belongingness to Generation Y can be interrelated. Discussing the reasons for taking enough make up on her sojourn, Tina ties the differences in pricing to the duration of the stay abroad:

And that's why I thought that I will try to take it with me somehow and then I will ration it so it'll last me for the whole time. Because I just don't think that's okay, I already think it's expensive here [in Germany]. [...] So that's why I think that I will take something like that with me and will see to make it last.

Prior to departing on her sojourn, Tina explained that she would “ration” her preferred German make up while abroad so she did not have to purchase locally available products and brands. Her main reason for this was that she knew how expensive it would be in the host country. This strategy was adapted by many of the participants who planned ahead and took enough cosmetics with them “to make it last”. The duration of the au pair experience, which for the participants in this research lasted from three to twelve months, seemed to be of an acceptable length for taking a sufficient supply of their personal brands with them. Au pairs do not appear to place great emphasis on flexibility and liquid relationships to possessions which are easily changeable but rather rely on their familiar personal brands for the duration of their stay abroad since a return home, with embedded consumption practices and routines, is imminent (Berry & Sam, 1997). This is in strong contrast to deterritorialised global nomads that value immateriality and short-term attachment to possessions in their current locale due to their serial relocations and unlikely long-term return home (Bardhi, et al., 2012). This leads to assume that knowing about the ephemeral nature of a life abroad fosters attachment to familiar personal brands whereas perpetual mobility promotes liquid relationships to possessions.

Whereas Tina’s statement was taken from an interview conducted pre-sojourn, Karina elaborated on the reliance on familiar personal brands during her sojourn:

Yeah if I would have known my mum couldn't send me all the time the parcels and also if I would have accepted prices more but I mean now I'm, I think like at the beginning I thought everything was so expensive, and I think I'm, kind of got used to it. Like, I don't think it's that expensive anymore. So I'm kind of accepting the price difference now which I haven't done in the beginning. So I think if I would have stayed now another year I would've bought more New Zealand brands or more products in New Zealand rather than get it sent.

Karina’s discussion incorporates the price differences between home and host countries and the participants’ belongingness to Generation Y. She acknowledged that if

those two reasons were non-existent and that if she had stayed in the host country for a longer period of time, like expatriates on work assignments, she would have resorted to purchasing more locally available brands and local instantiations of global brands. This again indicates that liquid relationships to possessions are established over time rather than existing from the moment a consumer is on the move, but this also demonstrates the need for this study in terms of establishing how global nomads and cosmopolitans adopt this type of lifestyle (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). In addition, Karina's statement highlights the existence of different types of acculturating groups which were discussed in regard to existing research in the literature review (Berry & Sam, 1997). In particular, the difference between more permanent immigrants and more temporary sojourners and their respective use of familiar personal brands was reflected on more deeply by Lotta during an interview after her return to Germany. As shown in Lotta's statement below, different types of movement appear to require different types of acculturation to the local brandscape:

If I would have been a tourist I think they wouldn't have sent me anything. I would have tried to take a lot with me. And I think if I was just there for two months or something I think I would have handled the New Zealand brands, and just buy something randomly. And if I was there longer probably, yeah, I think they would send me some more parcels during the time and I would have asked for more mascara I think. I don't, probably, it all depends on, if I was to stay there forever I probably would try to find a good New Zealand one. Just buy a new one and try it, and if it's worse I'd try another one so that they don't have to send me too many, or so I'm not dependent on the German parcels.

Lotta acknowledges that travellers to another country can be classified into four categories, based on their likely usage of familiar personal brands: tourists, short-term sojourners, medium to long-term sojourners and more permanent migrants. Firstly, she discussed how tourists would not get anything sent to them from the home country but would rather take the essentials with them. Secondly, for short-term sojourners (two months), she anticipated that local products would be purchased and used as the return home was imminently foreseeable. Thirdly, medium to long-term sojourns would need to have branded products from the home country as she had found during her own sojourn which lasted almost twelve months. Lastly, she assumed that moving to another country more permanently would require the acceptance of the local brandscape by trying out and ultimately using locally available branded products and local instantiations of global brands. Lotta's insightful categorisation highlights the importance of local brandscape acceptance as a traveller

segmentation factor. Furthermore, this reinforces the importance of not only investigating permanent immigrants but also other mobile acculturating groups such as (young) sojourners.

In times of ‘fluid modernity’ in a liquid world, mobile individuals cannot rely on stable routines in the longer term (Bauman, 2000). However, it appears that the length of the stay abroad greatly impacts on the level of liquidity since global nomads appear to form purely liquid relationships to possessions (Bardhi, et al., 2012) whereas young sojourners in this study are able to maintain their mundane everyday consumption of personal brands for, or yet because of, the duration of their sojourn, thereby having a solid constant in their otherwise temporarily mobile life. Through the investigation of young consumers’ first-time sojourns, it was established that different levels of reliance on familiar personal brands and different levels of liquid relationships exist. The form of relationship (for example, liquid versus solid) that is formed with material objects and possessions appears to be determined by the length of the stay abroad and the subsequent imminence of the return to the home as well as the frequency of the relocations. Having gained an understanding of the difference between first-time au pair sojourners and serially relocating global nomads provides an interesting starting point to explore Baumann’s (2000) notion of fluid modernity and a liquid world further.

In summary, it appears that young sojourners moving abroad for a fixed period of time with an intended return home at the end of their temporary relocation, rely heavily on familiar mundane personal brands. The previously illustrated three pragmatic reasons (price differences, belongingness to Generation Y, duration of the stay) provide a more rational explanation for the reliance on home brands. However, more emotional reasons were at play for the participants as well, often connected to the pragmatic reasons, either as a trigger or as a result of the aforementioned points. The next section will elaborate on the variety of emotional reasons that were evident in this research.

4.2.3.2. Emotional Reasons

Whereas the previous section focussed on pragmatic reasons, participants also discussed a great range of highly emotional reasons for their reliance on familiar personal brands in mundane everyday consumption. The following categories of emotional reasons played a crucial role for the participants: 1) self, identity and physical appearance, 2) routine, maintenance, comfort and safety, 3) consumer-brand relationships and 4) the connection to the home and past self. Illustrated through the participants’ opinions, the following section will discuss each emotional reason for the reliance on familiar home products.

4.2.3.2.1. Self, Identity and Physical Appearance

Extending James' (1890) notion of the material self, research on image congruency theory has long established that certain material objects allow individuals to convey aspects of the self to themselves and others (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Consumers use different objects, brands and products to extend their self-concept and express and remind themselves who they are (Belk, 1988; Mittal, 2006; Noble & Walker, 1997; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Self-brand connections increase during adolescence when young individuals have accumulated the cognitive abilities to see links between certain brands and their sense of self (Chaplin & John, 2005). As the participants in this research were all young female adults, physical appearance played a crucial role in their identity projects and sense of self. Tanja had a preferred shampoo brand but she was able to purchase it in the host country. She explained that *“I think I first went for the same hair conditioner and shampoo and stuff like this because I think sometimes it’s really funny with shampoo, that if you use another one it’s like, your hair reacts different on it.”* Karina, one of the key informants, made various statements revealing her reliance on familiar brands to preserve her physical appearance. She explained how she had used the previous au pair’s leftover shampoo, *“I was like “okay, cool, I don’t have to buy it”. But then I used it and it made my hair so “fettig” [greasy] so that was kind of, it wasn’t cool.”* She was initially open-minded to try out a new hair product but became self-conscious after the experience with this particular product that made her hair look greasy:

I’m kind of afraid that I won’t find the things I’m looking for, or I don’t know how my hair or my skin will react to this shampoo. Because for example, the shampoo from the au pair before me, it was from Garnier and I thought like, okay, it was for broken hair. So I thought okay, my hair is really healthy so I can use that one, totally fine. But like I said, my hair got so, how do you say in English?

Greasy probably, oily, yeah.

Yeah, so I’m kind of afraid that that will happen again. [...] I mean, I knew Garnier in Germany, so I thought, okay that will work, but it didn’t.

Even using Garnier, a brand familiar to her, eventually turned out not to be an option for Karina because it altered her physical appearance and left her self-conscious and with low self-esteem during the initial liminal period of her sojourn (Schouten, 1991). During a SWC trip with her after the initial interview, Karina mentioned the Garnier shampoo again and said that *“she didn’t want to use it anymore, she had always thought of Garnier as a great brand but would not use it anymore, not even in Germany”* [field notes]. This discussion reveals a) the frustration caused by the differentiated global brand strategies adopted by L’Oréal and b)

her resulting reliance on her familiar personal brand from Germany (mailed to her by her mother) to maintain her usual physical appearance and connected sense of identity. Evidently, consumption of familiar items can ease pain in transition and allow consumers to maintain their personal appearance (McAlexander & Schouten, 1989; 1992; McAlexander, Schouten, & Roberts, 1993). Karina was not the only participant who felt strongly about preserving her physical appearance and inherent sense of self. Sabine had the same issues with shampoo. But, instead of requesting her favourite shampoo to be sent to her, she tried out various locally available products:

I had to try several ones here and I would have been happy to find exactly that one, so that I wouldn't have to try so many different ones. [...] I really did look, but I couldn't find it, like they do have [L'Oreal] El Vital here, but only the orange one for dry hair. Stuff like that. But not the one I had in Germany.

And now you found one from Herbal Essences, which is fairly similar?

Well I would rather buy the one from Germany, still [laughs].

Not being able to source her preferred shampoo, despite the availability of its brand, Sabine settled for a locally available global brand that she used throughout her sojourn. Nevertheless, she acknowledged that she would “*rather buy the one from Germany*” over the temporary substitute. Again, the reliance on a particular branded personal care item during the sojourn indicates that young female adult consumers have formed close self-brand connections that allow them to express their identity. For Sabine, her sojourn of about 12 months was an acceptable time to deviate from her usual consumption practice of using L'Oreal ElVital. All three female participants above were greatly concerned with their physical appearance. Using a shampoo that made their hair greasy and thus not looking the way they looked in the home country was a sensitive issue for them. As was seen in Karina's account, she felt afraid of choosing a branded product that would spoil her usual look, and thereby, identity project. Products that are used to maintain or alter the outer physical appearance of participants were important to them. As mentioned previously, the informants had not given much thought to this prior to their sojourn. However, during their sojourn many realised how important the ‘right’ personal care product is for their physical appearance. Shampoo was one product critical to their sense of self. Other products included face wash and lotions as well as make up, which can also alter an individual's appearance. Sabrina always used a face lotion in Germany that she had been tested for in a pharmacy and was then “*a bit afraid of the face lotion [in New Zealand] because I thought you could make [cause] something wrong with it*”. Prior to trying an unfamiliar brand, Sabrina “*was a bit afraid*” that

her sensitive skin might react differently to it. This was echoed by Lotta in relation to a different product (body lotion). Like Sabrina and Lotta, many other participants also had products that they viewed as crucial in maintaining their physical appearance. The thought of deviating from those products caused a mild form of anxiety, being afraid to purchase something that would result in for example “*bad skin*”. Therefore, most participants relied on familiar products not just for pragmatic reasons but also because they knew that these products would allow them to maintain their pre-sojourn physical appearance. Vera explains this relationship between price and physical appearance:

Actually at the moment I only have German makeup as well, because my friends came here and I asked them to bring me some stuff. Because first it's more expensive here than it is in Germany, and second I don't know the brands and I didn't really want to spend a lot of money on something I didn't know and it might not be my colour or something.

Even though pricing plays a role in Vera's opinion, the more crucial aspect is that of maintaining her usual physical appearance. Using the right colour of make up was also a concern for Natalie who explained that “*what I brought with me is makeup because I know which colour I need and that is perfect for me*”. She had planned ahead to be able to facilitate her physical identity project whilst sojourning abroad.

All of the above accounts by young female au pairs illustrate how they use cosmetics (shampoo, lotion, face wash, make up, etc.) to maintain their sense of self. Liu, Keeling and Hogg (2012) established how women use cosmetic consumption to defend aspects of their self and strongly emphasised how “cosmetics are more than skin deep; they can be an integral part of the self” (p. 105). Particularly at times of (role) transitions, as established by McAlexander et al. (McAlexander & Schouten, 1989; 1992; McAlexander, et al., 1993), cosmetics can “function as coping mechanism, responding to changes occurring at varying stages of life” (Liu, et al., 2012, p. 105). As Kleine, Kleine and Kernan (1993) emphasised, “*ordinary products we use in day-to-day living are self-expressive [...] So what we consume, in the performance of even mundane activities, both contributes to and reflects our sense of identity – our sense of who and what we are*” (p. 210). In that sense, branded cosmetics can act as carriers of meaning: familiar objects of this category facilitate the maintenance of the usual physical appearance in the host country. Extending Noble and Walker's (1997) research, young sojourners in this thesis use branded cosmetics rather than other possessions that symbolise the past to facilitate this major life transition. In addition, items such as shampoo, lotions and make up are not merely regarded as cosmetic products but also as aids

to preserving the self that was established prior to the sojourn. Therefore, their meaning is not merely utilitarian or functional but rather social and hedonic, allowing young sojourners to portray their home public self when using familiar products in their grooming rituals (Belk, 1988; Rook, 1985). “Literally, grooming behavior is a form of body language, communicating specific messages about an individual’s social status, maturity, aspirations, conformity, even morality” (Rook, 1985, p. 258). Particularly in this context, young au pairs place great emphasis on their physical appearance as one aspect of their self that they can preserve whilst their environment is changing. Maintaining daily routines, especially during the sojourn, is important to all participants. This understanding is closely related and interconnected to the second emotional reason which is the reliance on familiar branded products to preserve a sense of routine, comfort and safety.

4.2.3.2.2. Routine, Comfort and Safety

The data shows that three interrelated concepts, routine, comfort and safety, represent other major reasons for au pairs to rely on familiar products. Firstly, maintaining routines appeared to be of importance to young au pairs. Tinka was one of the few participants who, already prior to her sojourn, wondered if she might miss any of her preferred products:

And then you can really tell what you are going to miss because at the moment I just know what I'm, I know what I'm used to but not what you have there. But the bad thing is when I start searching what you have then I'm going to think too much about it, what I'm going to miss and then it's also not that good. [...] I know, because I like it and I know that it's a good one and so of course I want to keep it.

Tinka was conflicted about searching for her products online but decided against it as she was generally open-minded and did not want to trigger missing certain items before she even went abroad. Particularly interesting in her statement is the use of phrases such as “*I'm used to [it]*”, “*I like it and I know that it's a good one*” and “*of course I want to keep it*”. Those wordings were used by many participants when discussing their preferred personal care brand and product: Nadine mentioned that she would buy Dove products in the host country because “*I knew it, I like it*”. Jessica said how her tooth paste was “*just something you're used to, I was so used to it*” and that she has “*had it forever, as long as I can think*”. Along the same lines, Jasmin explained that for her mascara, “*I always buy the same one, the black one with the pink stripes, it's Essence, from Essence*”. Tanja elaborated on how relying on items that are familiar and maintaining the routine of using them is important, by linking it to the first reason of preserving or maintaining a sense of self: “*I also bought, like, cosmetics*

and stuff before I left, just to be, to have like the usual things that I normally use. Girls with makeup is always a bit, hmm, find the right colour.” Her physical appearance is important to her, as can be seen by her stating that she needed “*the right colour*” similar to the excerpts illustrated above. However, in addition, she explained that she wants to have her “*usual things*” that she “*normally*” uses. Tanja used the word “*normally*” to refer to what she would use in the home country which is clearly distinguished from the sojourn, an experience that is exciting and new and not what she would normally do – everything else in her sojourn is different to the “*usual things*” she had at home.

The words used by the au pairs, such as “*usual*”, “*normal*”, “*used to it*” et cetera, represent how certain personal brands allow for the maintenance of routines during a sojourn. Ilmonen (2001) discusses how routines fulfil various functions which can be applied to the context of acculturation. He posits that routines “reduce the complexity of decision-making and save one’s energy, [...] create a safe, habitable world and a feeling of normality, [...] make our behaviour predictable and, in that sense, trustworthy” (Ilmonen, 2001, p. 17). This description is readily applicable to the young sojourners’ feeling about maintaining their home routines because those routines have “become a fundamental part of [themselves] or [their] ‘character’” (Camic, 1986, in Ilmonen, 2001, p. 17). This relates to the first emotional reason for the reliance on personal brands where the maintenance of self, identity and physical appearance seemed crucial. However, routines can also be restrictive which is evident in the au pairs’ accounts. They rely heavily on home personal brands and thereby, miss out on the opportunity to experience host brands. This is the nature of routines though, as they imprison consumers, restrict options and confine consumers to a limited set of alternatives (Ilmonen, 2001). In this context, however, most au pairs relied on their familiar routines rather than treading on unfamiliar terrain. This is in stark contrast to Bauman’s (1998a) ideal of a ‘good consumer’ in today’s consumer society: the sociologist sees habits and routines as something that should be “continually, daily, and at the first opportunity thrown aside, never given the chance to firm up into the iron bars of a cage” (Bauman, 1998a, p. 81). He goes on to discuss how consumers should not rest but rather be constantly on the move, exploring options available to them instead of committing to and feeling satisfied with familiar ones. Here, au pair sojourners rely heavily on home routine consumption practices, particularly mundane grooming rituals, to establish a safe haven in a different cultural setting. Therefore, even in times of constant change and in mobility, some consumer groups rely on the maintenance of routines to preserve some sense of order in everyday life and mundane consumption.

Secondly, items that provide comfort in this transitional period also appeared to be of utmost importance to au pairs. Sticking to familiar branded products that were used in the home country was a concern for many au pairs: Saskia explained how for “*shampoo and stuff like that, I tried to find the same here [...] because I didn’t want to change that*” which illustrates the refusal or avoidance of changing to a locally available product. This not only indicates the hope of maintaining routines but also seeking the comfort of familiar personal brands which was further elaborated by Lotta:

I wanted to have this brand, yeah definitely. Sometimes [with] mascara you don’t have a good brush. Some brushes are so annoying and I can’t handle them, so I found one I really liked and I really want to stay with it.

Was that more because you knew how it works, or what was the reason for that?

Yeah, I know how it works and it’s just I’m very used to this one so I don’t want to change it.

This is, again, linked to maintaining a certain physical appearance and preserving an individual sense of self as outlined above but Lotta also had another reasons for not wanting to switch to another mascara:

I’m not as focused on having the best makeup I would say. But of course it’s not as comfortable when you know that the mascara doesn’t look as good as normal. In a way it’s more for yourself I’d say, it’s annoying if you have to look a lot more in the mirror to check it.

The previous section illustrated how young female sojourners use cosmetics to maintain their public self in periods of transition (Liu, et al., 2012). However, Lotta appeared to be more focussed on preserving her private self than her public self conveyed to others. For her, feeling comfortable in her own skin by maintaining the use of her preferred mascara was more important than presenting “herself in a better light to face the world” (Liu, et al., 2012, p. 93). The use a familiar cosmetics item provides comfort in times of change, as Tinka also established during her elaboration on why she had relied on familiar personal care products during her six-month sojourn:

Actually maybe you don't feel comfortable anymore. I mean I haven't really thought about that before but it's just, if you know you have those products, you feel good and comfortable with it. I mean it's just food, you know you like it or you don't like it and then you just don't buy it anymore. But with all those personal care things, you always buy, like, a big bottle and everything so if you don't like it then you have to buy something else. I mean it's more expensive and actually you wouldn't say, “okay, I'm just throwing away this bottle and I'll buy another one but I'm not even sure if I'm going to like the other thing”, somehow it is different.

Tinka tried to compare trying out local foods to trying out locally available personal care products and came to the conclusion that if she did not like certain foods, she would just not have to eat them again. However, purchasing for example a bottle of shampoo, the risk was amplified. For her, foods and personal care products are different because the one-time consumption of a meal is less risky to trial than the multiple-time consumption of for example, shampoo. Tinka preferred to use familiar cosmetic products throughout her sojourn because they made her “*feel good and comfortable*” rather than anxious about trying out various alternatives.

Lastly, in addition to maintaining home routines and using certain cosmetics for comfort, safety constitutes the last factor of this second category of emotional reasons. A growing stream of scholarship has focused on the idea that brand connections provide consumers with security (C. T. Allen, Fournier, & Miller, 2008; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, & Wong, 2009) as traditional sources of security (for example social networks) appear to be changing and undergoing transformation (Bauman, 2001). In this thesis, young sojourners are temporarily separated from the security of their familiar social networks, which is why they seek safety in other, inanimate objects. As illustrated before, Sabine had to switch to another brand of shampoo while abroad and was not completely satisfied with the alternative product. Throughout the interview, she elaborated on this further:

I'd rather stay with the one I know.

Why do you think that is?

I don't know, I think it's one of my flaws [laughs]. I'm using this one and that's it. [...] Yes, it works well, I don't have to think about it, I'll just buy it again. If I'm happy with something, I'll buy it again [laughs].

Sabine sees the need to rely on a familiar product as “*one of my flaws*”. However, Sabine’s statement of “*If I'm happy with something, I'll buy it again*” represents the classical marketing thought where a familiar brand, the heart of the marketing mix, provides the guarantee of quality and allows for the elimination of multiple stages in the decision making process such as information search, evaluation of alternatives and choosing a suitable option. As elaborated on in the literature review, Biel (1993) discussed how “brands not only furnish the environment in which I live, but they also enrobe me, and by doing so, help define who I am” (p. 68). Brands package meaning, and thereby create a feeling of security and assurance, act as shortcuts to make choices easier and eliminate the need to undergo a feature-by-feature analysis of alternatives. This was also the case for Natalie who was able to reflect more

critically on her feelings with regard to why she preferred and ultimately relied on familiar products:

I was open, if I couldn't buy the Nivea deo[dorant] in Australia or here, I would buy something else of course, but I can buy it so I bought it.

So how does that make you feel, that you can find some of the stuff you know?

Good, I was really really happy when I found the same brand, the same product. I was really happy.

Did it make it easier for you rather than to find a new one?

Yeah, of course because I know what I, what I'm buying. I know the brand, I'm used to it. And it's, you know, it's better to, to go back to things you know already. It's a little bit, yeah, safety, a safety thing, instead of buying new products.

Natalie explained how the reliance on familiar personal brands provided her with “safety [...] instead of buying new products”. Familiar personal brands, in Natalie’s case a Nivea deodorant, can become branded security blankets. Prior research has established that inanimate objects can act as security blankets for infants separated from their mothers (Erikson, 1959; Hong, 1978; Passman & Halonen, 1979). Mehta and Belk (1991) transferred this knowledge to their research on migrants’ attachment to home artefacts such as photographs and found that transitional objects or security blankets “provide a sense of cultural identity and security” (p. 407). In this study, ‘security blanket’ will be used as the key term to describe this phenomenon as the term ‘transitional objects’ appears misleading in the sense that the object might be transitional. However, the personal brands that au pairs see as security blankets are very stable and it is the sojourn that provides the transition and liminal state. Building on Noble and Walker’s (1997) idea that “possessions may generate an almost womblike sense of security” (p. 40), the findings in this thesis indicate that personal brands can provide the same sense of security, thereby acting as branded security blankets. Further relating this insight to Goffman’s (1961) concept of identity kits, branded security blankets provide young sojourners with anchors to their home and prior identities and protect them from “total identity alienation [...] in unfamiliar surroundings” (Mehta & Belk, 1991, p. 400).

This section has firstly illustrated how the maintenance of home routines and everyday consumption practices in the host country represent a safe haven for young sojourners. Secondly, using familiar personal brands in times of change provides comfort to these young solo sojourners by allowing them to maintain their private self. Lastly, personal brands can act as branded security blankets in periods of transition, providing links to prior identities and the home culture. In addition to these three reasons for the reliance on familiar

personal brands, participants also exhibited varying degrees of existing consumer-brand relationships. Those relationships existed primarily with home brands that had been used for a longer period of time for reasons mentioned previously (self, identity and physical appearance; routine, comfort and safety). The following section elaborates on this third emotional reason.

4.2.3.2.3. Consumer-Brand Relationships

As established above, young adult consumers create ties to certain branded products during their adolescence (Chaplin & John, 2005). In this research, young au pairs rely on particular personal brands to maintain their sense of self, seek routines and comfort and use those items as branded security blanket. It was further found that those young female adults had formed strong consumer-brand relationships to FMCG brands prior to their sojourn, like the women explored in Fournier's (1998) seminal article. However, here, these existing ties to home brands were not readily apparent without extensive probing. Melanie (18), one of the participants who returned to Germany after only completing three of her planned twelve months in New Zealand, elaborated on her relationship with a make up brand prior to leaving Germany:

I don't use makeup, I will buy just mascara, that's it, because I don't need so much cosmetics.

So which mascara do you use? Do you know the brand?

It's from Germany, Astor, I don't know, do you know that? Astor is good, I love it.

Melanie's strong feelings for Astor are revealed by her use of the word "love" which could be regarded as belonging to either Fournier's (1998) committed partnership or best friendship relationship form. The emotive word "love" was used by various participants and for various items. The use of the word "love" to describe the attachment to a material object was also investigated by Schultz, Kleine, and Kernan (1989) who found that love is actually the second-most frequent feeling towards an object, only superseded by happiness. Ahuvia (2005) went on to explain that consumers only love a handful of brands and objects in their personal brandscape and added that "it is not surprising then that these few loved objects and activities play a special role in consumers' understandings of who they are as people" (p. 182).

Christina discussed the relationship with her preferred toothbrush "*I got, from Dr. Best [a leading German brand] I think, with the vibrator and that vibrating toothbrush is much more expensive here. [...] I love that toothbrush, I think it's so great.*" In Christina's

case, her love and admiration is more directed at the branded product than the brand itself. Jasmin elaborated on her relationship with a Wilkinson shaver which she discovered was also available in New Zealand: “*Yeah, actually I brought all the things for my shaver with me because I thought, it’s a really good shaver, I love it, and [I was worried that] I can’t buy it here, but actually you can.*” Like Christina, Jasmin described strong feelings towards the branded shaver she used. Love towards a branded product was also evident in participants’ accounts of food items: Jasmin got quite excited talking about German food brands that she missed while abroad:

Milka chocolate, Haribo. I love the, it’s the, not Pringles, it’s the..

Chips?

Yeah, kind of chips, the ones, Pombaer, I love Pombaeren, I’m just so addicted to Pombaer, so yeah, and my chewing gums, my special ones I always had, and bread. I can’t, I really, how can you live here?

Jasmin missed a particular brand of chocolate and candy; however, she used the word “love” to describe her admiration for the chips brand Pom-Baer (owned by Intersnack) and even asked the (German) researcher “*how can you live here?*” which indicates a very strong tie to this particular brand from which separation for a longer period of time seemed almost unbearable. For another participant, Klara, both the personal care product and the brand are important. Klara had a preferred shampoo brand in Germany, Herbal Essence, and a particular product in their range:

Same was with my shampoo, I always have Herbal Essences, yeah, and it’s much more expensive here than in Germany.

But you can find the same type though that you use?

Yeah, I find the same type, I always use, it’s the big blue one, I don’t know. [...] Yeah, because I love the smell, how it smells and I was searching for this brand especially of this shampoo because I can’t live without my special shampoo [laugh].

She elaborated on how she “*love[s] the smell*” of it and how she also made a great effort to find this particular brand because she “*can’t live without my special shampoo*”. Her relationship with Herbal Essences and the particular product can be described as a committed partnership which implies a “deep commitment to stay together despite adverse circumstances” (Fournier, 1998, p. 262). In this research, the committed partnership between a consumer and a brand crosses geographical boundaries and helps facilitate the temporary relocation to a different brandscape whilst also negotiating the liminal phase of the sojourn. This understanding of certain consumer-brand relationships in mobility builds on Ahuvia’s

(2005) claim that loved objects can “help resolve conflicts and tensions in the consumer’s identity narrative” (p. 182).

Klara’s statement above of not being able to “*live without my special shampoo*” also indicates a strong dependency on the particular brand, in addition to deep commitment. This was even more evident in Linda’s account:

Yeah, my Labello [lip balm]! And it’s actually not a Labello brand but it’s a Bebe one, and I need that! I’m just sort of addicted to it. And so my mum had to send that to me[...] The mascara? Oh my God, it’s Maybelline volume and define. Yeah, I couldn’t actually find it here so I looked at other ones but they were so expensive and I was like, no, no way that I’ll buy that one. [...] The mascara was too expensive. I don’t really mind buying another one. It doesn’t have to be that one, so I actually couldn’t find my normal one, or the one I used, but I mean I change the mascaras I used so often that it wouldn’t matter, but it was just too expensive. And Labello was quite obvious that I needed that one and...

[Laughs] Quite obvious...

Yeah, it was. It’s just everybody, like my friends say, “oh no”, I’ve always got my Labello in my pocket and they can ask me whether they can have some, I’m just using it all the time.

So is that like the blue one, or maybe the pink one?

Yeah, yeah [picks out blue Bebe lip balm from gym bag]. Well, actually I got much better because I’m not carrying it around in my pocket all the time, so it’s just in my bag somewhere and sometimes I even go out without it. At home I wouldn’t go out without my Labello in my pocket of my trousers.

Linda’s elaborate discussion of her relationship with a Bebe lip balm provides various further insights into consumer-brand relationships in mobility. At first, she described her feeling towards the brand and product as addiction, indicating an even stronger form of dependency which Fournier (1998) had defined as “obsessive, highly emotional, selfish attractions cemented by feeling that the other is irreplaceable” (p. 262). Then, she compared her relationship to the lip balm to that with mascara. For Lotta, the mascara could be replaced by a substitute if the prices were acceptable. She chose to have the mascara sent to her because of the price differences discussed earlier. However, even the idea of looking for a substitute for her lip balm seemed unthinkable to Linda, indicated by her saying that it was “*quite obvious*” that she needed this particular branded object. For Linda, there appeared to be no other suitable option to her preferred lip balm. In addition, stating “*I needed that*”, rather than expressing a want, implies how closely this cosmetic item was tied to her identity and concept of self (Liu, et al., 2012). However, she started to address how her relationship with this particular brand had slightly changed during her sojourn. Linda’s discussion of how she “*actually [...] got much better*”, “*even go[ing] without*” the lip balm at times or just

leaving it in the gym bag rather than closely attached to her body in her trouser pockets portrays a sense of separation or withdrawal from this relationship that was marked not only by dependency but also addiction. Upon her return home, Lotta was able to reflect more critically on her relationship to the lip balm and how it had changed over the duration of her sojourn:

I remember you said the Labello was one thing you really couldn't live without. So how are your feelings towards that now?

That actually has changed. Because I'm using a totally different brand now, I'm using Blistex now. And I'm, I think I was kind of addicted when I came to New Zealand and now I don't need that much anymore.

Was that because of your time in New Zealand?

Actually I think yes.

Upon reflection on the relationship, Lotta acknowledged that she had been “*kind of addicted*” to this particular brand of lip balm. Whereas she gradually weaned herself off the branded product during her sojourn, she completely terminated her relationship with the Bebe lip balm after her return to Germany and even started using a substitute, Blistex. However, interestingly, she had not yet established the same dependency on or addiction to it. For her, the sojourn to New Zealand acted as a separation period from a relationship marked by addiction and thereby, more negative emotions than the object love described before. Sojourns undertaken by young adults are seen as life-changing with regard to gaining intercultural competence, improving their self-understanding and independence (L. Brown & Graham, 2009). The findings presented here indicate that mobility in the form of a sojourn can also help consumers shed burdensome relationships and relieve the pain of being closely tied to a certain brand, opening up avenues for new and healthier consumer-brand relationships during or post-sojourn.

One last category of consumer-brand relationships was found in this research. For the older participants, lasting relationships with brands had been established over a few years and appeared hard to change. Those participants did not use the words “love” or “addiction” to describe their relationships but rather elaborated on their longevity and duration. Sabine, who had a preferred brand of shampoo as discussed previously, described her relationship with L’Oreal El Vital in the following way:

Well shampoo, I had to go shopping several times, before I found a good one for me.

Which one do you use?

I've got that Herbal Essences one. I've tried about 2-3 different ones before and yeah my hair was always greasy, so I would have preferred to have my product from home.

Which one did you use in Germany?

Um, they have it here too but not the exact one, um it's L'Oreal El Vital. And at home there is a green one for extra greasy hair [laughs]. And that was awesome, I had that for several years at home.

Her account portrays close ties between consumer-brand relationships, physical appearance, self and routine behaviour. Finding a suitable substitute proved tedious for Sabine and she would have preferred to have her “awesome” shampoo that she had used “for several years at home”. In her case, the relationship is not so much marked by a strong dependency as by a comfortable long-term relationship that used to be part of her everyday life and mundane consumption. This also appeared to be the case for Natalie and her relationship to a particular Nivea deodorant:

What I really really like is the deo[dorant] from Nivea and I'm so happy that I could bought it in Australia, get the same one in Australia that I get here [in New Zealand]. So that's something I really really yeah, I really prefer to buy, the deo[dorant] from Nivea. I don't know why but yeah.

How long have you used it in Germany, do you remember how many years roughly?

I had it in the States already and I bought the same in the States too, I could buy the same in the States.

So it must be at least five?

Five years maybe, yeah, five years.

Natalie (26 years old at the time of the interview) had worked as an au pair in the United States in her early twenties and travelled in Australia before embarking on her au pair experience in New Zealand. For her, like Sabine, excitement about the relationship with her preferred brand still existed to some degree (“I’m so happy”, “I really really [...] prefer to buy, the deo[dorant] from Nivea”); however, she was not able to pinpoint the exact attributes that she admired in that brand as indicated by her statement of “I don’t know why”. Therefore, as for Sabine, the longevity of this relationship was the most important factor. Like person-to-person relationships, some consumer-brand relationships might shift into a comfort zone where the initial feeling of having butterflies in one’s stomach makes way for a more cosy and comfortable, low-maintenance relationship often described as “old married couple” in colloquial terms. Rather than just aiming to maintain a home routine, the consumer-brand relationships described in Natalie and Sabine’s account portray a reliance on familiar brands based on a comfortable long-term bond, similar to that of a long-term person-to-person relationship.

This section of the findings has illustrated a third emotional reason for relying on familiar personal brands: Some young female consumers had established relationships to certain home brands in the form of committed partnerships illustrated by the frequent use of the word “love” to describe this emotional object attachment. Others had formed addictions to brands which were even more extreme than dependencies described by Fournier (1998). In this case, the sojourn acted as a separation or withdrawal period from this more negative relationship. Lastly, the older participants in this study relied heavily on familiar personal brands due to the longevity of their consumer-brand relationship comparable to an old married couple. However, brands may not only act as relationship partners as they can also provide a connection for consumers. In this research, certain personal brands act as connectors to the home, past self and child self, and thereby allow consumers to bridge (geographical) boundaries. The following section will address this last emotional reason which is closely tied to the preceding three emotional reasons.

4.2.3.2.4. Connections to the Past, Child Self and Home

Connections to the past, child self and to the home represent the last category of emotional reasons for relying on familiar personal brands. Brands can act as connectors in two different ways. First, they can act as portals. Young sojourners use familiar personal brands to transport themselves back into the past, a point in time before they left Germany, and to their child self. Thus, like indexical personal possessions (Grayson & Shulman, 2000), the brand acts as a portal, a gateway permitting transportation to the past. Second, brands can act as bridges. Like physical bridges that provide a passage over a barrier or gap, young sojourners use brands to build a connection between home and host country. By using familiar personal brands, many participants feel more at home in the host country; thus, the brand provides a virtual bridge between the two geographical locales. Both types of connections are elaborated on in the following section.

For one informant, Anna, her favourite perfume acts as a portal to her past self, the self she had been before temporarily moving:

So the perfume that your mum sent, was that quite special for you? You had to have that one particular one?

Yea, just because I wasn't able to find it. I was trying to find it so badly and I didn't find it so I was just saying to my mum, "hey with the next parcel can you please send it over"?

So why do you think the perfume is quite important for you?

When she was sending it I was thinking about coming back smelling the same way as I was leaving but [thinks], yeah, yeah. Maybe because of that.

Rather than wanting to maintain her physical appearance, Anna relied on her favourite perfume because it reminded her of her past self and how she had left this aspect of her life behind to embark on this sojourn. However, upon her imminent return home, the perfume would allow her to go “*back smelling the same way as I was leaving*”, essentially transporting her back in time to the self she had been prior to her sojourn. Noble and Walker (1997) discussed how photographs of family members and friends allowed recent college entrants to transport past relationships to their new role of being college students. The college students reminisced upon past relationships and how photographs provided “a connection to my past and [...] support me when I’m feeling lonely” (Noble & Walker, 1997, p. 40). The young au pairs in this study used branded products as pillars of their past. Anna in particular explained how in mobility, certain personal brands that consumers have special bonds with can act as portals to the past self. Through using those personal brands, young sojourners are able not only to reminisce about past times but also transport themselves back to where they had left off prior to their sojourn. In that sense, those personal brands not only act as branded security blankets as mentioned before but have a deeper meaning, that of a portal to past times.

In addition to personal brands acting as portals to the past self, a self possessed any time prior to the sojourn, certain personal brands can also act as portals to the child self. Nadine discussed how for every Christmas in “*the last couple of years*” she would receive an After Eight branded chocolate Santa from her father (who she lived with after her parents separated):

I was like, “oh dad, couldn’t you send me one please”, and then he just... and the After Eight Santa, chocolate Santa, I used to get that for the last couple of years, I was like, “oh couldn’t you send me one? I would like get a parcel too, everyone else is getting one, please”.

But you had to request it?

I had to request it. [...] I was excited, I was like, “oh yeah”, just because I love them so much, and that was something I would have really missed, yeah. [...] And it just brought a little bit of more Christmas feeling here. It was really good.

So did that make you feel more at home here or did it make you miss home?

No, it made me feel more at home here. It didn’t, I didn’t really miss Germany itself, I just missed having this food. It was more about the food and having it regular over Christmas, just the connection to Christmas really, not the connection to Germany but the connection to Christmas I would say.

For Nadine, requesting and ultimately receiving this particular personal food brand allowed her to fall back into her child self. Nadine did not miss Germany but she reminisced about how this food item would make the “*Christmas feeling*” complete and elaborated on

how having this particular personal brand from her childhood for this special holiday, that she is spending away from her family, “*brought a bit more of a Christmas feeling here*”. In that sense, the After Eight chocolate Santa helps her celebrate Christmas as she used to when growing up in her family. For Nadine, the familiar branded food item acted as a portal to Christmas spent with family during her childhood. Again, Noble and Walker (1997) explained how stuffed animals and specific bedding offer a sense of comfort to their participants because they provide ties to their childhood. Participants were emotionally attached to those items for the same reasons that were found in this study: comfort, security and safety. However, here, this comfort and also the ties to childhood experiences were enacted by personal brands, such as an After Eight chocolate Santa, rather than personal objects. In addition, as discussed earlier, many participants relied on their parents to mail them particular preferred personal brands. Statements such as “[*my mother*] *knew what I always had so she sent over that*” (Tinka) or “[*my mother*] *knows what I love to have*” (Klara) also illuminate how some participants fell back into their child self in the sense that they would rely on their mothers to purchase specific personal brands for them and ship them to New Zealand. Despite undertaking an independent sojourn, taking care of the host children and working as a mature employee for the host family, some au pairs were happy to fall back into this child self when it came to having their mothers provide for them, as explained in a previous section.

Lastly, some personal brands also allow consumers to connect the home to the host country, thereby acting as bridges between the two cultures. In the interview with Natalie during her sojourn, she pondered on why she relied on certain personal brands and why she had her mother ship them to her:

I said to her I need some Milka chocolate (laughter). Yeah, and Haribo Colorado because you can't buy it here. [...] No, it was nice to have it after a few months. Yeah. It was really nice but I don't, I don't need it in general, so it was just nice to have a wish and get something.

How did that make you feel when you opened the parcel?

Happy, of course, happy of course. Yeah, I'm, the brand Milka or Kinder chocolate, “also ich verbinde das mit zuhause” [I link it to home], it's home for me, so that makes me feel good of course.

So it made you feel like home here or did it make you feel like you miss home?

A little bit of home, so it's a piece of home to have here and a kind of luxury thing, something special.

First, Natalie explained how she “*need[ed]*” a particular brand of chocolate (Milka) as if it was a necessity. Second, she discussed how she links those particular food brands to

home, how they are “*home for me*” and “*make[...] me feel good*”. Third, having those particular personal brands in the host country brought “*a little bit of home*” to the host country for her, making her feel “*happy*” about being in the host country without missing out on anything from home. Lastly, by consuming home food brands in the host country, their status was elevated from a mundane food item to “*a kind of luxury thing, something special*”. In that sense, those particular personal food brands provided a connection between host country and home whilst also changing the meaning of those personal brands. At home, those brands are regarded as mundane, everyday consumption objects (Kleine, et al., 1992) whereas in the host country, they are elevated to the status of extraordinary, special consumption items.

The third point in Natalie’s account, how personal brands can provide a bridge between home and host country, was also evident in two other participants’ accounts: Lotta and Tinka were interviewed post-return to Germany and reflected on their use of and reliance on personal brands. Linda provided the following account on why she preferred to use familiar items over locally available products:

Of course the price first, and second that I was a bit too lazy to look for the right brand or the right colour. And it was so easy to just tell my Mum, because I mean it’s easy for her to go to DM [German drug store] to just get one. And I know how to handle them, I know the brand so I can just use it as always. And it’s a bit like having your home, being at home, having my stuff here, my makeup.

Was that quite important for you?

Yeah, it made it a bit easier that not everything was changing. I mean I had my clothes there and my makeup and, yeah, it makes me feel a bit more at home I think. [...] Price and comfortable, and then having a little part of home there. I mean it’s not a big thing but it’s like all the little things come together and they are similar.

Lotta sums up well what has been illustrated in this section. Pragmatic reasons such as price and belongingness to Generation Y resulting in a close tie to her parents as well as emotional reasons such as routine, comfort and safety (“*I know how to handle them, I know the brand so I can just use it as always.*”) are important factors in triggering the reliance on familiar branded products. However, in addition, Lotta also noted how those familiar brands allowed her to have “*a little part of home*” in the host country. Previous research established that items such as photographs, jewellery and other family keepsakes and trinkets allow migrants to recreate and connect to the home (Mehta & Belk, 1991). In this research, informants also discussed those typical souvenirs or gifts (photos, jewellery, stuffed animals, etc.) but additionally expressed how this bridge from host country to home is facilitated by the presence and use of familiar personal brands in the host country.

The following quote by Tinka, who also reflected on her sojourn experience, as did Lotta during the follow up interview, sums up this section:

So why do you think personal items are so important that you have to have the specific ones, so the mascara that you've always used?

I don't know, I'm just used to using it somehow and it feels normal, [...] you're just used to it and it's part of your routine, what you have and if you would also change that, it's like you changed everything of what you're used to and it's like, you know, maybe feels a little bit like at home like you still have the same product and everything.

I guess we talked about it and you didn't think that would happen. So were you quite surprised to see how reliant you are on some of the products?

Yeah, maybe a little bit because, I don't know, at home it feels so normal to have all the things and then suddenly you're away and you have, like, nothing at all anymore.

Tinka's statement captures various aspects that were illustrated in the preceding section. This excerpt taps into the reliance on familiar brands for emotional reasons ("used to it", "routine", "normal"). Tinka further elaborated on a feeling that all of the participants were familiar with: when moving abroad temporarily on their own, without the support network of their home family and friends, "everything of what you're used to" changed for these au pairs. They had to temporarily leave behind their social networks and familiar environment and instead, try to fit in with their host family and local culture. Unlike permanent immigrants, global nomads or cosmopolitans investigated in past studies (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Mehta & Belk, 1991; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999), au pairs undertake their first sojourn alone and with limited ability to take along personal items (due to for example the imminent return home, baggage restrictions, limited personal space in the host family home, etc.) and have not yet accumulated sufficient cultural capital to easily adapt to different brandscapes (Holt, 1998). Therefore, in addition to taking some mementos from home (Mehta & Belk, 1991; Noble & Walker, 1997), they also use familiar personal brands as a means to build a bridge between home and host country. In that sense, certain personal brands symbolically represent the home, including the social networks and the environment that has been left behind. Thus, the personal brands bridge the geographical gap between home and host country by making young sojourners feel "a bit like at home" in the host country.

Whereas the above emotional reasons for the reliance on familiar brands are representative for most of the participants, some of the informants engaged in (temporary) relationships with locally available brands and products as previously insinuated and now discussed in the following section.

4.2.4. (Temporary) Relationships with the Local

As previously discussed, prior to the sojourn, au pairs were not deeply concerned about having familiar personal brands with them when sojourning abroad. However, from the start of their experience, they realised differences in brandscapes and started relying on familiar branded products for various pragmatic and emotional reasons. Nevertheless, few au pairs experimented, either out of a sense of adventure or due to the unavailability of their preferred branded products, with locally available options (the local here refers to branded products available in the host country and can be either locally produced and sold products or globally available products). This in turn resulted in four main relationship types with the locally available options: a holiday romance, doomed love affair, rekindled temporary romance and travel companionship. Those four types are discussed in the following last part of this findings' section.

4.2.4.1. Holiday Romance

Firstly, it seems necessary to briefly review Fournier's (1998) seminal article on consumer-brand relationships with regard to temporary relationship types. She provides a definition of so-called brand flings which regards those relationship types as "short-term, time-bounded engagements of high emotional reward, but devoid of commitment and reciprocity demands" (p. 362). However, a lack of theoretical advances on this relationship type led Fournier (Alvarez & Fournier, 2012; Fournier, 2009; Fournier & Alvarez, 2010) to revisit the brand fling and, together with Alvarez, create a revised working definition of brand flings: "the brand fling is a hedonic, non-committed, time-bounded relationship driven by impulsivity and the need for experimentation and associated with post-termination feelings of shame and regret" (Alvarez & Fournier, 2012, p. 77). This expanded definition appears to be helpful when investigating this first temporary relationship type which will be referred to as holiday romance. Some au pairs formed temporary ties to locally available branded products with clear signs of the temporary and fleeting nature of this relationship.

Tanja discussed her experience with candy brands in New Zealand, which were introduced to her by her host family:

I got some sweets, some typical New Zealand sweets. Jaffa and these pineapple chocolate [Pineapple Lumps]. [...] Hmm, I don't like both in the beginning, like it was a bit like, hmm. But when you've eaten a few you start to like them. [...] I think if I would see it in Germany I wouldn't buy it. Or maybe I would buy it if I would do a, like, a New Zealand party or something like this. But I wouldn't buy it because I like it so much. [...] But I wouldn't buy Cadbury or something like this because I think we

have better chocolate in Germany. [...] Maybe if I have, like, I don't know, if I'm really homesick to New Zealand I might buy it just to have something that reminds me but at the moment I would say no.

Tanja's host parents had bought her those typical New Zealand food brands as an arrival gift, to introduce Tanja to the host family and ease her transition (Belk, 1997). This introduction to the brand by a third party is in line with Alvarez and Fournier's (2012) description of a brand fling where "in the dynamics of fling initiation, the most critical spark is the input of influential others" (p.84). Initially, Tanja was not fond of the candy; however, she eventually formed a temporary relationship with the brands and occasionally purchased them for herself throughout her sojourn. In contrast to Alvarez and Fournier (2012), Tanja's account of her relationship with Pineapple Lumps, Jaffas and Cadbury does not portray a "high level of emotionality [...] and engagement" (p. 81) but rather indicates a loose bond to those host brands. Even prior to leaving the host country, Tanja appeared confident that she would not purchase those brands in the home country, because "*we have better chocolate in Germany*". In that sense, the host brands were merely used as temporary substitutes for unavailable home brands with a clear and pre-determined end in sight for this relationship. Whereas this is in line with Alvarez and Fournier's (2012) description of the transience of brand flings, they also found that "almost half the respondents (46 percent) did not completely stop purchasing or using the brand though they claimed the fling was over" (p. 83). In Tanja's case, she was sure that she would not purchase the New Zealand brands again, because a) brands for equal products are "*better [...] in Germany*" and b) those particular brands would not be available in Germany, hence a forced termination of the relationship was inevitable.

Another participant, Natalie, also elaborated on how she had engaged in a temporary holiday romance. Natalie was looking for a substitute body lotion whilst travelling in Australia prior to her au pair experience in New Zealand:

Yeah, the brand Vaseline, you know? I really like the cream, the body cream, so I bought the cream over here because I had it in Australia [laughs].

So that reminds you of Australia a little bit?

No, I really like it. It's a really good brand, didn't expect it and yeah, it's not that expensive and was nice. I really like it so I bought it here too, yeah.

She had usually used a body lotion from Dove, however, was unable to find a Dove product she liked at a reasonable price. Upon trying out Vaseline in Australia, she established that this branded product works well for her, resulting in a relationship that lasted not only for the duration of her travels in Australia but also during her stay in New Zealand. She also

discussed how she would change back to her preferred Dove body lotion once back in Germany. In comparison to Tanja, Natalie's relationship with Vaseline was joyful while it lasted which indicates another characteristic of a brand fling in that this relationship provides "very positive feelings [...], a general state of enjoyment, of feeling good" (Alvarez & Fournier, 2012, p. 80). However, similar to Tanja, despite "*really lik[ing] it*", Natalie was certain that she would change back to familiar Dove products at home.

Both of the above accounts illustrate some of the characteristics of Fournier (1998) and Alvarez and Fournier's (2012) brand fling. However, firstly, both of those studies were conducted in a single-country context where access to the brand flings was guaranteed on a long-term basis. This is not the case for the above accounts by Tanja and Natalie as their stay in New Zealand and access to those particular local host brands was temporary with a clear end point and, therefore, termination of the relationship. Secondly, contrary to Alvarez and Fournier's (2012) working definition, the participants did not feel ashamed or regretful post-termination. Rather, both participants had preferred personal brands in the home country that they were looking forward to being reunited with but acknowledged the temporary benefits of the holiday romance with locally available branded products. Therefore, the consumer-brand relationship of a holiday romance, as described above, would necessitate an adapted definition to that of a brand fling: a holiday romance with a foreign brand is a non-committed, fixed term, more or less voluntary union associated with temporary emotional attachment to a local brand and feelings of anticipation about the reunion with the home brand. Important to note here is that the termination of the relationship causes neither shame nor regret, nor does it cause separation anxiety because a preferred option will be readily available upon returning home. The fixed-term nature of this relationship type is known to and greatly accepted by the participants. However, this is not the case for the next category of temporary consumer-brand relationship which has been termed a doomed love affair.

4.2.4.2. Doomed Love Affair

Some participants did engage in seemingly pre-determined temporary holiday romances with locally available brands. However, the relationship with local brands became more intense for some participants who were then distressed knowing that they would have to separate from their relationship partner. Jessica voiced her anxiety about missing a particular shampoo brand:

I tried Sunsilk [shampoo] stuff and I quite like that now. And I'll really miss that in Germany. [...] I didn't really have a fixed one but it was mostly L'Oreal.

Okay but you couldn't find the one here that you were using?

I could find it but it was more expensive than the Sunsilk one so I switched to the cheaper ones. And after I, after I tried it I found that it was working at least as good as the other one, if not better. So why not take that one, even if it's cheaper?

So for you pretty much that was the one you've used throughout the past year?

Yes, yes. And I'm quite happy about that. I will really really miss it.

The above excerpt is taken from an interview with Jessica conducted close to the end of her sojourn in New Zealand. At the beginning of her sojourn, she actually searched for L'Oreal products that she had used at home. However, price was an issue for her, which led her to try out a cheaper, locally available brand. For Jessica, it turned out that this branded product worked “*at least as good as the other one, if not better*”. After using this particular brand for the duration of her sojourn, she already anticipated missing it upon her return to the home country. At the time of the interview, she had just started to plan what she was going to take back home with her:

So do you think you will buy some [Sunsilk] to take back?

I think I've bought too much shoes. So my luggage will be too heavy for shampoo I think [laughs].

This statement appeared to illustrate some of the same ease of letting go of the holiday romance that was seen in both Tanja's and Natalie's accounts. However, Jessica was also interviewed after she had returned to Germany. During this final interview, she discussed how she still missed the New Zealand brand that she had used throughout her sojourn:

Is there something you miss from New Zealand though? I remember the shampoo you had here you really liked so is that something you miss in Germany now?

Yes, I wish I could have the New Zealand shampoo but first time here I tried 3 or 4 different kinds of shampoo and conditioners, and I don't really get along with them. I haven't found the right one yet so I'm still trying to find the right one. And that's a bit annoying because in New Zealand I was there and I bought the cheapest one and it was the right one, it was working for a year and here I'm just trying and trying and doesn't really get along with it. [...]

So you haven't found a substitute in Germany yet?

No I haven't. I'm sad for it.

In Jessica's case, the holiday romance is more intense. Already prior to leaving New Zealand, Jessica had a feeling of Trennungsschmerz (German word for emotional pain of separation). Jessica had established more than a holiday romance with Sunsilk: The liminal transition (van Gennep, 1960) or the “change in a significant life role” (Noble & Walker, 1997, p. 32) when moving temporarily to the host country made Jessica form a close bond to Sunsilk. The brand was able to “fill the role that family, friends, and other personal

relationships once held in the individual's extended self" (Noble & Walker, 1997, p. 34) and "assume[d] a key role in easing the psychological difficulties associated with transitions" (Belk, 1992; Mehta & Belk, 1991 in Noble & Walker, 1997, p. 34). Therefore, the symbolic use of Sunsilk was crucial to Jessica's sense of sojourn self.

Since Sunsilk is not available in Europe, Jessica knew that their relationship would end once she had to return to Germany. However, even after many weeks back in her home country, Jessica still missed the brand and got quite frustrated about having to meet other brands on the dating dance floor (McEwen, 2005) in the home country. She remembered her time with Sunsilk fondly, displaying signs of enduring admiration that reached beyond her sojourn, resulting in sadness when remembering the time she had spent with the brand which could not be relived because the brand was not available in the home country. Jessica's longing for this particular host brand represents nostalgia, not in the sense of longing for home but rather a "painful yearning to return" (Havlena & Holak, 1991, p. 323) to the host country. Here, a longing for the sojourn past is evident.

Jessica was not the only participant who had engaged in a doomed love affair with a locally available branded product: Jacqueline bought styling foam from Schwarzkopf in New Zealand and used it throughout her sojourn. During an interview a few months after her return to Germany, she discussed how she had not been able to find a suitable substitute in the home country:

I still haven't found my favourite styling foam brand. I don't know. [...] In New Zealand I had the one from Schwarzkopf. I like that pretty much but still I'm back and I don't really know what I want or what I need.

So do you wish you would have the one from New Zealand?

Yeah, that would be nice.

Have you thought about trying to find it or getting it sent? Have you looked into it more?

No not really. I'm still trying to find something else or to get along with something else. [...] I bought it by myself one day, actually I just took the cheapest brand from, I don't know if you know it, DM [drug store], yeah. It was I think from Balea, the DM brand. But I wasn't very happy with that.

Jacqueline appeared rather frustrated than sad at not being able to find a suitable substitute for her styling foam. She did mention that it "would be nice" to have the brand she used in New Zealand, however, she had not engaged in an active search for it. Despite having lived in Germany most of their lives, the sojourn opened both Jacqueline's and Jessica's eyes to other brands and left them longing for those brands, either reminiscing about it with sadness or through expressing frustration.

The above accounts portray a different consumer-brand relationship to that of a brand fling (Alvarez & Fournier, 2012; Fournier, 1998; Fournier & Alvarez, 2010) and that of a holiday romance, as discussed above, in the following ways: informants who engaged in a doomed love affair had feelings of fear and anxiety prior to leaving the host country about the impending separation from the foreign brand. However, the participants did not want to stock up on those host brands as they anticipated that they would be able to find a substitute in their home country. Upon the return home, participants were frustrated at the lack of available substitutes which resulted in an intense longing and *Trennungsschmerz* for the host brand, which was evoked by an enduring admiration for the host brand. Therefore, a doomed love affair is different to brand flings and holiday romances as here, sojourners would rather want to continue the relationship with the foreign brand than per force having to terminate it. Having engaged in a doomed love affair that is characterised by strong emotions and feelings, participants dreaded stepping onto the dating dance floor (McEwen, 2005) of the home brandscape upon their return home. Sadness and frustration were the predominant feelings post-termination and post-return, indicating that the re-entry to the home brandscape does bring with it some challenges and not only anticipation of the return to routines, habits and the past or home self. Therefore, it can be proposed that the re-acculturation to the home can also be seen as a liminal transition period where a void is left in place of the host country, family, and friends which sojourners initially struggle to fill with the symbolic consumption of possessions. Whereas the informants who had engaged in a doomed love affair knew of the imminent and feared separation from preferred host brands, some participants were surprised to be reunited with long-lost personal brands from their past in the host country.

4.2.4.3. Rekindled Friendship

For the two types of temporary relationships discussed above, holiday romances and doomed love affairs, participants connected with locally available brands. However, other participants serendipitously encountered familiar brands that they had not used, bought or been able to find in many years. One participant in this research, Natalie, discussed how she found a particular brand and product of toothpaste during her sojourn that had been discontinued in Germany. The discussion with her illustrates another form of temporary relationship, namely that of a rekindled friendship:

[laughs] I had another toothpaste. It's so funny. I had the Colgate, a special one from Colgate.

In Germany?

In Germany, years ago, and then they stopped producing it so you can't buy it anymore in Germany, the toothpaste. And so I changed it and I had the German one when I came to Australia and it was finished some day of course, and then in the supermarket I saw the toothpaste I had years before! So I bought this, Colgate.

So how did that make you feel when you saw that?

Yeah, good, good. Really good, yeah. Because I really like it and I was so sad that I couldn't buy it anymore in Germany.

So now in New Zealand they have the same one?

Yeah.

So will you take some back when you go back home?

No, I think the one I still have then, but no, I don't want to. [...] Yeah, I don't need it because I have another one in Germany I like to use. So it's not a problem, no.

Natalie indicated that she remembered how she used to use this particular Colgate toothpaste in her teens in Germany. At that time, she might have formed a close relationship with the brand but because it was discontinued, Natalie searched for and settled on a new branded product. Her description of the relationship with Colgate sounded like that of a person-to-person relationship where two individuals, potentially childhood friends, had lost contact and then met each other again by coincidence years afterwards in a foreign country, as illustrated by her saying “*and then in the supermarket I saw the toothpaste I had years before!*” She rekindled the friendship she had previously shared with Colgate for the duration of her sojourn. Russell and Levy (2012) discussed how “times of identity transition – prompted by, for example, the loss of significant others, a move to a new country, the birth of a first child, or a second marriage – may trigger reconsumption” (p. 355). For Natalie, reverting back to her childhood friend while temporarily residing in the host country is in line with Fournier’s (1998) definition of a childhood friendship which is an “infrequently engaged, affectively laden relation, reminiscent of earlier times”, “yield[ing] comfort and security of past self” (p. 362). Therefore, through the reconsumption of Colgate during her sojourn, Natalie was able to relive the childhood friendship with a personal brand. However, she sounded almost annoyed when asked if she would take any stock of Colgate with her to Germany. Her reply to this question indicated that she had no plans to take this relationship any further than her sojourn (“*I don't want to*”) because she does not “*need*” the brand as she has “*another one in Germany that [she] like[s] to use*”. After the discontinuation of the brand in Germany, Natalie had to find a new friend which ultimately replaced her relationship with Colgate, deeming it unnecessary in the home country. In that sense, the temporarily rekindled friendship is similar to that of a holiday romance where participants anticipated their reunion with a preferred home brand leaving no need for the relationship to transcend beyond the sojourn. However, it is different to a holiday romance in the sense that participants already

knew the brand from prior engagements and relationships. Unlike for the doomed love affair, no separation anxiety was displayed but rather a genuine enjoyment of the reconsumption of the brand during the sojourn.

Another participant also rekindled a friendship she had formed and lost in the past. Nadine used her first trip to a New Zealand supermarket to encounter the local brandscape but also to establish the availability of familiar branded products:

I like looking for products I already know from Germany and the Countdown [supermarket] had like a European section with stuff from abroad and they had also the Walkers chips from England.

Okay, so both from the UK and Germany.

From the UK and the prawn cocktail chips I used to eat when I was in London, so stuff that was really, ten years ago I used to have them. And every time I see them I'm like "oh yeah", and the memories come up having them.

Nadine initially explored the host supermarket to look “for products I already know from Germany”. Surprised to find a “European section”, she serendipitously came across Walker chips from England. Nadine had lived in London for a few years from when she was four years old as her father had been on a military assignment in England. For her, rediscovering and rekindling this relationship was quite special as it allowed her to reminisce about the time she had spent in London “ten years ago” “and every time I see them I'm like “oh yeah”, and the memories come up having them”. Nadine’s account describes a feeling of nostalgia, a longing for an idealised past (Baker, Karrer, & Veeck, 2005; Havlena & Holak, 1991), for a food branded product that she consumed whilst living with her parents in London. Baker, Karrer and Veeck (2005) discussed how emotions and memories are recreated through cooking as “food, with its ability to engage multiple senses, may be particularly effective at transporting consumers back in time” (p. 402). Here, merely being exposed to and then consuming Walker chips transported Nadine back into her childhood self of living in London. Additionally, her parents got divorced upon the family’s return to Germany, so Nadine particularly remembers this time in England with great fondness. This can be explained by how the “idealized past emotions [characteristic of nostalgia] become displaced onto inanimate objects, sounds, smells and tastes that were experienced concurrently with the emotions” (Hirsch, 1992, p. 390). Nadine’s fondness of the brand can be further described using Holak and Havlena’s (1998) definition of nostalgia as “a positively valenced complex feeling, emotion, or mood produced by reflection on things (objects, persons, experiences, ideas) associated with the past” (p. 402). Rather than reminiscing on her time in Germany upon seeing familiar German brands, Nadine was temporarily

transported back to her time in England. That this type of nostalgia occurred is no surprise when considering Havlena and Holak's (1991) proclamation of the existence of an "apparent tendency of individuals to feel nostalgic emotions more strongly during transitional periods in the life cycle" (p. 327). In addition, Emontspool and Kjeldgaard (2012) proclaim that in migration, "the nostalgia is as much for mundane or exotic products from previous sites of residence as it is for marketed aspects of foods "typical" of home culture" (p. 215). Nadine's account portrays this nostalgia for a brand from England during this transitional period in her life.

As can be seen in both of the accounts above, rekindled friendships based on the reconsumption of once preferred personal brands allow consumers to transport themselves back into their past self for the duration of the sojourn. The transitional nature of the sojourn appears crucial for this type of relationship which is, like holiday romances, voluntarily time-bounded with a pre-determined termination date. In that sense, the mundane consumption of personal brands changes only temporarily for this particular transitional period and an anticipation and acceptance of the reunion with preferred home brands is prevalent.

4.2.4.4. Travel Companionship

The last encounter with the local is termed travel companionship and is the least temporary as it can transcend the sojourn and enter the cultural context of the home. As illustrated earlier, Anna asked her mother to send her a particular perfume (Replay) so she could transport herself back to where she had left off before her sojourn, creating a connection to her past self. However, in addition, she also established a lasting bond with a perfume brand (Calvin Klein) in New Zealand that is also available in Germany:

But with the personal care brands, was there anything that your mum sent you throughout your time in New Zealand or your friends sent you?

Personal care, just my perfume, she [mum] sent me. But I changed it in New Zealand, I changed from Replay to Calvin Klein because my host mum got the Calvin Klein one for Christmas from her sister and I love this perfume so I bought it when I was leaving New Zealand. I wasn't able to buy it in New Zealand because I thought it would be weird [laughs].

All of the participants in this research established lasting relationships with other au pairs, and more often than not, other German au pairs. Kennedy (2004) describes this tendency to form some close relationships to other non-host nationals in the following way: "The experience of leaving one's homeland, family and friends, especially for the first time and for a considerable period, may create a kind of emotional deficit, a hollowing out of

one's life space. The easiest way to overcome this deficit is to form friendships with others facing the same predicament and the most accessible candidates for this are fellow professional workmates with whom you already share so much else, especially if like you they are non-nationals" (p. 169). Whereas Kennedy (2004) explored professionals in the building design industry, his description applies to au pairs in this research. The participants in this research cherished relationships with other German au pairs because they felt like they were in the same situation of leaving behind family, friends and other social networks and finding their own way in the host country, providing a crucial point of commonality between each other. This recognition of shared self (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005) rooted in common experiences in turn resulted in strong bonds that were expected to last until long after they had returned to Germany. For example, Jacqueline anticipated during her sojourn that "*when we [German au pairs] get back to Germany, at some time, that we can meet there.*" Since these au pairs are fairly young when embarking on this sojourn, they seek the company of others "*in the same extreme situation*" as described by Karina:

They [German au pair friends] are from the same country, we can speak in our usual language and we are all in the same extreme situation. We all have the same problems, we all feel sometimes homesick, we really understand each other so that's pretty cool.

Particularly upon the return home, the friendships that had been formed whilst for example travelling together in the host country are crucial to them because they all share an experience with each other that their home family and friends cannot fully relate to ("*they don't know how it really was*", interview with Saskia). These travel companions become important points of reference in the au pairs' post-return life. Saskia explained why the German au pair friends she had made in New Zealand were even more important to her once she had returned home:

It's always fun when you meet to share or talk about the time in New Zealand, like both funny situations or have a look at the photos and stuff like that, that's really cool. And yea, it's always good.

This emotional bond to real life others during and after transitional periods in a consumer's life cycle sheds light on the brand relationships formed in the host country. The quote by Anna at the beginning of this section exemplifies the consumer-brand tie of a travel companionship: Anna had changed her perfume from the one that signified her past self (Replay) to one that symbolises her current, sojourning self (Calvin Klein). She bought the

perfume “*when I was leaving New Zealand*” to mark the termination of the sojourn but also the continuation of the consumption of this brand and therein the inherent connection to the host country. The smell of this perfume, which would have been present in the host family’s home because her host mother used it, helps her remember the time she has spent in New Zealand. In a sense, contrary to the Replay perfume, the Calvin Klein perfume acts as a connector to her sojourn experience and takes on the role of a travel companion similar to a fellow German au pair who has returned to the home country with her. Here, nostalgia might be present but rather than a longing for the past in the host country, Anna was able to reminisce on the time she had spent in New Zealand. Whereas food has the “ability to engage multiple senses [...] effective at transporting consumers back in time” (Baker, et al., 2005, p. 402), it is the smell of the perfume that Anna’s host mother used that allows her to be transported back to her sojourn experience and self. The Calvin Klein perfume was introduced to Anna in the host country but is also available in the home country. Therefore, like German au pairs returning to the home country together, Anna was able to return to the home country with her personal brand travel companion. Despite mainly using her preferred perfume Replay in the home country, she was also able to recreate her sojourn experiences when occasionally applying the Calvin Klein scent. Therefore, a branded product that has become a partner in the local can be transported back home and act as a reminder of the past, allowing the sojourner to reminisce about the sojourn with someone else, in this case a brand, who has been there and experienced the sojourn with them.

In line with Fournier’s (1998) typology of consumer-brand relationship forms, Table 11 provides a summary of the findings on the four (temporary) consumer-brand relationships with the local including the characteristics for each relationship form. Whereas the first three relationships are of a temporary and fleeting nature, they do not seem to fall under Alvarez and Fournier’s (2012) definition of a brand fling. They posit that flings are non-committed and filled with post-termination feelings of regret and shame. However, here, no negative feelings are associated with the relationships. The four relationships are rather marked by positive emotions and (temporary) engagement.

(Temporary) Relationships with the Local	
Relationship Form	Definition
Holiday Romance	Non-committed, fixed term, more or less voluntary union associated with temporary emotional attachment but feelings of positive anticipation about the reunion with the home partner.
Doomed Love Affair	Intense love affair marked by anxiety and fear of inevitable and impending separation. Strong longing and nostalgia for brand and sadness about separation upon return to the home country.
Rekindled Friendship	Serendipitous reunion with a lost partner from the past, reminiscent of earlier times, temporary and transient due to enduring commitment to home partners.
Travel Companionship	Strong bond based on shared experiences in the host country, possibility to continue union in home country and reminisce upon sojourn experience together.

Table 11: Typology of (Temporary) Consumer-Brand Relationship Forms with the Local

4.3. SECTION I – SUMMARY

To summarise, this first section provides an answer to the first research question which was: *How does sojourners' mundane everyday consumption of their personal brands change?* It was established that au pairs were open-minded and curious to try out unfamiliar brands and products and presented an (at least aspired-to) adventurous self prior to and at the beginning of their sojourn. However, upon entry and deeper immersion into the local host culture, the young participants experienced differences between home and host brandscapes: the non-availability of familiar personal brands, differentiated global brand strategies as well as a general dissatisfaction with local brands and local instantiations of global brands led to the reliance on home personal brands and subsequently, a more reserved self.

This reliance was manifested in two ways: 1) relying on familiar personal brands for pragmatic reasons such as price differences, belongingness to Generation Y and the duration of the stay abroad; 2) relying on familiar personal brands for emotional reasons such as the maintenance of self, identity and physical appearance, stability provided by routine, comfort and safety, existing consumer-brand relationships, and connections in the form of portals and bridges to the past, child self and home. The elaborate exploration of the findings with regard to these two categories (pragmatic / emotional) has indicated that young sojourners did not want to change many private aspects of their mundane everyday consumption of personal brands but rather happily relied on familiar items to maintain some form of stability in an otherwise completely changed environment.

However, it was interesting to find that some informants embarked on (temporary) relationships with locally available brands or local instantiations of global brands despite the great reliance on the familiar. These more or less temporary relationships took the form of holiday romances, doomed love affairs, rekindled friendships or travel companionships.

4.4. SECTION II – GIFTING AND THE SOJOURN EXPERIENCE

This second section of the findings chapter addresses the second research question that was posed in the beginning of this thesis:

How does gifting (of material items) facilitate the sojourn experience?

The emphasis of this section of the findings is on *gifting*. Past research has not explored how gifting is used to facilitate consumer acculturation, and in particular, the consumer acculturation of sojourners. The findings in this section are separated into two parts: first, how gift giving between sojourner and host as well as sojourner and home allows for the creation, establishment, maintenance and modification of social bonds and relationships. Gifts given and received by sojourners can act as country-specific artefacts and material acculturation agents. Second, it is demonstrated how care packages shipped between home and host can act as connections between different, distant parties and how mundane goods within those packages can act as proxies or stand-ins for absent loved ones. Whereas the first part clearly focuses on the giving of actual gifts, the second part elaborates on the exchange of care packages, which is also regarded as gifting. As will be illustrated, throughout the sojourn different dynamics exist, which appear to be facilitated by the giving and receiving of gifts in the form of branded food products and other mundane items.

4.4.1. Gift Giving

The findings of this research indicate that gifts play a crucial role in the process of au pairs' sojourning from home to host country and back. It has long been established that gifts, defined as goods or services that are not forced or required but rather voluntarily provided (Belk, 1976), allow for the creation and strengthening of social bonds and act as an invitation to partnership (Sherry, 1983). Based on Mauss' (1954) seminal essay, consumer researchers have focussed on the motives for gift giving (Goodwin, Smith, & Spiggle, 1990), gift giving for birthdays (Baskin, Wakslak, Trope, & Novemsky, 2014) and festivities such as Christmas (Fischer & Arnold, 1990; Kimura & Belk, 2005; Otnes, Lowrey, & Kim, 1993; Rook, 1985; Sherry & McGrath, 1989) and Valentine's Day (Otnes, Ruth, & Milbourne, 1994), intracommunity gifting (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012), the dark side of the gift (Sherry, McGrath, & Levy, 1993) and consumer gift systems in contemporary societies (Giesler, 2006). Van Genneep (1960) posited that gift exchange often takes place in transitional periods such as moving from one place or status to another. With particular focus on place transitions, it pays to consult the tourism literature on the gifting of souvenirs: Tourists who

seek extraordinary experiences in a place away from home purchase commercially produced souvenirs to take back home to their loved ones (Belk, 1997; B. Gordon, 1986; Peters, 2011; Urry, 2002). Souvenirs have been grouped into five categories, namely pictorial images, piece-of-the rock, symbolic shorthand, markers, and local products and crafts (B. Gordon, 1986). The recent addition of banal souvenirs seems to complicate the definition of souvenirs as they represent items that “in spite of being purchased in ‘other’ places, their aesthetic appearance is usual, ordinary and mundane” (Peters, 2011, p. 238).

In the findings presented here, goods regarded as mundane by the gift giver are transferred to receivers in the home and host country in various scenarios which are explained and discussed as follows: first, au pairs give gifts to their host families upon arrival in New Zealand; second, host families present au pairs with gifts upon their arrival and departure; third and last, au pairs take gifts to the home country upon their departure from New Zealand. As will be illustrated, certain food and other branded products can act as country-specific artefacts and thereby, material acculturation agents for both the sojourning individual and stationary home and host others. In addition, using branded food products and other mundane goods as gifts allows for the creation, establishment, manifestation and maintenance of social networks, relationships and bonds.

4.4.1.1. Sojourner – Host: Creating and Establishing Relationships

Sherry (1983) introduced a three-stage process of gift giving which includes the gestation, pre-station and reformulation stages. This model, in particular the gestation stage, is highly applicable to this research. Prior to their sojourn, au pairs conducted extensive external and internal information searches and put a lot of thought into choosing the most appropriate gift(s) for their host family. In this first stage, gestation, external search was conducted by the au pairs on social networking websites such as Facebook. In the Facebook groups observed as part of this research, au pairs discussed items that they regarded as appropriate gifts for their prospective host families. In one group, “Au Pair Neuseeland Sommer 2012”, the members had collaboratively compiled a list of gifts in the form of a note. Overall, the items discussed in this note include mostly mundane goods that need to be purchased rather than created (Sherry, 1983). Further, many of the listed items are branded food products such as gummy bears by German sweets manufacturer Haribo. It appears that young au pairs regard these items as artefacts that can be appropriated to become part of the gift giving ritual. It is important to note here that the gestation period brings with it a challenge for au pairs: unlike gift giving amongst family members for Christmas (Fischer & Arnold, 1990; Otnes, et al.,

1993) or purchasing souvenirs for home loved ones (B. Gordon, 1986; Peters, 2011), au pair sojourners do not know the recipient of the gifts at the gestation search which in turn complicates the choosing of an appropriate ritual artefact. When the recipient of the gift is known, the giver can use “hints from the recipient about his or her needs and wants” (Wagner, Ettenson, & Verrier, 1990, p. 683) and base the choice of gift on their “prior history of reciprocal giving” (Belk, 1976, p. 161). This is not an option in the case of unknown recipients in the host country. This then begs the question of how au pair sojourners choose gifts for their prospective host families. As illustrated above, external search is conducted online within social networking groups. Interestingly, au pairs seem to rely on other au pairs to make an informed decision about the items they might purchase to take along as gifts for the host family. However, the exact motivations behind listing or suggesting items are so far unknown. In the following section, participants’ motives for choosing certain items as suitable gifts for host others are explored.

In general, it appears as if gifts for the host family can be grouped into two categories: branded food products and other mundane goods. The motives for choosing those items as gifts are depicted in Figure 7 and subsequently elaborated on. Embedded particularly in the first two motives is the notion of sharing certain levels of me with the host, ranging from the German me, regional me and the private home me to the home family me. This identity-sharing will be elaborated on under each relevant motive. In addition, branded products from the home presented as gifts to the host appear to allow the host to hyperexperience the sojourner’s home culture.

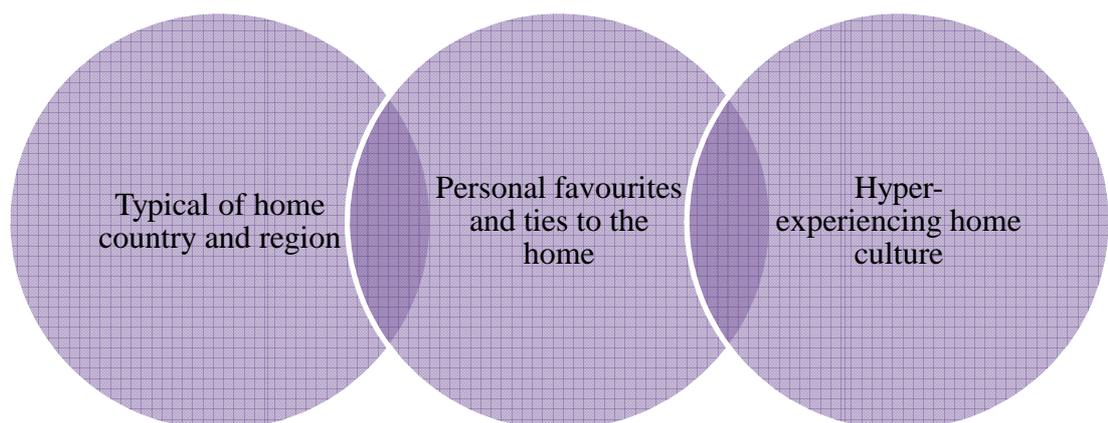


Figure 7: Motives for Choosing Gifts for the Host Family

4.4.1.1.1. German Me and Regional Me

The first motive, that the gift should be typical of the home country and region, was articulated most expressively by many of the participants in this research because they assumed host families would have little or no knowledge of the German culture. Henriette elaborated on how she would like to purchase gifts that are typically German for her host children:

I thought about buying for the children, kind of lunch box because the boy will go to school and the girl will start going to kindergarten. And yeah I would, would fill it with, yeah with typical German sweets. [...] Haribo, Lindt maybe but I don't like Lindt, so.

As suggested in the Facebook group, Henriette anticipates purchasing lunch boxes for the host children that she would fill with “*typical German sweets*”. A mundane good, the lunch box, is then supplemented with branded food products that act as country-specific artefacts. This is also the case for Nadine, who purchased German sweets for her host children:

I just brought something for the kids. Like the Haribo gummy bears and typical German sweets for the kids.

What was that, do you remember what you bought for them?

Kinder chocolate, the surprise eggs, the little one, and [...] yeah, Haribo stuff. Just the things that are typical to Germany.

Both participants place emphasis on purchasing gifts that are “*typical German*” and state that they regard branded food products as suitable gifts because those items can convey information about their home country. The participants do not appear to regard typical souvenirs as suitable gifts for their prospective host families. This might be due to the nature of typical souvenirs which implies that they are purchased during extraordinary, different experiences away from home (B. Gordon, 1986; Urry, 2002). However, here, the au pair sojourners want to share a part of their home culture, their ordinary everyday life, through the gifting of mundane food products. The branded food products take on the role of the ritual artefact for the gift giving ritual between au pair sojourner and host family. Karina further explains the exact reasoning behind purchasing branded food products as gifts:

Yeah, like I mean, like all kids love candy so I think it would be an advantage for me to bring candy for the kids [laughs]. And I think, like Milka, Ritter Sport and Kinder, I mean, it's like, I really like it, and yeah, I think it's traditional German. Or Haribo, I mean everyone knows Haribo for example, so yeah.

According to Karina, children all over the world “*love candy*” which is one of her main reasons for purchasing branded food products as gifts. Karina also wants to gift something that is “*traditional German*”, hence, the choice of Milka, Ritter Sport and Kinder chocolate as well as Haribo gummy bears. Further, she exclaims that “*everyone knows Haribo*” as a heritage German brand providing her with more grounds to purchase this particular branded food product as a gift. Gordon (1986) established that local products are one category of souvenirs. He discusses how indigenous foods and food paraphernalia may be purchased as souvenir gifts for people at home. Here, it is the other way around as participants purchase traditional and “*typical German*” brands of food products from home. It is important for the participants to buy indigenous, local foods and moreover, those foods are German branded products. In addition, the above accounts illustrate how the participants strive to share a part of their German me by gifting typical German branded food products. The brands that are mentioned by the participants are tightly embedded in the German culture, hence, are part of the participants’ sense of self and identity. By purchasing these products as gifts, the au pairs are able to portray a part of their German identity and share their German heritage with the host family.

In addition to choosing specific German branded food products, au pairs also wanted to gift products that are typical of the particular region that they have grown up and live in. In this sense, the internal search in the gestation period was focussed more on finding and choosing gifts that would allow the sojourners to represent an aspect of their selves (Sherry, 1983). Here, it appears crucial for au pairs to be able to portray a more personalised regional me rather than their generic German me. In addition to purchasing candy or sweets for the host children, Karina bought branded food products to gift to the host parents:

And for my host parents I brought like a cup from Hamburg [...] and some chocolate from our region like Hachez, do you know Hachez? It's like chocolate from Bremen, and Luebecker Marzipan and, yeah.

Having grown up near Hamburg, Bremen and Luebeck, Karina sees it as most fitting to give the host parents gifts that are typical of the particular region or area of Germany that she is from. Rather than purchasing generic, typical German sweets, she customised the gifts for the host parents to represent her personal background. The meaning of those seemingly mundane goods becomes symbolic, representing her back story and personal history and allowing her to share a part of her home self, her regional me, with the host family. Clarissa also elaborated on her reasons for picking items that are typical for her home area:

Yes, something typical, maybe about Mainz [German city], about my “Heimat” here. So Rhineland-Palatinate is a typical wine region, maybe a wine or then a book about Mainz or something like that. Well I don’t know if they care too much for that, but I think it is something typical.

Clarissa lives in a part of Germany that is world-famous for wine hence her idea of giving a local wine. However, most interesting in her statement is the use of the German term “Heimat”, which has been defined as “a place where one feels comfortable and at home” (Kastner, 2013, p. 167) and “which encompasses a stronger emotional relation to individuals’ origins and linkage to particular places” (Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012, p. 228). This term identifies not only the place where one feels at home but also a connection to people, in this case, the home family. Clarissa wants to share with the host family where she is from, where she feels at home and what makes up her personal background.

Some participants chose to purchase gifts that are typical of their region rather than typical of Germany in general because their prospective host families had some form of ties to Germany. In Sabrina’s case, her host father is German which makes purchasing typical German gifts unnecessary because he would be familiar with them. Instead, Sabrina chose to purchase gifts that are typical of her particular area:

But I would say the gifts should be from my area because my father, my host father, is from Germany and I think it's not very special for him to get some German food or something else because he knows it. And I would say the wife and the child also travel to Germany and so maybe it will be some gifts of my area and I would show them where I come from and yeah.

She acknowledges that a typical German item would not be “very special” for the German host father and the rest of the host family. The host father, being German, would possess his own version of a German me, an identity that might comprise multiple typical German brands in its portfolio. Therefore, Sabrina intended to purchase gifts typical of her area to “show them where I come from”, representing her regional me. She thereby allows her host family to see a deeper level of her self, her regional rather than German me that the German host father would have no prior knowledge of. The same predicament of choosing a more region-specific rather than typical German gift was faced by Tanja. Both Tanja and Sabrina stayed with the same host family (Tanja was the first one to stay with the family and was “replaced” by Sabrina once her sojourn experience came to an end). In contrast to Sabrina, Tanja did not have a good experience with picking a personalised, region-specific gift for her host family:

And for Anna and Stefan I brought just stupid Ostfriesen tea, so something typical for my area, that maybe Stefan would like and Anna. So I thought they're German, okay, they would like this. Yeah, but Stefan don't drink tea so it was a bit of a, yeah.

Did you have it in the end, or is it still in the cupboard?

It's just in the cupboard. [...] Yeah, and who knows that someone is not drinking tea? And I think I brought them also some, like, Sanddorn honey, something like this, and Kluentche [sugar lumps] for tea.

Knowing of her host father's German background, Tanja used the gestation period to search for a suitable gift for her host family. She purchased tea and other tea accompaniments (honey and sugar) typical of her home in the North of Germany rather than generic German products. However, the family did not drink tea and put the gift in a cupboard out of sight. Tanja appeared upset at the negative receipt of her personalised gift that portrays a significant representation of her regional me. Tanja's case shows how choosing a gift for someone that is unknown to the gift-giver can create problems. As mentioned previously, this represents the biggest challenge for sojourners: not knowing who or what the recipient of the gifts will be like intensified the gestation period and called for longer external and internal search. The ultimate goal of the giver of a gift is to offer something that is relevant, enjoyable, pleasant and delightful for the receiver (Belk, 1996; Cheal, 1986; Otnes, et al., 1993). Whereas most of the participants had a positive experience in the prestation stage of the gift, the unfamiliarity with the likes, needs, and wants of the gift recipient did cause a problem for at least one participant, as seen above in Tanja's account.

Overall, the previous presentation of findings outlines the personal motive for choosing a gift that is typical of the home country and the home region. The former allows sojourners the presentation of their German me whereas the latter enables sojourners to portray their more personalised, specific regional me. Au pair sojourners chose the above mentioned branded food products as country-specific artefacts and gifts to present the host family with a glimpse of their personal history, background and heritage. By appropriating the gifts and stamping them with their own identity (Carrier, 1990; Chevalier, 2014) as either a part of their German or their regional me, participants allow host others to hyperexperience their home culture. In this thesis, the term 'hyperexperience' is used in the sense of Baudillard's (1981) understanding of hyperreality as reality by proxy or how an individual takes on someone else's version of reality and claims it as his or her own. Hyperexperience thereby means that through the tasting and trying out of foreign products, others are not only able to ingest another culture's product but are also allowed to experience someone else's history and background. It is also assumed that gifting items that represent a version of me or

self can create empathy in the receiver because he or she is able to vicariously experience the thoughts and feelings of the other. As contended by Miller (1998), “objects – whether individual and unique or standard commodities – gain meanings via the social relationships in which those objects are involved” (Peters, 2011, p. 236). Thus, the material items chosen as gifts can act as material acculturation agents, allowing for the establishment of social bonds (Schwartz, 1967) between sojourner and host family at the start of the sojourn.

4.4.1.1.2. Private Home Me and Home Family Me

The second motive that was detected in the participants’ accounts was that of choosing items that are either personal favourites or items that represent ties to the home. Au pairs purchased gifts in the form of branded food products that they like to eat in Germany, thereby portraying parts of their private home me. The branded food product is significant because of “attachments based on personal memories” (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988, p. 537). Tina dismisses purchasing something that is “*typically German*” and explains what she intends to buy for the host family instead:

So I don't know exactly what I will take. I will definitely take something what I like to eat, so candy, chocolate or something but nothing special that's typically German.
Yes, what are your favourite sweets and chocolate, which ones would you take?
Hm, well chocolate I would, well I don't actually eat that much chocolate but when I do, I eat the Lindt one with Mousse au Chocolat, that's super yummy, that's just my favourite! Or, I eat everything that's candy and sweets, chocolate not so much but all of this Haribo stuff, I like to eat that, gummy bears.

For her, it is not important to gift branded food products that are typically German but she wants to share sweets that she likes to eat. The branded food products are the same as the ones that were purchased by the previously mentioned participants; however, Tina places more emphasis on taking along her personal favourites. This allows her to share some parts of her own individual personality and self by introducing her favourite branded foods to the host family, allowing them to see and experience a part of her private home me.

In addition, participants choose food or other material, mundane goods as gifts for the host family to symbolise ties to their home family. As illustrated in an earlier quote, Sabrina’s host father’s German background and knowledge of German food products necessitated her purchasing gifts that are more personalised. As she had mentioned before, she wanted to purchase gifts typical of her area, representing her regional me. Sabrina purchased strawberry vinegar which is not only typical of her region but also a favourite for her own home family:

I don't know how it's called, I have bought 'Erdbeeressig' [strawberry vinegar] [laughs]. [...] We use it for salad and we like it very much here and yes I bring it with me and I hope they like it too.

So that's something typical for your area and your family uses it as well?

Yes. I think it will be, I think other areas have it too but we like it very much, so our family like[s] it. And we use it very often so maybe it will be good.

Rather than purchasing a food item that would only represent her regional me, Sabrina opted for a food product that also represents her home family me. Gifting this particular German, everyday food product allows Sabrina to share an aspect of how she has meals with her family and how this particular food product is enjoyed by her home family. In gifting this seemingly mundane strawberry vinegar, Sabrina allows the host family to get to know her home family me, her identity of being part of the home family unit and her home consumption practices as well as tasting something that is typical of her home region. Therefore, the vinegar takes on a deeper meaning than just being a region-specific artefact or gift as it represents a window into Sabrina's home life, her private home me and her home family me. Larina's account is similar to Sabrina's in the sense that she had also purchased food items that would portray part of her home self:

And I have also some things, I live next to the Harz [mountain range in Northern Germany] and there are some 'Spezialitaeten' [specialities or delicacies]. For example, 'Brockensplitter' and 'Schierker Feuersteine' [laughs]. I think you don't know this [laughs].

No, is that to eat?

Yea, it's to eat but it's typical for this region and mum comes from the Harz and so I think I take this.

Here, the specialities from the Harz region are not only typical of where Larina comes from but also portray a part of her family's history as Larina's mother was born and raised in the Harz. By purchasing and gifting specialities from that area, Larina allows the host family to gain some insights into her family's past and history, shared through the seemingly mundane gift of chocolate delicacies from a particular region in Germany. This second personal motive illustrates how certain (branded) food products allow the sojourner to portray parts of their private home me as well as home family me. The mundane goods mentioned here by the participants act as both country-specific artefacts and windows into their home lives, allowing host family recipients to gain an insight into their personal history. This is in line with the representation of their German me and regional me as the sojourners appropriate gifts, extend their selves onto the gifts and stamp them with their own personality (Belk, 1988; Carrier, 1990; Chevalier, 2014).

4.4.1.1.3. Hyperexperiencing the Home Culture

Lastly, au pairs purchase branded food products as gifts because they know or anticipate that they are unavailable in the host country and therefore want to gift a branded product that will allow the host family to hyperexperience their home culture. Larina explains how her host parents had told her about New Zealand chocolate which led her to purchase German chocolate as a gift:

And for the host parents, for my host parents, I have German chocolate.

Which one is that?

Ritter Sport.

Which one did you buy?

[laughs] One moment please [gets out all chocolate bars]. Okay, I have ‘Olympia’, ‘Traube-Nuss’ [grapes and nuts], ‘Edel-Vollmilch’ [milk chocolate] und ‘Dunkle Vollkorn-Nuss’ [dark chocolate with wheat and nuts]. [...] I think, chocolates, the parents told me, are not so good in New Zealand and I think so they, yea, find chocolate good from Germany because it’s very ‘lecker’ [yummy].

Larina assembled a large quantity of chocolate bars by the popular German brand Ritter Sport to gift to the host family because the host parents had told her that New Zealand chocolate is not as good as German chocolate. Sabine also brought along chocolate, in particular “‘Kinder Schokolade’ and stuff like that, things they don’t have here.” Henriette asked the researcher “do you have Milka (chocolate) in New Zealand?” Upon a negative response, she states “so I better, I definitely take the Milka.” By gifting items that are unavailable, the participants allow the host family to taste something that they would be unfamiliar with and which would allow them to be introduced to the tastes of the sojourners’ home country. This extends Belk’s (1979) finding that givers aim to socialise receivers into cultural values by emphasising how particular branded food products presented as gifts can act as (reverse) acculturation agents. As also suggested in the list in the Facebook group, various participants in this research purchased German cookbooks for their respective host families:

Tinka: I thought about a cooking book with Bavarian food, yeah, it’s just typical for the region and so, why not?

Celina: Because my host mum, like when she was living in Germany, she really liked it, and I got her a German cookbook as a present when I came.

Karina: And Sarah, she’s ten and she likes to bake so I brought for her German Baking Today from Dr. Oetker.

Here, all of the participants intended to or had already purchased cookbooks that feature recipes of the German cuisine to gift to the host family. Food paraphernalia can be regarded as gifts under Gordon's (1986) souvenir category of local products. Whereas Tinka's reasoning is that the cookbook features typical Bavarian dishes, Celina knew from the previous au pair that the host mother had spent some time in Germany so she purchased a German cookbook to gift to her to let her reminisce and relive her time in Germany. Karina purchased a baking book by a traditional German food company Dr. Oetker for the host daughter as she had found out that the host daughter enjoys baking. Gifting cookbooks featuring German cuisine was therefore seen to display typical, traditional dishes and to create a bond or relationship based on knowledge of the recipient's past (Celina's host mother's travels to Germany) and present (Karina's host daughter's interest in baking). Through the creation of meals from the cookbooks, the host families can then hyperexperience the sojourners' home culture as will be elaborated on further in the last section of the findings chapter.

Thus this section establishes three motives for choosing branded food products and other mundane goods as gifts. First, sojourners purchase those items as country-specific artefacts which either represent their German me or their regional me. Second, those goods are purchased as gifts because they represent the participants' private home me as well as their home family me. Both motives illustrate the understanding that material objects are used to portray one's character to others (Belk, 1988; Carrier, 1990; Goffman, 1959; Turner, 1969; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Finally, participants acknowledge that certain products will not be available in the host country and therefore purchase home products to expose the host family to unknown products and share aspects of the home culture with the host. All three motives depict how mundane goods can represent material acculturation agents that facilitate intercultural exchange between sojourner and host. Carefully chosen gifts also allow for the creation and formation of social bonds upon the initial encounter of sojourning au pair and host family. For the au pair, the gifting of German (branded) food and other mundane goods means that they can share a part of their background, history and heritage with the host family, allowing them to use those artefacts as material acculturation agents to ease the transition into the host country. For the host family, country-specific artefacts act as material acculturation agents allowing them to (hyper)experience a part of the German culture and sojourners' past.

4.4.1.2. Host – Sojourner: Creating, Establishing and Manifesting Relationships

The previous findings illustrate the ritual of gift giving from sojourner to host family which includes the gestation period prior to the sojourn and the pre-station and reformulation stage upon arrival in the host country. Three motives were found that explain how and why sojourners choose branded food products and other mundane goods as suitable gifts for the host. Some of the au pair sojourners also received gifts from their host family at the beginning and/or end of their sojourn. Welcome gifts in the form of branded food products are used as a means of introduction to the family and local culture while other mundane items gifted as leaving presents act as a reminder or memento of the time they have spent in the host country. Some au pairs also received gifts from their host family during the sojourn; however, those gifts were given for particular occasions such as birthdays or Christmas rather than to mark the transition into or out of the host family.

4.4.1.2.1. New Zealand Host Family Self

Branded food products were gifted as welcome presents by some host families when sojourners arrived in their home. Using a branded food product as gift facilitates the transition into the host country and family. This was the case for Tanja who received various sweets upon her arrival, gifted by her host family:

I got some sweets, some typical New Zealand sweets. Jaffa and these pineapple chocolates [Pineapple Lumps]. [...] Hmm, I don't like both in the beginning, like it was a bit like, hmm. But when you've eaten a few you start to like them. Like I don't know, I mean at first I was like hmm, but then it was okay.

Tanja received two typical New Zealand branded sweets products upon her arrival in the country and in the host family. Tanja's host family presented her with a welcome gift that represents something typical of New Zealand and thereby their personal history and background (Carrier, 1990; Chevalier, 2014). By choosing a typical New Zealand food product, the host family is able to portray their New Zealand self, similar to the au pairs who choose to present their German or regional me when gifting particular branded food products. The receipt of a branded food product as country-specific artefact allowed Tanja to try out and taste something that is typical for most New Zealand families which further enabled her to gain an insight into her own host family's life. At first, Tanja seemed sceptical about the products she had received but then became accustomed to their taste. The receipt of branded food products eases the integration period into the family and allows for the establishment of

a relationship and bond at the beginning of their sojourn. In addition, those branded products also act as material acculturation agents to the host culture. Despite initial indifference about the products' taste, these products gifted as welcome presents allowed the au pairs to experience the host culture and feel integrated into the host family. The simultaneous giving (Sherry, 1983) of branded food products between sojourner and host family at the start of the sojourn facilitates the establishment of a social bond. Further, the branded food products act as country-specific artefacts in the same way as the branded food products gifted by sojourners to the host family.

4.4.1.2.2. Integration into the Host Family

Some au pairs received gifts during their sojourn for particular occasions such as their birthdays or Christmas. Whereas the welcome presents were picked to represent aspects of the New Zealand culture and the host family identity, the gifts given during the sojourn were either mundane items that would also be gifted to au pairs by family or friends in the home country or were mementos that au pairs could take back home at the end of their sojourn. Klara received generic, mundane items (a moisturiser, soap, and hand lotion) from her host mother for her birthday:

*I tried a new moisturiser, it's pretty cool but I don't know the brand, sorry [laughs].
Is it a local brand or something you hadn't seen before?
Ah yes, it's a local brand. Yeah, she [host mother] gave it to me on my birthday with soap and moisturiser and something like hand cream and I think it's not just a New Zealand brand, it's an Auckland brand.*

Here, the items that were gifted do not represent any part of the host family identity or New Zealand culture in particular. Rather, they are mundane products that would be gifted for any birthday in the home country, for example by the home mother. Klara had been living with the host family for a few months when her birthday came around and the gifting of those products implies that the host mother had got to know Klara well enough to know that those would be items that she might like. In that sense, living with the host family for a longer period of time allows the host to get to know the sojourning au pair and her preferences, wants and needs (Wagner, et al., 1990) which is not possible pre-sojourn. This was also the case for Karina:

I fall in love with the Country Road bags, I got one for my birthday. Those huge ones, I really like them.

Karina had received a Country Road bag for her birthday from the host family. Those bags are quite popular with New Zealand young adults and represent a fashion statement. Because Karina had become an integral part of the host family unit by the time of her birthday, her host family knew of her desire (one characteristic of the perfect gift as specified by Belk, 1996) to purchase one of those bags. This mundane good represents an aspect of the New Zealand culture, youth fashion; however, the reason for gifting it was based primarily on the knowledge of Karina's likes, wants and needs. In addition, gifting the aforementioned mundane items manifests existing relationships between host family and au pair due to the accumulated knowledge of each other's wants and needs.

Linda was the only participant who discussed the receipt of gifts from the host family for Christmas. Linda spent Christmas with her first host family with whom she did not get along very well, which was why she changed host families shortly after. However, despite their irreconcilable differences, the host family presented Linda with a personalised and meaningful Christmas gift:

Christmas was great with [the host family], they even got me nice presents. [...] I got my greenstone necklace so that was something I really wanted to get and because you're not supposed to buy it for yourself I was really happy when I actually got one for Christmas.

Oh, was that from your host family?

From my host family, yeah, that was really nice. [...]

Oh nice. So that'll be a good memory when you go back.

Yeah, absolutely. I'm wearing it almost every day.

Based on the above excerpt, it does not appear as if Linda and the host family had irreconcilable differences in their relationship. On the contrary, the host family presented Linda with a very personal gift, a greenstone necklace, which should not be purchased for oneself but needs to be given by a close loved one as the pounamu (Greenstone) symbolises a new connection (TePapa, 2013). This particular gift might represent the last attempt to reconcile their differences whilst also becoming a memento that Linda wore "almost every day" during her sojourn and which she would cherish post-sojourn as reminder of the time spent in New Zealand and with the host family. Gifts explored in this section are given to au pairs to demonstrate their integration into the host family and to manifest the ties that have been formed throughout the sojourn. Gifts given to au pairs during the sojourn are more in line with Belk's (1996) idea of the perfect gift, where the giver wishes to please the recipient and therefore chooses something that is uniquely appropriate to the particular recipient. Those gifts further symbolise how au pairs are regarded as integral members of the host

family, something that is aspired to by both au pairs and host families alike (AuPairWorld.net, 2013; Búriková & Miller, 2010). Those gifts thereby allow the au pairs to represent their host family me, both during and post-sojourn.

4.4.1.2.3. Remaining a Part of the Host Family

Lastly, gifts were also presented to au pairs by their host family at the end of the sojourn. Linda received some gifts from her second host family when she left New Zealand a few months prior to Christmas. The subsequent excerpt is taken from the follow up interview conducted with her shortly before Christmas:

Yeah I've got some Christmas tree things, like you put on the Christmas tree. One is a Māori a little figure. And I've got a Kiwi [bird] to make a Christmas cookie. And I use that a few weeks ago and made Plaetzchen [cookie]. So we've got little Kiwi Plaetzchen [cookies] at the moment. They're really cute.

Linda had not received a branded food product as a leaving gift but rather an item with which she could (re)create something that is typical of New Zealand: cookies in the shape of a Kiwi bird. This gift can be regarded as a banal souvenir due to its ordinary aesthetic appearance (Peters, 2011). However, using this mundane, banal item, a cookie cutter, in the home country allowed Linda to reminisce about the time she had spent in New Zealand and reminded her of her host family. This then leads to the assumption that seemingly mundane goods can act as memorabilia or mementos illustrating the sojourn experience. The mundane, banal object is transformed into an extraordinary item due to its encapsulated memories. Anna also received a leaving gift from her host family which she still cherished and was very fond of at the time of the follow up interview, approximately two months after her return home:

And I have my big New Zealand blanket I got from, back from my host family and it's still on my bed and still getting used every day.

Anna was also not gifted a branded food product as a leaving gift. She received a blanket covered with typical New Zealand signs and symbols from her host family, which she used “every day” post-sojourn, allowing her to reminisce about her sojourn and remember her host family on a daily basis. The blanket thereby acts as a “memory-trigger, filled with associations” (B. Gordon, 1986, p. 142). Further, the receipt of this blanket allows for the manifestation of the established relationship between Anna and her host family, even post-sojourn.

One participant, Lotta, had been given a farewell party which represents the ritual of formally departing from one geographical location and personal life stage to transition to the next one (Noble & Walker, 1997; Rook, 1985). Lotta expressed her feelings about her farewell party and the leaving presents that she had received from the host family and friends in more depth at the time of the follow up interview upon her return to Germany:

We had a farewell party which was really sad. Really sad! [...] Yeah, with the family and friends all from New Zealand. My New Zealand friends, no au pair friends. Because I knew I was going to see them again, my friend from Germany I see here a lot of times so that's okay. [...] I helped with organising too, but it was a really nice evening and there was a lot of crying and giving presents to each other. But yeah, I mean it has to be like this, so yeah. [...] From the friends I got a few things like greenstone necklaces and stuff like this. And from my family, from my host family I got a beautiful photo in a photo frame and it's from Whangapaua [where the host family has a beach house in which they would all stay many times throughout the sojourn]. And there's a little island at Whangapaua, and a friend of Polly's [=Lotta's host mother] is a photographer and she's living in Whangapaua and she made a really, really nice photo from the island on a stormy day. So I got a big print of that, yeah, and I was really happy with that.

Whilst Lotta remembers how the farewell party was a “*really sad*” occasion with “*a lot of crying*” where she had to say goodbye to her host friends, she also acknowledges that this is an integral and necessary part of the temporary sojourn (“*it has to be like this*”) and the transition back into the home. For Lotta, the ritual of the farewell party includes “*giving presents to each other*”. She had received various mundane goods from host friends and family as leaving presents. However, only one item, the photograph of an island near the host family’s beach house, appears to be crucially important to her, even after the termination of the sojourn and her return home. Pictorial images are the most common type of tourist souvenirs and include items such as postcards, snapshots, illustrated books, playing cards or photographs of extraordinary occasions (B. Gordon, 1986). Here, the photograph was gifted to Lotta as a leaving present by the host family so she could reminisce about the time she had spent with them holidaying at the beach house and the good times she had had with the host family in general. Thus, this photograph of an island taken on a stormy day takes on the qualities of a special token, acting as a memento of Lotta’s sojourn experience and as a reminder “that carr[ies] an air of authority and finality that help[s] people “get their hands on” ephemeral events” (B. Gordon, 1986, p. 141). Contrary to the tourist experience, Lotta was embedded in the host family and culture and lived the life of a local rather than a transient visitor. Therefore, this photograph allows Lotta to envisage her host family me and

further manifests the enduring relationship and bond between Lotta and her host family, making it last long beyond the actual sojourn.

Host families appear to exclusively choose branded food products as welcome presents for au pair sojourners. They face the same complications in the gestation stage as au pairs as the recipient, and “his or her needs and wants” (Wagner, et al., 1990, p. 683), of the welcome present is unknown to them at the time of purchase. The pre-station stage appears to be rather short and simple. Au pairs are given branded food products as gifts upon their arrival without any special events surrounding this ritual. It appears as if the reformulation stage is most crucial here: the gifting of a branded food product allows for the sojourner to be introduced to the local culture and the particular host family that they will be staying with for a fixed period of time. Thus, the branded food product acts as a material acculturation agent, facilitating an easier transition and integration into the local culture. In line with Sherry’s (1983) description of the reformulation stage, the gifting of a welcome present allows for a social bond to be created at the early stages of the sojourn. The host family is able to share a part of their family identity as well as their New Zealand identity with the au pair through typical branded food products.

Gifts were presented to au pairs during the sojourn for particular celebrations, such as birthdays and Christmas. Those gifts comprised mundane goods and mementos that illustrate the established knowledge of the recipient’s likes, wants and needs. Whereas welcome presents facilitate the establishment and creation of social bonds and relationships, gifts given during the sojourn allow for the manifestation of established relationships. Those gifts further acknowledge the standing of the au pair within the host family, as can be seen in the cases above, as an integral member of the family unit.

Lastly, host families chose mundane goods rather than branded food products as leaving presents for the au pair sojourners. It appears that the host families conducted “an internal search involving conceptions of self, other, and gift” (Sherry, 1983) at the gestation period to select the most appropriate gift. The ritual artefacts that were chosen by the host families included items such as a meaningful photograph, typical greenstone jewellery, a Maori figure, Kiwi bird shaped cookie-cutter, and a blanket covered in New Zealand signs and symbols. All of the items incorporate properties that are typical for and unique to New Zealand. The pre-station stage, at least for one participant as seen above, includes a ritual occasion of a farewell party, to set the scene for the gift exchange. The ritual performance roles are taken up by the au pair as the recipient and the host family as the donor (Giesler, 2006; Sherry, 1983) of the gift whilst the ritual audience could be played by the host friends

who also gifted items to the departing sojourner. The reformulation stage still plays the role of facilitating a relationship or bond between sojourner and host. The mundane goods gifted as leaving presents act as reminders, memorabilia and mementos of the overall sojourn experience and the time spent with the host family in particular. Those items symbolise and manifest the existing relationship between sojourner and host, even post-sojourn. For both the presents gifted during the sojourn and those given as leaving gifts, host families assume that the au pairs now have enough knowledge to appreciate those mundane items. At the start of the sojourn, those mundane items would not have possessed any meaning for the au pairs. However, living with the host family and becoming an integral part of the family unit allows au pairs to associate deeper meaning with those mundane goods. As the gifted “objects are never completely separated from the men who exchange them” (Mauss, 1969, p. 31) those items then act as reminders, memorabilia or mementos of the sojourn and the time with the host family after their return home.

4.4.1.3. Sojourner – Home: Maintaining and Modifying Relationships

Planning their return to the home country, au pair sojourners were again faced with purchasing gifts, in this instance for home others, mostly their (extended) home family. Similar to gifts purchased for the host family, the chosen items can be grouped into branded food products and other mundane goods. Figure 8 illustrates the key motives for choosing gifts for home others.

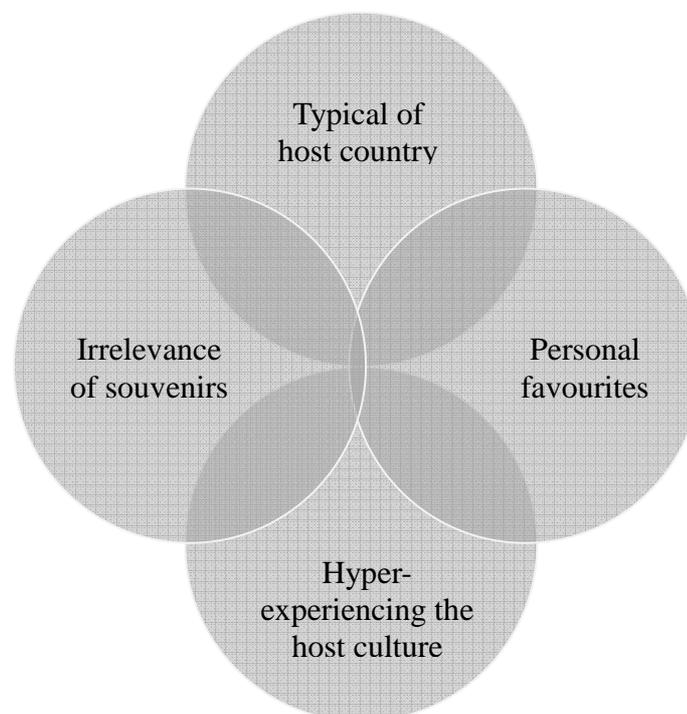


Figure 8: Motives for Choosing Gifts for Home Others

It needs to be noted that the four motives are highly interrelated and intertwined. The participant accounts that those motives refer to therefore cannot be presented in isolation from one another or broken down into relevant fragments. Table 12 incorporates the accounts of five participants who all address at least two of the aforementioned motives. Each motive will be elaborated on in greater depth subsequent to the table.

Participant	Data Excerpts	Key Motives
Jasmin (interview during sojourn)	<p><i>It was quite a good experience, you should really go to the [Cadbury] chocolate factory, it's worth it. And it's really cool. So you can buy, like, all the stuff afterwards in the shop for way cheaper than in the warehouse next to it. So you get, like, Picnic bars this size for one dollar and I bought so much stuff and, yep.</i></p> <p><i>So are you taking any of that back home as well?</i></p> <p><i>No, I just bought some for my brothers, and peanut slabs, I really like them. So it's also for my brothers because I thought they might rather taste something like this than having an unnecessary toy they won't play with. So yeah, I thought that was a better idea.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical of host country • Personal favourites • Irrelevance of souvenirs
Jessica (interview during sojourn)	<p><i>I was really missing Milka in the beginning and Ritter Sport, but then I got really addicted to the Cadbury Black Forest and I told all my friends in Germany "oh that's the best chocolate here in New Zealand you can get". So they were like "okay bring me some samples" so it will be mostly chocolate I'm taking home. I think chocolate is another thing that I will really miss back in Germany, especially that Black Forest one.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical of host country • Personal favourites
Saskia (interview during sojourn)	<p><i>I have to see how much space I have, but my plan is to take some but I think not that much souvenirs. I think more food, like biscuits, like hundreds and thousands biscuits and Pineapple Lumps and all the stuff that I eat here that you can't get in Germany. Like, stuff like that.</i></p> <p><i>So why do you not want to buy real souvenirs?</i></p> <p><i>I've sent them some stuff for Christmas as well and yeah, I think it's always, I don't know, they've never been here so a souvenir t-shirt or something doesn't mean anything to them. Yeah, I think they're more interested to get to know stuff I've eaten here a lot, like what is typical here. And the typical souvenir tourist stuff is not what they want, yeah, what they would enjoy I don't think so.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical of host country • Personal favourites • Hyperexperiencing the host culture • Irrelevance of souvenirs

<p>Anna (interview post-sojourn)</p>	<p><i>I wasn't a person travelling around New Zealand sending them postcards or buying them whatever, a cup or anything, I was trying to find some real presents. So yeah, and it took me a long time and I was spending a lot of money. So I was just taking some stuff for my family and my grandparents and for my friends a couple of typical things to eat but not something really big because it was quite hard to find something and I was saying "okay I'm just gonna spend a hundred dollars for my family" and for my friends I can just, things like the chocolate from New Zealand from the supermarket, just some lollies or whatever which is really typical. [...] So I was just taking for them stuff I really liked to eat, because what are they going to do with, well what is a typical souvenir? I don't know. So they're just going to put it in their room somewhere and they will forget about it. So yeah, this was actually the way to make it hard to take some stuff back for other people.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical of host country • Personal favourites • Hyperexperiencing the host culture • Irrelevance of souvenirs
<p>Sabrina (interview post-sojourn)</p>	<p><i>I brought some stuff like the honey and kiwi jam and some small things. I brought tomato, oh spaghetti in a can. I tried to show them the traditional things and yeah, what we ate and, yeah, so I tried to show them also what I've experienced.</i></p> <p>Why was that important to you?</p> <p><i>I don't know, I just wanted to show them what I've seen and what I've experienced. And I want them to be part of it kind of, and I want to show them how I've lived the last few months.</i></p> <p>Especially probably because they couldn't come and visit you.</p> <p><i>Yeah, exactly they couldn't really see what I've done or where I've lived so yeah, I tried to show them somehow what I've done.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical of host country • Hyperexperiencing the host culture

Table 12: Motives for Choosing Gifts for Home Others - Participant Accounts

The first motive, purchasing items that are typical of the host country, appears in all of the five accounts. In the same way as carefully choosing gifts for the host family as part of the gestation stage prior to the sojourn, au pairs wanted to purchase gifts that are “*typical*” (Saskia, Anna) and “*traditional*” (Sabrina) for the host country to take back home to their families and friends. The home family might possess little or no knowledge of the New Zealand culture. The branded food products thereby, again, act as country-specific artefacts that carry deeper meaning and embody the essence of what is typical of New Zealand. In addition, gifting branded food products that are “*typical*” of New Zealand allows returning sojourners to portray a level of their New Zealand me that they have acquired while living and working abroad. During this transformational period, au pairs have accumulated

knowledge and expertise and have become more independent. They have established new tastes and discovered a different aspect of their selves which they would like to reflect in the choice of gifts for their home family and friends. This first motive is closely connected to the other motives, especially the second motive of choosing branded food products as gifts because au pairs have embraced particular food items as their personal favourites during their sojourn.

For the second motive, Jessica talks about how she had favourite brands of chocolate in Germany but how this changed during her sojourn. Jessica discusses how she “*got addicted*” to and “*will really miss*” Cadbury chocolate which she got to know and favour in New Zealand. Upon her return to the home country, she wanted to share her excitement with her German friends, which is why she bought this particular food product as a gift for her friends as well as for herself. Thus, the branded chocolate allows her German friends to try out a product that played an important part in Jessica’s sojourn and to which she had formed a strong, temporary bond. By gifting a personal favourite, Jessica is able to portray her private sojourner me to her home family and friends and share with them the products she has come to appreciate in the host country. In addition, the branded food product honours the relationship between Jessica and her friends that was maintained throughout her absence whilst sojourning abroad. In that sense, some branded host food products that are gifted to home others post-sojourn can act as outside material acculturation agents. They allow the stationary home other to hyperexperience and become part of the au pairs’ sojourn through the empathetic recreation of the sojourner experience. This becomes the third motive for gifting branded food products post-sojourn.

As can be seen from the excerpts in the table, all of the participants purchased branded food products to allow their home loved ones to try out and taste something that is typical or traditional for New Zealand. Sabrina explained well why she thought gifting a food item that she had eaten in New Zealand would mean more than just representing something typical or traditional for New Zealand: Sabrina said branded food products as gifts allow her to show her home family “*what I’ve experienced*”, “*what I’ve seen*”, “*what I’ve done or where I’ve lived*” and just “*to be part of*” her sojourn. Thus, food products lose their meaning of being pure nourishment and rather take on a deeper symbolic meaning of representing the sojourn experience. Those food products act as country-specific artefacts and carriers of memories, conveying deep-rooted meanings about the au pair’s sojourn. Thus, they allow home others to hyperexperience the host culture and take part in the au pair’s sojourn. Non-durable food products that can be tasted, tried and experienced were regarded in stark

contrast to “*typical souvenirs*” by au pairs. Similar to gifts purchased for the host family pre-sojourn, au pairs purchased branded food products which they knew would not be available in Germany, again representing something that is unique to one particular country. Here, the home family and friends can then taste something that is quite particular to New Zealand.

Lastly, as can be seen in Jasmin, Saskia and Anna’s accounts, au pairs want to distance themselves from typical tourist travellers. They spent up to twelve months working and living within a local host family, becoming embedded into the family unit and regarded as an integral part of the family and local culture. Whereas tourist travel is marked by its transient nature (Becken & Gnoth, 2004; Peters, 2011; Schapendonk, van Liempt, & Spierings, 2015), sojourners become part of the host culture and do not live in a transient, liminal state throughout the entire experience. In addition, the experience of tourist travel is regarded as extraordinary whereas the sojourn eventually becomes mundane the longer the sojourner is embedded in the local host culture. Hence, the participants in this research did not want to purchase any “*typical souvenirs*”. In addition, au pairs questioned what “*typical souvenirs*” would actually look like. Items such as t-shirts, toys or cups branded with New Zealand markers that can be typically found in souvenir shops were regarded as “*unnecessary*” and meaningless and it was assumed that those items would not be enjoyed by home family and friends. Living the life of a local in the host culture for the duration of the sojourn, they regarded branded food products as conveying most about the sojourn experience. Gifting those items allows for the maintenance and modification of bonds and relationships to the home, by integrating home others into the au pair and sojourn experience. Therefore, branded food products rather than tourist souvenirs, act as country-specific artefacts and material acculturation agents, again letting the home other become part of the journey. This is in contrast to leaving presents received by sojourners: host families would gift New Zealand artefacts or souvenirs as mementos to the au pairs prior to their departure from the host country. It appears as if those goods only have an emotional value and meaning once the recipient has experienced the host culture. As Saskia explains, her home family has “*never been here [in New Zealand] so a souvenir t-shirt or something doesn’t mean anything to them*”. The home family does not have a place reference, hence the lack of meaning of a typical tourist souvenir (Peters, 2011). However, au pairs have accumulated place knowledge to appreciate the meaning of local artefacts and souvenirs. This highlights that when it comes to purchasing souvenirs differences exist depending on the recipient and his or her ties to the local culture.

As mentioned earlier, the previously illustrated four motives are closely interrelated and intertwined and cannot be interpreted in isolation. The aforementioned participant accounts have shown how multiple motives exist for choosing branded food products as country-specific artefacts as gifts to take back to their home family. Gifts given post-sojourn allow for the maintenance but also modification of relationships and bonds between sojourners and home others. Au pair sojourners have spent several months apart from home others and have changed significantly due to the experiences gained during their sojourn (L. Brown, 2009; Waters, et al., 2011). They have accumulated additional levels of self that incorporate their New Zealand me and private sojourner me, which they share with home others. The branded food products that are given as gifts post-sojourn represent those changes, allow home others to be integrated into the sojourn, hyperexperience the sojourn and become part of it. As Jessica explained well, she had acquired a new personal favourite chocolate during her sojourn. This metonymically stands for the sojourn as a whole: tastes, preferences, and personalities have changed; hence, relationships with home others need to be adapted and modified post-sojourn to accommodate those changes.

This entire section addresses the research question posed at the beginning of Part Two. It has been established that both home and host brands are used as country-specific artefacts at the beginning of and post-sojourn respectively, bridging the gap between the two cultures and letting the respective other hyper-experience the home or host culture in the form of tasting, smelling, and trying typical, special, traditional (branded) food and other mundane goods. In addition, these items also act as material acculturation agents. By gifting and receiving branded food and other mundane goods, relationships and bonds are created, established, manifested, maintained and modified between various parties involved in the sojourn, mainly the sojourner and the host and home family. Table 13 summarises this first section by highlighting key findings with regard to the three different gift exchanges explained previously: gifts given to the host by the sojourner, gifts received by the sojourner from the host, and gifts given by the sojourner to those at home. In addition, it illustrates the key motives for choosing appropriate gifts and explains the ways in which relationships are (re-) formulated after the gestation and prestation stage of the gift giving ritual.

	Gifts	Motives	(Re)Formulation of Relationship	Representation of Self
Sojourner – Host	Branded food products and other mundane goods	Typical, personal favourites and ties to the home, hyperexperiencing the home culture	Creation and Establishment	German me Regional me Private home me Home family me
Host – Sojourner				
<i>Welcome presents</i>	Branded food products	Introduction to host culture and family	Creation and Establishment	New Zealand self (host family)
<i>Presents during sojourn</i>	Mundane goods	Markers of celebrations	Manifestation	Host family me
<i>Leaving presents</i>	Other mundane goods	Reminder, memorabilia, memento	Manifestation	Host family me
Sojourner - Home	Branded food products and other mundane goods	Typical, personal favourites, hyperexperiencing the host culture, irrelevance of souvenirs	Maintenance and Modification	New Zealand me Private sojourner me

Table 13: Sojourn Gift-Giving - Motives and the (Re-)Formulation of Relationships

4.4.2. Care Packages

The previous section has demonstrated how the giving and receiving of gifts between various parties facilitates the creation of bonds between au pairs and host families at the beginning of the sojourn and the maintenance and modification of relationships post-sojourn. This following section illustrates the motivations for and meanings of shipping care packages between home and host country during and after the sojourn. Originally, the term care package denoted food relief parcels sent from the United States to Europe by the humanitarian organisation CARE (Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere) shortly after World War II (CARE, 2014). Nowadays, the term is used to describe two different types of parcels: 1) care packages that contain “food, clothing, or other items sent as necessities to the needy” (Dictionary.com, 2014) and 2) care packages that are sent as “a gift of treats to relatives or friends, especially of items not readily available to them”

(Dictionary.com, 2014) due to being away from home for an extended period of time. In this research, the latter definition applies to the type of care packages that are shipped between home and host country. Those care packages allow for the connection to home others and the preservation of home relationships and social networks. In addition, (branded) food products shipped in the care packages act as proxies or stand-ins for absent loved ones whilst also allowing for a new connection between home and host families to be formed.

The shipping of (requested) care packages has been briefly touched on under research question one of the findings. It was revealed how many participants would request their favourite personal care and make up items to be shipped to them on a regular basis. The focus of the findings there was strongly on the individual sojourners' reliance on personal brands for pragmatic and emotional reasons. However, the following findings illustrate how care packages containing food items are shipped between the two countries without prior requests to provide deep-rooted connections between different parties. Thus, those care packages fall within the realms of gift giving, as an exchange between giver and recipient takes place (Belk, 1996). As will be illustrated, care packages are shipped throughout the sojourn on a regular basis as well as for special occasions or holidays. First, findings on parcels shipped from home to host country will be discussed. Next, reasons for parcels shipped home by au pairs are explored. Then, the receipt and shipment of parcels for special occasions and holidays are illustrated before lastly presenting findings on the shipment of care packages between au pair and host family post-sojourn. All four sections incorporate findings on how care packages can facilitate various connections and how (branded) food products within those care packages can act as proxies or stand-ins.

4.4.2.1. Home – Sojourner: Easing the Transition

Hogg, Folkman, Curasi and Maclaran (2004) found that in empty nest households, “consumption becomes a bridge to connect parents with their children’s new lives, both as a way to communicate more effectively at a distance, and as a way to still share a part of their lives” (p. 249). This was also the case for participants in this research. Except for one participant, Tanja, all the participants received parcels from their home family and friends throughout their stay in New Zealand. A small group of participants only received care packages for special occasions and/or holidays whereas others received unexpected rather than requested parcels on a regular basis, for example every month. In line with Hogg et al.’s (2004) findings, care packages in this study were sent to provide connections and demonstrate the home family’s unselfish love (Belk & Coon, 1993). These care packages can

firstly provide a link to the home or past self and help counter homesickness, and secondly, transport absent loved ones to the au pairs through products acting as proxies or stand-ins while lastly, they can also facilitate new connections in the host country.

4.4.2.1.1. Connections to the Home

Saskia was one of the au pairs who received unrequested care packages on a regular basis, both from her home family and friends:

My family have sent me, like, I think 3 packages. In the beginning, like, just once she [mother] sent me something and there was, like, sweets in it. [...] It was Katjes, yeah. [...] I really like, like Katjes and they took my favourite, the little pigs, the little pink pigs, I don't know.[...] Yeah, and a friend sent me a package with photos and, yeah, and some sweets as well. She's a girl, the daughter of the family that has this cafe where I worked and she's a good friend of mine and she sent me some local sweets from my area where I live, like from a sweet shop there. [...] In the beginning I think it was just because they were worried that I'm homesick or something and need something from home, but no.

Here, the au pair received care packages throughout her sojourn. Those care packages contained sweets that were either Saskia's favourite ("*the little pigs*") or were from her area and the place that she had worked at prior to her sojourn. In that sense, her parents sent her something that they knew she would like, initially to counter potential homesickness by providing her with items that she is familiar with, which in turn provide a connection to the home for her. In addition, the care package from her friend included items that represent aspects of her home and past self which allow her to connect to her friend, her former part-time job and home locale. It appears as if most of the unrequested care packages were shipped from home others to the au pairs to provide tangible connections to the home, to demonstrate that home family and friends are thinking of the au pair and that they want them to remain active parts of their lives despite sojourning abroad. Adding to Hogg et al.'s (2004) research, it appears that care packages in this thesis can also represent a bridge to connect au pairs to the home rather than only the other way around. This was also the case for Klara, who articulated her feelings well about receiving care packages on a regular basis:

So what type of chocolate did you get then?

Dark chocolate. [...] It's a brand from, it's not a very famous brand, it's from a little store who is just in my town, it's a family store and I love their dark chocolate. They do it with chilli and stuff, it's pretty cool. [...] Yeah, it's different because the New Zealand chocolate is, like, very sweet and a lot of milk chocolate, stuff like that, and I prefer the dark chocolate that's not so much sweet. So it was great to, because it just tastes like home. [...] It makes me feel better because I know I'm still in their hearts

and they're thinking about me and they think about, oh, "what Klara would like to have and stuff". And that lets me feel more comfortable and more yeah, how can I say that, I know they take care of me and they think about me and they miss me too and after then I feel more happier. [...] It helps me to handle with the homesick[ness].

At first, Klara explains why she favours the particular dark chocolate from Germany matter-of-factly. However, she then proceeds to elaborate on how this chocolate sent by her mother provides a connection to the home for her, further allowing her to cope “*with the homesick[ness]*”. In this thesis, (branded) food products seem to be able to help young sojourners cope with the potential and actual homesickness they might be experiencing. Findings for research question one illustrated how young sojourners find a sense of security and safety in their personal brands, extending Noble and Walker’s (1997) research on favourite possessions in liminal transition periods. An extension of their research is also evident here: Noble and Walker (1997) found that possessions such as pillows, blankets and other bedding give “emotional support needed to adapt to the new environment and preserve through the challenges of the new role” (p. 40). In this thesis, participants were sent familiar (branded) food products by loved ones from home to ease the transition in the host country. Again, those (branded) products can act as a (branded) security blanket as established earlier.

4.4.2.1.2. Proxies or Stand-Ins

In addition to the products’ abilities to provide a connection to the home and help sojourners cope with homesickness, it also appears that some (branded) food products can act as proxies or stand-ins. In Klara’s case, this particular chocolate can be regarded as a proxy or stand-in for her mother to whom she is very close. This understanding derives from Klara’s statements such as “*I know I’m still in their hearts and they’re thinking about me*” and “*they miss me too*”. By sending Klara her favourite chocolate, her mother transports herself to Klara’s side in the form of this particular care package which creates a strong tie to the home and thereby provides emotional relief for Klara. However, not only can certain (branded) food products act as proxies or stand-ins for mothers but also for other family members. Celina also received multiple parcels from her family throughout her sojourn. She described how opening the unexpected care packages made her feel:

I was happy when I open[ed] the parcel from my mum, I Skyped to my parents. I think it was like Christmas, like a big present and I was like “oh, I got pudding!” [...] And my dad has found something for me in the supermarket where they went shopping. Like lots of little Kinder Joy eggs. [...] Yeah, the one with the spoon. I was so happy because I really love those. And yeah also so excited.

Celina explains how the opening of this unexpected care package made her feel as if it was Christmas and she had received the greatest gift. She was excited about the care package in general but was particularly pleased with her father's addition of a particular kind of German chocolate. Whereas most of the participants' accounts demonstrate how mothers express their love through purchasing and sending items to their daughters (Hogg, et al., 2004), Celina's account illustrates how a connection is maintained between her and her father because he knows which product she "love[s]". Here, the chocolate that was selected for her by her father acts as a proxy or stand-in for him, transporting him to the host country to be part of Celina's sojourn. In addition, Celina's excerpt shows how she opened the care package whilst talking to her family on Skype. This was the case for many au pairs who received care packages but waited to open them until they were able to video-chat with their parents. This practice allows the au pair and home family to share the moment of revelation of what is inside the care package. Epp, Schau and Price (2014) established how video-chat capabilities "that capture gestures and expressions boost expressive capacity" (p. 15). In their study, the focus is placed on how co-located family practices can be reassembled during periods of separation. This is not the case here as the shipping, receipt and unwrapping of care packages is a new practice to all involved parties and dispersion rather than co-location is necessary for this practice to exist in the first place. Through the virtual presence of both parties created via Skype, the au pairs in this research are strongly connected to their home families, allowing both to share the moment of revelation. Thus, the video-chat tool Skype appears to allow for the creation and facilitation of new practices in addition to tech-mediating existing co-located practices during periods of separation.

Reverting to the findings on how products shipped in care packages can act as proxies or stand-ins, Christina's account provides insights into how siblings can express their love by sending personalised food products. Christina received numerous care packages throughout her sojourn however, one care package was particularly special to her as it contained a homemade cake from her brother:

Oh, exactly, I had a cake in there from my brother!

Oh yes, how did that work out with getting through customs?

I don't know, the parcel, I don't know. Well I got the parcel, opened it, at first there was a note from customs, "opened for inspection". Okay, well what's in it? The cake was untouched, not even the plastic, well the tin foil around it wasn't opened because it was closed with sticky tape from my parents. Uhm, and the rest wasn't touch either. So I don't know. [...] Anyway... [...] it was a bit dry but for that it tasted quite nice [laughs]. [...] I was standing in front of the parcel, crying because I was so happy and then the cake was in there too, and especially "cake, how did that make it in?"

Despite strict customs laws in New Zealand, the homemade cake had not been confiscated by the customs office. Whilst Christina received a variety of care packages, requested and unrequested, this particular parcel was the only one that made her cry because she “*was so happy*” to receive a homemade cake from her brother. It seems as if it was quite important for Christina that, despite the opening of the parcel for inspection, “*the cake was untouched*”: Her brother had baked this cake himself, contaminating it with effort and his love for his sister, and thereby, extending his self into this cake (Belk, 1988). This illustrates yet another example of how certain food items that are sent to the au pairs can act as proxies or stand-ins that incarnate absent loved ones. Both Celina and Christina’s previous statements extend the traditional view of enacting love through consumption solely by mothers to also include fathers and siblings (Hogg, et al., 2004). Branded products that act as proxies or stand-ins for absent loved ones are different from Fournier’s (1998) brand-as-partner where consumers animate, humanise and/or personalise their favourite brands. Here, the (branded) product steps in place of the absent loved one. Absent loved ones extend their selves in those branded products, transcend geographical distances and become part of the sojourn experience. Therefore the branded product is rather a representation of an actual real life partner than an imagined brand-as-partner.

4.4.2.1.3. Facilitating New Connections in the Host

In addition to facilitating existing connections between au pair sojourners and home family and friends, some care packages are used to allow for acculturation to the host country through letting others experience those home products, like the gifts that are given at the beginning of the sojourn. Linda received numerous care packages throughout her sojourn, most of which included requested branded personal products such as her lip balm. However, her mother would also include branded food products that were meant to be shared with the host family:

She [mother] also sent Haribo gummibears for my host family, so I didn’t eat them but just as a present every now and then.

Here, Linda’s mother included sweets in her care packages especially for Linda to share with or gift to the host family. Again, like the gifts discussed earlier, those products can act as material acculturation agents by facilitating the exposure of the host families to the au pairs’ home families. Like Linda’s mother, Celina’s mother also included sweets to be shared with host others in her care package:

Chocolate and Yogurette it was so good and everybody loved it here. Especially the au pairs like it. First she sent me Kinder chocolate and then I asked for Yogurette. And now she usually sends me Yogurette and yeah. [...] And pudding and also chocolates and Haribo. I don't know how I should eat that. [...] It's too much. She always, my mum always says "you should share it with the other ones".

Both mothers did not only want to demonstrate their devotional love and mothering (Hogg, et al., 2004; Miller, 1998) by sending products to their daughters but they also included items that could be shared “*with the other ones*”, either the host family as in Linda’s case or other au pairs as in Celina’s case. In consumer behaviour research it has been established that one’s family acts as a socialisation as well as acculturation agent (Peñaloza, 1989; S. Ward, 1974). In this thesis, the sojourners’ families stay behind in Germany, leaving the au pairs to fend for themselves. However, parents and especially mothers, try to play an active role in their daughter’s sojourn and help out as much as possible from afar. Celina’s mother explicitly told her to share the food products, which might imply that she is trying to facilitate connections, social bonds and relationships for her daughter with others in the host country. Potentially, Celina’s mother sees this sharing as “a way in” for Celina, easing the transition into the host family for her as she cannot be there physically to aid this transition.

For Linda, the receipt of branded products, similar to the gifts that she had brought to share in the beginning, allowed her to show her host family a part of her home culture. Consequently, those branded food products again act as country-specific artefacts and material acculturation agents, facilitating intercultural exchange and strengthening the new bonds and relationships during the sojourn. For Celina, most of the au pairs that she shared the chocolate with were also German and familiar with the branded products. As established in past research, social networks comprising people from the home country help mobile consumers not to lose their sense of belonging to the home culture (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Peñaloza, 1989). Here, bonds are formed between au pairs from the same home country over the sharing of branded food products from home. In that sense, (branded) food products shipped in care packages from home can a) strengthen bonds with host others and b) facilitate a sense of belonging to home others in the host country. In both instances, the products act as outside material acculturation agents for sojourners in the host country, facilitating those relationships and bonds.

The previous accounts in this section illustrate how care packages that include certain (branded) food products allow sojourners to connect to the home. The products in those care packages can act as stand-ins or proxies for distant loved ones, not only the mothers.

Furthermore, these products take on the role of material acculturation agents in the following way: it has long been established that family and peers act as (consumer) acculturation agents for immigrants, helping those mobile individuals in times of homesickness (Peñaloza, 1989; S. Ward, 1974). However, here, au pairs sojourn abroad without the social network of their home family and friends. In that sense, these home others cannot ease, for example, homesickness by physically being there. Instead, they send care packages which include the au pairs' favourite products which then act as outside or material acculturation agents.

4.4.2.2. Sojourner – Home: Reciprocity and “Keeping Up” with the Home

Whereas the previous section has illustrated how branded products shipped from the home can act as stand-ins or proxies for distant loved ones at home and material acculturation agents for au pairs in the host country, the following section illuminates how sojourners reciprocate care packages. Many of the participants sent parcels home for special occasions such as birthdays and other celebrations (particularly Christmas). However, some participants also shipped care packages to home others throughout their sojourn for no specific occasion. Despite not having vast amounts of economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986), participants in this research purchased (branded) food products to send to their home families and friends. This is in contrast to the two original definitions of care packages as parcels that are sent 1) to provide items for the needy and 2) as a gift for loved ones that are away from home for an extended period of time (CARE, 2014; Dictionary.com, 2014). On the contrary, in this research, au pairs, who are away from home for a fixed period of time are the ones who ship care packages to home others who are not in economic need of those shipments. In addition, young sojourners that ship care packages home do this to express their love in a similar fashion to empty-nest mothers as studied by Hogg et al. (2004). The following excerpts illuminate how this research advances existing knowledge on the shipment of care packages as various factors are reversed or changed compared to previous studies.

Celina mentions how she would receive care packages from her cousin, who she refers to as her “*chocolate deliverer*”, and how she eventually reciprocated because she “*felt guilty*”:

I've got my cousin who I Skype with and she's also my chocolate deliverer, oh she delivers chocolate to me by big letters, envelopes. So last week I got Toffifee and Milka, that was really nice.

[...]

Now I sent her [cousin] a packet because I felt guilty not having sent her anything.

So what did you send her then?

I sent her Tim Tams. And Cadbury black forest I think or Whittakers chocolate and some muesli bars. [...] Yeah, yeah Kiwi, yeah she was really happy and she really needs it because she's stressed right now from university and she is going to send me something back maybe next week so I don't know what she's going to send me.

The need to reciprocate a gift has been studied previously and is the final but crucial obligation of gift giving (Mauss, 1969). Celina's account shows how there might be an obligation to reciprocate care packages, even though the giver, her cousin, might not have expected anything in return. Celina reciprocated the care packages she had received, which contained typical German chocolates (Milka and Toffifee), with a care package that contained sweets typical of New Zealand. Instead of purchasing New Zealand memorabilia, it appeared most suitable to her to also send branded food products so that her cousin could experience what Celina ate during her sojourn. Similar to gifts purchased for home others for the return to the home, those branded food products shipped to her cousin allowed Celina to share an aspect of her private sojourner me. In addition, those food products acted as material acculturation agents by letting her cousin experience something typical of New Zealand. Connecting to home others through the shipment of branded food products from the host country was one of the main reasons for sending mundane goods for no special occasions. Celina had also sent a parcel to her friends who were going to meet up for a gathering soon after the arrival of her care package:

And I, what I sent to my friends because they're going to meet on Thursday and I thought because I can't be there I sent them a parcel with some Tim Tams and chocolate and also the onion soup where you can make the Kiwi dip. But I didn't send the cream because it would have been too expensive. But I think you can't find that in Germany because I told him [boyfriend] what it is and he had no idea what I mean. So I said [...] "you can just use creme fraiche or something".

So then they have a part of you with them when they meet?

Yeah. [...] So take the parcel [...] I sent to my boyfriend, and he opened it and then he saw the letter for my friends and he closed it again. [...] Yeah, yeah I'm looking forward to it maybe I see it when we do Skyping. Yeah we try to arrange it.

Whereas the previous excerpts from interviews with Celina illustrate how she reciprocated care packages she had received, the above excerpt shows how she proactively sent a care package to her friends in Germany before their gathering. "Because [she] can't be there", Celina sent her favourite New Zealand branded food products to act as stand-ins or proxies for her, allowing her to still be part of the meeting whilst not physically able to attend. Epp, Schau and Price (2014) disputed the claim that co-location is necessary for meaningful family (consumption) practices by establishing that long-distance families are

able to reassemble and reconfigure certain practices through the use of technology. This is also the case for Celina – she is able to virtually take part in her friends’ social gathering by using Skype. Not only do the branded food products act as proxies or stand-ins for her during that meeting but technology also allows her to “see” the get-together “*when we do Skyping*”. Epp et al.’s (2014) research focussed on “brands, products, and services embedded in family life” (p. 2), items families were familiar with and would use on a regular basis to facilitate family practices. Here, Celina shipped products to her home friends. First, this finding is different to Epp et al.’s (2014) because here, sojourners ship items to friends rather than family which means that particular consumption practices would not have been shared prior to the sojourn, hence no reassemblage or reconfiguration is necessary. Second, the items that were shipped had not been part of their shared activities before. Both those findings allow for the extension of Epp et al.’s (2014) work in the sense that brands and products allow for the maintenance of bonds and creation of new consumption practices. Those branded food products also act as material acculturation agents, introducing home friends to products from the host country and thereby, reinforcing existing relationships and bonds. In addition, the products acting in place of Celina allow her to “keep up” with her friends in the home country, continuing to be part of her circle of friends while being away and therefore, they act as proxies or stand-ins in the same way as branded products shipped by home others to sojourners do.

As with gifts purchased before their return home, au pairs also used care packages to introduce their home families to branded food products typical of New Zealand and typical of their own sojourn experience. Thus, those care packages containing New Zealand products allow the au pairs’ home families to be part of their sojourn. Christina put a lot of thought into which products to ship home during her sojourn and made a list of the most important products with another German au pair:

I will make, send a parcel home. So just grandma and granddad and pre-Christmas gifts for mum, dad, that they don't have to carry them home, uhm, carry home, yes [when they come to visit]. Uhm, with Pineapple Lumps and all of those things from here that you can't find in Germany and... [...] Well we have already, we have already started to buy, we got all of that hokey pokey chocolate, then those Pineapple Lumps, the fish [chocolate marshmallow fish]. Hm, salty popcorn, we packed, too. [...] No one eats this salty popcorn in Germany, or I just don't know anyone. I think you can't even get that at the movies anymore, or just very rarely. [...] I also put Tim Tam's in it. They are very tasty. [...] Just put in hokey pokey and kiwi chocolate, I also put that in. [...] Marmite or Vegemite, they only had those really big glasses when we looked, we couldn't find the little ones, if we can find the little ones, then one of those will go in it.

Christina and her German au pair friend wanted to make sure to ship home branded products from New Zealand “*that you can’t find in Germany*”. The products Christina purchased for the care package were items she had tried before and which had become part of her sojourn experience, thereby portraying her New Zealand me and private sojourner me. By shipping them to her extended home family (parents and grandparents), she would allow the home others to take part in her sojourn, hyperexperiencing and tasting what she had become familiar with in New Zealand. In addition to that, au pairs also wanted to send their home families branded products that they “*love*”, as explained by Linda:

I love Tim Tams. I'm not actually supposed to eat them [due to my gluten intolerance] but every now and then I kind of have to. I sent lots of Tim Tams back home to my friends and family.

Oh you’ve done that already?

Yeah, I've done it already, like 5 packages already and I send some more or take some more in my suitcase. [...] It's something that you really can't get in Europe so I thought it's something to take over.

Linda had already shipped five packages of her favourite biscuits to her home family and anticipated either shipping or taking more home. Despite her gluten intolerance, Linda would eat those particular biscuits as they had become such a favourite of hers. By sending a care package containing those products, she was able to share her most favourite food item with her home family, allowing them to experience not only the branded product but also a much-loved product that formed a vital part of her sojourn. This section has illustrated how certain branded food products from the host culture can act as outside material agents by allowing home others to hyperexperience the sojourn with the au pairs and maintaining bonds and relationships between au pairs and home others.

4.4.2.3. Special Occasion Shipments: Recreating, Changing and Sharing Rituals

As mentioned previously, care packages were often shipped in both directions for special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas, and Easter. Most of the participants received care packages for Christmas from their home family, which triggered mixed emotions in the au pairs:

Especially on Christmas when my aunt sent me a little box with biscuits, Christmas biscuits [...] that she had made herself with my granny's recipes. And one evening nobody was home and we had the Christmas tree, which was like a really ugly plastic

thing without the smell, but it was switched on and it was glowing in the night. And I had those, I had those biscuits and a candle burning and felt really like home.

For Jessica, who was well integrated in the host family and felt as if she was a family member, the receipt of a Christmas care package with home-made biscuits made by her aunt using her grandmother's recipe made her feel "really like home". Jessica had created a special setting for the opening of the care package and the consumption of the home-made biscuits to make this occasion even more special and enjoyable. She sought out a time to open the parcel and eat the biscuits when the host family was not at home so she could immerse herself in the moment, thereby mentally transporting herself to childhood memories of Christmas with her family in Germany. Setting the scene for the consumption of the biscuits was important for the recreation of those memories. Her aunt had provided her with the necessary item, the home-made biscuits, to allow Jessica to be transported mentally to the past and re-create childhood practices in the present. Jessica mentioned throughout the interview that she was not homesick around Christmastime but that having this particular food product, special to her home family and home Christmas practices, allowed her to feel more at home in the host country. In that sense, this food product acts as an outside material acculturation agent by mitigating the potential feeling of homesickness and transporting aspects of the home to the host country to ease the separation from home. The biscuits themselves act as stand-ins or proxies for her home family and let her reminisce and recreate home Christmas practices in the host country. Vera had also received a care package for Christmas, from her grandmother. However, in her case, this parcel which contained branded chocolates as well as home-made biscuits, did not make her feel at home in the host country but rather triggered sadness at missing out on the home Christmas celebrations:

I already put so much weight on that I didn't want to have any more food from home [laughs]. So it was just my Grandma, she sent me a parcel with Kinder Ueberraschung [surprise] and self made biscuits and what was in there as well? Yea, just a letter and the Kinder stuff. [...] I was actually quite sad because I love my family and I love Christmas. It's like my favourite holiday. At home we always have all the family over at my Granny's and we always eat together and spend time together. It's cold outside and you have that hot wine and, you know, it's just a really nice time of the year I think. And then I was quite sad, but other from that I didn't really realise that it was Christmas because it was so different here. It was summer and it was not like Christmas at all. Just when the parcel arrived it was when I missed it.

Vera described how she would usually spend Christmas, her "favourite holiday", with her family in Germany. In New Zealand, she did not "realise that it was Christmas",

particularly due to the different climate but also due to the absence of her home loved ones. In her case, receiving a care package for Christmas did not ease the homesickness that was common for many participants at this time of year but it rather made her miss home. Vera wished that she could celebrate with her home family and be part of their Christmas family practices. Here, the shipment of a parcel from home to the au pair was meant to ease the participant's homesickness by providing her with a part of her home and home Christmas family practices to act as stand-in for absent loved ones. However, the opposite occurred for Vera who missed her home family and Christmas celebrations even more due to the receipt of those food items. It appears as if care packages containing food items crucial to and usually embedded in certain special celebrations can both ease and trigger homesickness in sojourners who spend the festive season away from their loved ones. Both types of emotions triggered by the receipt of a care package from home others allow for the connection to the home and the maintenance of bonds and relationships facilitated through material items. Both accounts above show how foods received for Christmas create a feeling of nostalgia for the participants, a "longing for the past, a yearning for yesterday" (Holbrook, 1993, p. 245) and the consumption practices and activities associated with this particular day. "Through nostalgia, one re-establishes a symbolic connection with significant others" and "affords the individual a sense of safety and security" (Zhou, Wildschut, Sedikides, Shi, & Feng, 2012, p. 40). The latter is the case for Jessica: eating food products they associate with past home Christmases with her entire family let her reminisce upon the past while feeling a sense of belonging in the host country. However, nostalgic feelings for Vera caused her to miss her home family and home Christmas practices. Vera travelled back to her childhood Christmases through certain (branded) food products with "a bittersweet emotional reaction" (Vignolles & Pichon, 2014, p. 225), a negative or ambivalent function of nostalgia (Vignolles & Pichon, 2014).

In addition, care packages received for special occasions such as Christmas allow for the sojourner's deeper integration into the host family whilst also providing a link between home and host family. This was the case for Lotta who received numerous care packages throughout the sojourn but an especially large one for Christmas. This particular care package contained food products that were meant to be shared with others in the host country:

I probably got all in all three parcels or so, three or four. And at Christmas a big one and for the advent calendar a big one. [...] Yeah, but I was always happy to receive a parcel. [...] For Christmas I got all the Christmas candy, you know the Christmas candies from Aldi [discount supermarket]. [...] Chocolates and the nougat marzipan.

And I got some chocolate, the Kids Chocolate Bons. [...] Some Milka chocolate, yeah. I was always very, very careful with eating them [laughs], so that I don't eat too much. [...] Yeah, I shared it with the family and my au pair friends, but we always shared our German lollies [laughs]. [...] Yeah, at Christmastime we had a lot of German lollies [laughs].

Did your family send gifts as well for Christmas?

For me yes, and for my host family as well, yeah.

Oh, okay. So what did they get for your family?

They got the kids some little toys, and for my host mum a wine glass because when I came to New Zealand I bought them some wine glasses. I don't know whether you know Ritzenhoff, they are the glasses with the colouring on them. So my host mum, she loved them so my parents sent her another one. [...] Well my parents are quite close to my host family, too. They are writing on Facebook too, [...] writing about me [laughs]. Not a lot but my Mum wrote them a thank you and my host mum wrote them something when I left about me, and yeah. But it's quite nice. But my host family said something was special with me because they got to know my parents as well.

Lotta's care package contained branded food products from Germany that were meant to be shared with other German au pairs and the host family. In that sense, integrating home products in host Christmas celebrations both with other au pairs and the host family allowed Lotta to share her Christmas traditions and rituals by sharing branded food items. Again, those food items thereby act as outside material acculturation agents that allow for the creation of community and togetherness during this occasion. In addition, her home family had sent Christmas gifts that were chosen particularly for the host family. Lotta's parents had visited her in New Zealand and got to know and become "quite close" to her host parents. Even after their holiday visit to New Zealand, Lotta's mother and host mother would write messages on Facebook. The Christmas gifts that were chosen by her home family for her host family allowed for a deeper connection and display of a continuous bond between the two families. Here, the care package containing branded food products and other material items facilitated the sharing of home rituals and holiday traditions, the formation of stronger bonds between sojourners from the same country and the reinforcement and manifestation of newly established relationships and bonds between two families that are deeply connected through the au pair sojourner.

It has been illustrated how care packages are shipped from home to host country for special occasions but care packages are also shipped home by the au pair sojourners for those occasions. Similar to reasons for taking branded food items back to the home as gifts and for sending care packages throughout the sojourn, different participants discussed how sending "something typical" (Karina), "typically New Zealandish" (Tanja) and something that "you

can't buy in Germany" (Christina) was important to them when it came to shipping care packages for Christmas:

Tanja: *I already sent some Jaffa's and Pineapple Lumps back home for Christmas, just to send something over that's typically New Zealandish, from New Zealand [laughs]. [...] Oh I sent quite a bit, like I think 7 packages over because I have a big family so my dad, my mum and like my grandparents, everyone got a bit of chocolate and sweets from New Zealand.*

Christina: *I had to send something home, and it was hokey pokey chocolate. And what else? I had for my grandparents a Christmas present, I sent it to Germany, was typical chocolate and Pineapple Lumps, yeah, stuff like that. [...] Both, souvenirs, chocolate, typical New Zealand stuff.*

So why do you think that chocolate is quite typical?

You can't buy them in Germany. If you search hokey pokey chocolate or something like that in Germany you can search and search and search and you won't find it. Yeah, Kiwi chocolate you also won't find.

Karina: *And for my parents and my sister I got a New Zealand calendar and some New Zealand t-shirts with like New Zealand map and also I sent them Tim Tams and some Cadbury chocolate. [...] I thought it was nice for them to try that too. But my mum said it was too sweet, the chocolate was too sweet. But my sister really liked it. [...] I guess I gave them all like an individual present, and the chocolate was like to share, for sharing. And I just think it's like something typical, like a typical present from another country to give like sweets. Like the local sweets, so I thought it's a nice idea. Because every time I go like, like every time I stay with another host family in a different country I bring them German sweets. So I thought this time I send them Kiwi sweets. [...] I think because it's typical. [...] And I really like the Cadbury chocolate and everyone loves Tim Tams. [...] I mean I really like just to give people presents I guess. It's a nice feeling that they really like the presents you choose for them.*

The above participants had picked some individual presents for family members such as "a New Zealand calendar and some New Zealand t-shirts" but predominantly sent typical New Zealand food products as Christmas gifts for their home families. Karina explained that this practice of giving local sweets as "typical present[s] from another country" was her main reason for purchasing New Zealand branded food products as Christmas presents. In addition, she intended for the sweets to be shared by her family, and thereby integrated into their celebrations which she would not be able to attend. Again, those branded food products shipped by all of the three above mentioned participants allow them to be part of the home Christmas celebrations through the shipment of a material stand-in or proxy although not actually being there. This idea was also echoed by Lotta who had sent a parcel containing both souvenirs and branded food products to her home family for Christmas:

I sent my parents and my family one for Christmas. [...] I sent them something from the Greenstone Shop and some Maori things. But I also sent them some photos and I made them a calendar. And, yeah, some Kiwi lollies, like the pink cookies or like Kiwi chocolate, like what is the brand, not Dairy Milk, the other one. [...] I just wanted them to be part of what I do and what I eat in New Zealand. No, I thought it's a nice way to integrate them in my life in New Zealand.

And you thought you could do that more by sending sweets and things like that rather than souvenirs?

I sent them both, so I sent them something from the Greenstone Shop too. But I thought why shouldn't I send them some New Zealand lollies? And Christmas you always eat like German Christmas lollies, so why shouldn't they eat some New Zealand lollies at Christmas time? [...] So I thought I'd send some typical things. The cookies were obviously typical for me, but the marshmallow chocolate fish, I think they're quite typical for New Zealand, and the chocolates. I mean, that's just about the brand, but I chose the one with the kiwifruit in it because you have everything with kiwi in it.

As mentioned before, Lotta had received a large Christmas care package from her home family that contained not only gifts for her but also for the host family. In turn, she sent a parcel to her home family that contained souvenirs, photos and a hand-made calendar in addition to various branded food products. Her reasoning for sending branded food products for this particular festivity was that her family could “*eat some New Zealand lollies at Christmas time*” in addition to the traditional German Christmas sweets. She explained that this would allow them to be integrated in her life in New Zealand and “*to be a part of what I do and what I eat in New Zealand*”. This again illustrates the symbolic function those material and mundane objects take on when they are shipped from one distant loved one to another. Not only do those items allow for the trial of something that is typical of the other country but they also represent the absent loved ones, in a way allowing them to still be part of the family practices surrounding this festivity.

4.4.2.4. Shipments Post-Sojourn: Preserving Connections

Whereas the previous three parts of this section on care package movements have focussed on the shipment of items from the home to the host country and back between home families and au pairs, this last part investigates the post-sojourn shipment of care packages to and from the host family. Shipments between au pairs and host families post-sojourn aid the maintenance and preservation of relationships and networks established during the sojourn. In addition, as both parties know that an imminent reunion is unlikely as soon as the au pair leaves the host family, those care packages allow for the maintenance of a connection between au pair and host family and particularly, for a connection between the au pair and the host culture. Natalie pondered on what she would miss when she returns to Germany:

What I will miss in Germany then, I think it's the Weetbix. But my host mum said to me that she will send something over to Germany then.

Here, Natalie and her host mother had come to an agreement prior to her departure that particular items that Natalie had enjoyed would be shipped to her post-sojourn. This was also the case for Celina who explained in the post-sojourn interview that her host mother had offered to send her food that the family would regularly enjoy together:

Yeah, and my host mum offered to send me some curries. That's quite nice. [...] There's a lady or a couple I think in Auckland and they make their own curries. Yeah, so they're really, really fresh and without lots of chemical stuff so that's quite nice. And we also cook those quite a lot and they're really yummy and my host mum offered to send me some if I'm going to miss it too much.

At the point of the interview, Celina had not yet asked for or received a care package containing the food items. However, both Natalie and Celina had been provided with the option to have some of their favourite products shipped to them by their respective host mothers, thereby allowing them to eventually consume foods that had become part of their consumption portfolio during their sojourn. In addition, despite au pairs having been live-in caregivers for the host family's children and thus employees, host mothers regard au pairs as members of their family and therefore want to ship care packages to them just like home mothers whose daughters have left the family nest (Hogg, et al., 2004). Neither Natalie nor Celina explicitly discussed whether they would reciprocate the care packages and send something to their host family in return. For Saskia, this was "the deal" she had made with her host family prior to her departure:

The deal is if I send them a package with German stuff they send something to me with New Zealand stuff. But it's quite hard for me to think about stuff which is typical, which I can send. Because they have a lot of our stuff like Nutella, they have Pumpernickel and they have Haribo and they have Kinder Schokolade, like the Surprise Eggs. I'm not so sure what I would send them. [...] Yea, Milka, that would be a thing and yea, we have a lot of goods in like good bread and good sausages but I can't send that. It's a problem. I'm still thinking about what I can send.

The above excerpt is taken from an interview conducted post-sojourn, approximately three months after Saskia's return to Germany. She had not received a care package from her host family yet as she was still struggling to figure out what she would send to them. Living in New Zealand for twelve months, she had found that many of the branded food products that she had initially considered typical of Germany were indeed available in New Zealand. However, she acknowledged that there were items she would potentially be able to ship to her

host family and then she would receive a care package in return. This reciprocity would allow both the returned sojourner and the host family to still be part of each other's life, maintaining the bond that was formed during the sojourn. This was most evident in the account of Jessica who post-sojourn discussed her feelings about sending care packages to her host family, in particular the host children, for occasions such as their birthdays and Christmas:

Yeah, I want to keep on doing that [sending care packages]. With the younger two it's easier because their birthdays are around Christmas, so I will probably just send one big parcel for Christmas with little extra parcels in them, in the big parcel for their birthdays and then the big parcels then for all the kids together and yeah but that's probably something to do. And I want to keep on doing that, because also Carla, the former au pair, for every birthday she send them little parcels with German lollies so I probably want to do that as well or at least something for every birthday, something small. And if it's something small it's not too expensive and I think I can do that. And I mean they are, I really love them and I just think they, I can spend some money for them so that shouldn't be like something I don't want to do after all I've done for them. So that's something they earned, they're something special to me and I want to let them know that I still think of them.

Most important in this excerpt are her statements of “*I really love them*” and “*I want to let them know that I still think of them*”. Jessica aims to show her affection for her host children by regularly sending a care package containing their favourite food items such as Haribo and pudding which she would prepare for them during her sojourn. Showing affection and love by sending care packages to the host children post sojourn is in line with research on gift giving and love (Belk & Coon, 1993; Cheal, 1987). In particular, Cheal (1987) manifested that the act of gift giving is “defined as an emotionally significant performance” and one “seen as means by which individuals communicate with those who are important to them” (p. 153). Jessica's account clearly demonstrates the strength of the relationships that can be formed during an au pair sojourn and the bond that both parties aspire to maintain, even post-sojourn. This is most crucial for the au pairs as they have (mostly) lived with just one host family during their sojourn, becoming quite attached to them. For the host family, having an au pair as a temporary family member might be a more frequent arrangement as seen in the above excerpt. Nevertheless, when both the au pair and the host family have a good experience during the sojourn, the bond and connection that is formed remains quite strong even after the sojourn. Again, shipping branded food products and other mundane goods between au pair and host family allows for the maintenance of those ties despite the

distance between them and the rather unlikely reunion. In addition, those branded products symbolise the enduring love and affection for one another despite being apart.

4.5. SECTION II – SUMMARY

This second section has addressed the second research question: *How does gifting facilitate the sojourn experience?* The first part of this section explored how the giving of branded food products and other mundane items as gifts allows for the creation, establishment, manifestation, maintenance and modification of social bonds and relationships. Gifts given by au pairs to the host at the beginning of the sojourn allow for the portrayal of their German me, regional me, private home me and home family me while in addition providing the host family with a chance to hyperexperience their home culture. Gifts given to the au pair allow the host family to portray their New Zealand self and integrate the au pair into their family unit during the sojourn while reinforcing and retaining the relationship post-sojourn. Gifts given to home others (family and friends) post-sojourn allow au pairs to share their New Zealand me, private sojourner me and let the home family hyperexperience the host culture. In addition, au pairs distinctly distance themselves from tourists and emphasise this difference in their choice of branded food products as souvenirs. The physical movement of gifts between those different parties symbolises the relationships and bonds at play.

The second part of this section established that care packages containing branded food products and other mundane items were constantly on the move between home and host country. Home others sent care packages to au pairs to help ease the transition into the local scene: The branded products in those packages allowed for a connection to the home, acted as proxies or stand-ins for absent loved ones and helped facilitate new connections in the host country. Care packages were reciprocated by au pairs to “keep up” with the home as products here also acted as proxies or stand-ins. Care packages sent between home and host country for particular holidays allow for the recreation, changing and sharing of rituals in the respective others. Lastly, care packages shipped between au pair and host family post-sojourn allowed for the preservation of close connections and for the communication of enduring love and affection.

Overall, it appears that gifting (in the form of actual gifts and care packages) does facilitate the sojourn experience in multiple ways, involving various actors. Branded food products and other mundane items can act as outside acculturation agents that facilitate social

bonds and relationships. Whereas this second research question has specifically addressed gift giving in temporary mobility, the third and final research question focuses on sharing, which is regarded as distinct to gift giving (Belk, 2010).

4.6. SECTION III – SHARED CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION IN MOBILITY

Whereas the second research question focussed on gifting, this third and final section focuses on sharing. Belk (2010) explains that there has been a reluctance to study sharing due to the “lines between giving, sharing, and commodity exchange [being] imprecise” (p. 718). Sharing “seldom draws attention since it is a routine activity without the more formalized rituals of gift giving” (Belk, 2010, p. 724). One particular reason for the reluctance is the ubiquitous nature and daily enactment and hence taken-for-granted approach to sharing, especially the sharing of mundane meals. Attending to this lack of research, the third section of the findings chapter addresses the third research question posed at the beginning of this thesis:

**How does the shared production and consumption of food aid the
sojourners’ acculturation and re-acculturation process?**

The key focus of this question is placed on *sharing* as distinct from gifting. In particular, it examines how the *shared production and consumption of food* during and post-sojourn might influence the acculturation and (re-)acculturation processes. This thesis focuses on how sharing can aid and facilitate acculturation processes. The unique context of this research allows for the exploration of not only the integration of mobile consumers in extraordinary consumption events in the host country, such as weddings (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999), but also the integration into the mundane, ordinary everyday production and consumption of meals. Whereas immigrants, global nomads, cosmopolitan consumers and tourists (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Bardhi, et al., 2010; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Oswald, 1999; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999) often struggle to actively engage in local consumption practices, particularly when it comes to the consumption of mundane meals, the participants in this research are directly placed within a host family context where they evidently (need to) take part in the mundane everyday production and consumption of shared meals. This last section of the findings is different from the previous two sections. Unlike the branded products used or sought (in Section 1), given or shared (in Section 2), Section 3 focuses on

the sharing of mundane food products and meals from the respective cultures. Thus, this section addresses Luedicke's (2011) call to investigate (brand) specific consumption practices and "the role of (unwillingly) shared consumption resources for multi-directional cultural adaptation" (p. 236). This section also answers Belk's (2010) call to explore the sharing of mundane meals: Focusing on an acculturation context where individuals from different cultural backgrounds share a household extends recent research on sharing meals within stable single-household, home contexts (Cappellini & Parsons, 2012; Holttinen, 2014). Since au pairs enter the host country specifically to work for and live within a local host family, taking part particularly in mundane production and consumption practices is anticipated and expected. This represents a major difference from existing research on immigrants, tourists, global nomads or expatriates who do not have the chance to immediately take part and immerse themselves in the everyday life of host culture members (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Bardhi, et al., 2010; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Mehta & Belk, 1991; Peñaloza, 1994; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). In this research, young sojourners are able to experience and embed themselves in the mundane production and consumption of meals through which intercultural exchange might be facilitated (Luedicke, 2011). Further, au pairs take part in extraordinary meal production and consumption. Therefore, this final research question places an emphasis on the joint and shared production and consumption of foods between sojourner, host and home for ordinary and extraordinary meals.

4.6.1. Mundane Production

Au pairs partake in, and even prepare, ordinary family meals which are usually reserved only for direct members of the family unit. Cappellini and Parsons (2012) established that "guests are not invited to these everyday sharing events" and if they are, it "implies a deeper level of inclusion: being part of the family" (p. 124) as this is where (family) identity concerns are rooted (Kleine, et al., 1993). The findings illustrate that au pairs not only consume ordinary meals with the children and/or the entire family but they are also responsible for the production of mundane meals (planning, shopping, cooking) (Hogg, et al., 2004; Moisisio, et al., 2004), which had previously been reserved as the devotional duty of the mother (Miller, 1998). Therefore, the au pair is able to influence family decision making in general and, to some degree, product and brand choice for the family unit, something that had previously been reserved for family members (Moore, et al., 2002). Traditionally, it has been the role of the mother in the household to "materialise [her] love through everyday shopping, cooking and all other practices surrounding the work of feeding

the family” (Cappellini & Parsons, 2012, p. 110). In this research’s context, many of these tasks are fulfilled by the au pairs who take on the mother’s role of homemaking (R. Cox & Narula, 2003) and intensive mothering (Macdonald, 1998). Host families hire au pairs based on the premises that they will receive “help [to] relieve [their] family of everyday stress and to get to know a different culture all at the same time” (AuPairWorld.net, 2013). In turn, au pairs expect to become part of the host family and be integrated into mundane activities such as the production or preparation of meals. In this space, home foods are shared with the host family to produce either a traditional German meal or a dish that is typical of the home family. In turn, the host family integrates au pairs into the production of host dishes to let them experience country-specific mundane meals whilst simultaneously integrating them into their family. Upon return to the home country, au pairs then prepare meals for home others using the knowledge they have gained and sharing dishes they have become accustomed to abroad.

4.6.1.1. Sharing the Home Culture

First, au pairs produce meals for the host family as part of their contracted terms or to simply share aspects of their home culture. Saskia declares how she is “*not the best cook*” but still has to prepare meals for the host family occasionally where “*if I have the possibility to show them something from Germany, for example, I do*”. Despite not producing meals on a regular basis, Saskia tries to prepare German dishes when she has the chance. Other au pairs have to cook most meals for the host family. Sabine in particular cooks all meals for the host children. She received a tool to make German egg noodles from the previous au pair who left it behind and prepared this typical German dish for her host children:

What I think is really cool is that I got a “Spaetzlereibe” [tool to make egg noodles] from the previous au pair. I have never really made Spaetzle [egg noodles] myself, I know it from home but that I have made it myself, that has never happened. And so I made it now and it was pretty easy, would have never thought so, that Spaetzle are that easy. I always thought “it is more work” and...

The family also liked it?

Yes, I just made it for the kids.

So you try to make some German food for the kids?

Yes, because yes, because otherwise, something is missing for me for meal times.

Preparing a German dish such as egg noodles allows her to share a traditional German meal with the host and to embed parts of the home culture into the host family because “*otherwise, something is missing for me for meal times*”. Thus, this seemingly mundane meal allows for the experience of the German culture by the host family and for the maintenance of

ties to the home and nostalgic feelings (Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012; Havlena & Holak, 1991) for the au pair. Both of these notions were important to many of the au pairs. Celina had to cook for her host family as part of her contract and recalls preparing a typical German dish:

*But what I make here is ‘Schnitzel’ and my host family really likes it.
That was something that reminded you of home as well?
Yeah what my mum always made and yeah.*

She shared a dish with the host family that she used to eat in Germany and that her mother had shown her how to prepare. The preparation of meals and specific foods that are typical of the home family was a common occurrence in au pairs’ accounts. The above accounts show how upward intergenerational influence is possible in acculturation. Like children acting as socialisation agents studied by Ekström (2007), au pair sojourners here have, and actively use, the opportunity to introduce the host family to home foods and meals and thereby act as reverse acculturation agents.

Many of the participants produced those types of meals simply because they were the only ones that they knew how to prepare. However, for others it was the host family that requested meals that au pairs would usually have at home. This was the case for Linda as illustrated in the following excerpt:

My new host mother, she wants to sing German children’s songs and things like that. They want me to cook once a week and cook something that we’d cook at home, like something that my family would cook, not even typical German but just typical for my family. Because we eat lots of Asian and Italian food. [...] Chicken marsala, blipfa, that’s a Croatian dish, that’s with silver beet and potato. A fish pie but without the pastry so it’s not actually a pie but sort of, and yesterday I actually cooked cannelloni filled with pumpkin and ricotta mash and cooked in the oven with tomato puree and vegetables and cheese on top. [...] I like the chicken thing, that’s one of my dad’s favourites so it reminded me of home.

The meals she would prepare are not typically German but rather represent the particular consumption practices of Linda’s home family. In particular, preparing a dish for the host family that is her father’s favourite allowed Linda to be reminded of home whilst producing and consuming this meal with the host family. Community is thereby created not only between the au pair and the host family but also between the host and home families. Despite not having met in person, the host family is thereby connected to the home family through these particular meals that are prepared by the au pair. Baker, Karrer and Veeck (2005) showed how favourite family recipes inherit elements of selfhood, create nostalgic

associations and “are often related to happy or intense childhood memories, such as birthdays or time spent with people they loved” (Vignolles & Pichon, 2014, p. 229). This is truly the case here where au pairs are able to show links to their home family and home past by reproducing family meals (from their childhood) for the host family.

However, some typical German dishes are specifically not produced for the host family because it is anticipated that the host “*wouldn't really get it*” as exclaimed by Jaqueline who prepared a German meat salad just for herself:

Once I did that when the family was in the beach house, I made Fleischsalat [meat salad] by myself. It was nice, but it was actually just for me and not the family because yeah, probably they would've said that I am crazy to do such or to eat something like that. [...] Yeah, I think they wouldn't really get it [laughs].

In her opinion, this particular dish is specific to Germany and Germans and would not be appreciated by the host family, hence she only produced it for herself on one occasion when the host family was not at home. However, she did prepare other German meals for the host family:

Once I did 'Buletten' [German meat balls] and I did it with a friend of mine. The children wouldn't have eaten it anyway, so only my host dad tried it because my host mum wasn't home that evening. And he really liked it, so yeah. [...] I was actually very proud of myself that my host dad liked it. I don't know, I was just happy about it.

Sharing this typical German dish with the host father and particularly his appreciation of the dish represented a great reward for Jaqueline. Since she considered the German meat salad as unsuitable for the host family to try, she was “*happy*” that the host father enjoyed this particular German dish. Through the production of an acceptable German dish, Jaqueline was at least able to share some aspects of her home culture with the host.

4.6.1.2. Experiencing the Host

Second, when au pairs were expected to cook for the host family they also had to prepare meals that were typical of New Zealand or of the host family. Having never cooked those dishes before, this allowed the au pairs to experience unfamiliar, new foods and be integrated into the host culture. Jessica was one of the au pairs that had to regularly prepare meals for the host family. The following excerpt illustrates how she initially struggled with the different style of cooking in the host culture but how, in the end, she was introduced to foods that she actually liked:

What I was quite used to from Germany from cooking was especially Maggi, or 'maegiee' as they say here. And in the beginning I was really like "is it possible to get that here?" [...] The whole style of cooking is different from Germany. [...] I mean I got used to the cooking without Maggi and cooking Lana's style because she wants, she's very open to preparing food my way but she has her own ways and she still tells me "yeah I want you to cook that and that and that, and you cook it best like that". So I got some new ways of cooking that I can bring home. It's quite interesting. Especially fish, I have never cooked fish at home. So when she first gave me some fish I said "what am I supposed to do with that?" And she said "oh yeah I have that marinade in the pantry, just use that on it and put it in the oven or you can make like some flour and egg and breadcrumbs on it and pan fry it". I said "oh cool, I don't actually like fish". Well but the kids do. So I cook fish and I really liked it.

Not being able to find a typical German seasoning, Maggi, Jessica adapted to the cooking style of her host mother Lana who introduced her to "new ways of cooking". For example, Jessica did not like fish prior to her sojourn; however, when she prepared fish for the host family, she acquired a taste for it and "really liked it". The host mother was thereby able to introduce the au pair to the production of meals specific to this family and made Jessica try out previously unfavoured dishes. Here, it is the host family that introduces the au pair to the local host culture rather than the au pair sharing her culture through the production of home meals. In addition, as Jessica mentions, au pairs that are introduced to and involved in the production of host meals are able to "bring home" these "new ways of cooking". Through being included in the production of mundane meals, host families socialise au pairs into preparing unfamiliar dishes and help them acculturate to country-specific foods. In particular, host mothers take on the role of the home mother in showing them how to prepare certain meals. Au pairs in return step into the role of the host mother through cooking mundane weekday meals which is usually regarded as the "mother's gift to the family" (Cappellini & Parsons, 2012, p. 116).

4.6.1.3. Connecting Host and Home Post-Sojourn

This leads to the last part of the findings on the production of mundane meals. As uncovered in the interviews conducted during and post-sojourn, many au pairs expected to and/or actually prepared specific host meals for home others upon their return to Germany. During the sojourn, au pairs discussed foods and meals that they would like to prepare for their home family. Linda rediscovered her passion for baking in New Zealand and planned on making cakes and other dishes she had made for her host family upon her return home:

I really like cole slaw, I'll definitely make that when I'm back home and yeah, just the baking here is so much more fun, I don't know, all the nice cakes, banana bread, carrot cake. [...] So I like to bake for other people and make them happy.

Having learned how to bake cakes that are not typical of Germany, such as banana bread and carrot cake, Linda plans on sharing those cakes with home others to let them taste foods that she has been introduced to in New Zealand. This is also the case for Karina who lists various dishes that she produced in New Zealand which she would like to share with her home family upon her return:

I will definitely cook and bake some recipes I've done here, I've made here in New Zealand. [...] I will definitely cook some recipes for my family, my German family. And I also think I will cook and bake more than I used to. Just like I really enjoy trying new recipes now and to cook. [...] Pavlova, definitely pavlova. I haven't had apple crumble or apple pie in Germany before so I'm going to make that as well. I really like the stir fry my host mum was making. [...] What else? A chicken risotto, a tomato risotto. Some salads. I really love the food here. [...] My mum tried Anzac biscuits here and she loves them so I'm going to make them for her too.

Karina entered the host family not knowing how to cook and not enjoying the process of producing meals. Throughout her time with the host family, she had to undertake cooking mundane family meals on a regular basis, through which she learned to prepare a variety of meals, either typical of New Zealand or typical of her host family. Before her return home, she already anticipated that she would use those recipes for her home family. In addition, Karina's home family had visited her during the sojourn. Her mother had tried Anzac biscuits in New Zealand and "love[d] them". Karina planned on baking those particular cookies for her mother once back in the home country. In this way, Karina would not only be able to show off the skills she gained while abroad but also let her home family taste typical dishes that she would eat during her sojourn and let her mother relive the holidays they spent in New Zealand by making these particular cookies. Whereas Karina's mother associates fond memories with the cookies and would appreciate Karina baking those for her, Jasmin's mother did not enjoy the New Zealand dish [meat with soy sauce and honey] that she had prepared for her after her return home "because it was too strong. Maybe it was, but I like it because it reminds me of New Zealand." Despite her mother not liking this dish, Jasmin enjoyed preparing it because it provided a connection for her to New Zealand and the time she had spent there. As another au pair, Jacqueline, explained, the production of mundane meals facilitates intercultural exchange:

Yeah, once I made the bacon and egg pie. [...] They [home family] liked it very much actually.

So what do you think is good about sharing typical foods with one or the other family?

Just to let them know maybe how we eat, like on the other side of the world, or what we eat. And to learn something new, I think it's a nice experience always.

Jaqueline's account unravels how producing a mundane meal that is typical for either the home or the host country for the respective other represents an opportunity to share how and what the other eats. Essentially, this allows the other to experience and “*learn something new*” about a foreign culture that they might not have otherwise been able to experience, thereby facilitating intercultural exchange. In addition, preparing meals that are typical of the home or host family for the respective other creates a sense of community and belonging to both worlds, mostly for the sojourning au pair but also for their two families that might not have physically met. The joint production of mundane meals and the sharing of cultural knowledge that is embedded in this practice thus sheds light on how other forces can act as outside acculturation agents by facilitating an integration of the sojourner into the host culture and a learning about foreign cultures from other actors involved in the sojourn (such as the home and host families). The host family here also acts as socialisation agents, similar to the home family (S. Ward, 1974), by teaching young sojourners how to produce family meals.

4.6.2. Mundane Consumption

Whereas the previous section provided insights into the production of mundane meals, this section focuses on the (shared) consumption of mundane meals. Mundane foods typical of the host culture are consumed by au pairs and mundane foods typical of their home are shared with the host family. In addition, some ordinary, mundane foods transform into extraordinary treats during the sojourn for the au pairs. However, some constraints of shared consumption of mundane meals in both the host and home countries do exist which are illustrated in the last part of this section.

4.6.2.1. “Part of the Family” – Integration into the Host

First, mundane host foods are introduced to the au pairs by the host family and host others. In line with au pairs' (aspired-to) adventurous self discussed earlier, au pairs were open-minded about trying out local and unfamiliar foods. Karina discusses how she was introduced to the very typical English breakfast by her host mother:

I think I would try definitely the most I can. So for example I've never had an English breakfast before, so I tried it when my host mum did it last weekend. Or how do you say "porridge"? Is it "Haferschleim", what we call "Haferschleim"?

Yes.

Yea. So I would never consider that I would try "Haferschleim", ever, because it sounds kind of disgusting and gross. So I tried it and I actually really like it. So yeah, I would say I would try the most I can, new stuff.

Here, Karina consumed a typical New Zealand breakfast meal that was prepared for her by her host mother. The host mother is thereby able to introduce Karina to a culturally specific, mundane meal that she would otherwise never have thought of trying. Taking part in the host family's mundane, everyday life and consumption practices easily facilitates a cultural experience that does not usually include foreigners and outsiders to the host culture. In this context, au pairs are actively involved not only in the production of mundane meals but are also able to take part in their consumption. Outsiders or guest do not usually participate in mundane weekday meals. Everyday, ordinary meals are considered thrifty meals to "save time, effort and money in the kitchen" (Cappellini & Parsons, 2012, p. 117) and the sharing of thrifty, intimate meals "reaffirms family membership [... and] do not usually include guests" (Cappellini & Parsons, 2012, p. 120). Including au pairs in the everyday family meal time practices reaffirms their integration into the host family unit. "Sharing a pleasing meal is an act of caring as well as nurturing" (Belk, 2010, p. 728) which is clearly evident here.

In addition to consuming typical meals, au pairs were also introduced to mundane branded food products by the host family. Saskia was able to experience a wide range of meals and products that were favoured and therefore shared by the host family:

With regard to food, so what did you try that you hadn't had in Germany before, for example?

Oh, pie, a lot of pie. [...] Yeah, but I really like that now. Yeah, Marmite, but I don't like that. They forced me to try it, to get me into it but I'm not, no, no [laughs]. No way. [...] But L&P, I love L&P, and yeah, we're eating pie a lot, fish and chips, just desserts, how do you call this white cake?

The pavlova?

Yeah, that one. [...] We had a family dinner with the grandparents and they made that. [...] Yeah, and there's a lot of sweet stuff like biscuits and lollies and stuff which are different. Like hundred and thousand biscuits, I love them! [...] Yeah, it's of Griffins, yeah. Pineapple Lumps I like.

Saskia consumed "a lot of pie", fish and chips and pavlova which were all introduced to her by her host parents and host grandparents. However, she also mentions a variety of

branded products that are typical of New Zealand. Here, the host family introduced the au pair to typical branded products such as Marmite (spread), L&P (soft drink), Griffin's Hundreds and Thousands' cookies, and Pineapple Lumps (pineapple chocolate chunks). The accounts by Karina and Saskia illustrate how for sojourners, branded food products can act as material acculturation agents and how brand-specific consumption practices allow for the adaptation to the local culture as proposed by Luedicke and Giesler (2009) and Luedicke (2011). The host family can act not only as a socialisation agent, which is in line with Moore et al.'s (2002) understanding of intergenerational influence exerted on brand choice, but also as acculturation agents through the introduction of locally available products to the au pairs. The sharing of everyday meals and the inherent meaning is closely related to the second findings section; however, here branded food products are shared on a day-to-day basis rather than gifted as a ritual artefact at the beginning or end of the sojourn. Those branded products are thereby consumed in a mundane context rather than the context of gift exchange and gift-giving rituals. This affirms Belk's (2010) understanding that sharing and gift-giving are distinct from each other.

4.6.2.2. Reverse Acculturation – Sharing Home Practices

Au pairs are also able to share mundane consumption practices and associated food products from their homes with their hosts. Contrary to the previous accounts, sharing consumption resources from home with the host family allows for the host family's cultural adaptation to the German culture which most would not have personally experienced. Lotta was missing German bread, which is why she actively searched for a German bakery in New Zealand, particularly in Auckland:

Did you find the bread in New Zealand somewhere? Did you look for that?

Yeah, I found it in Grey Lynn in Auckland, there's a German bakery. And there's one in Auckland, the Queen Street Pandoro bakery. It's not a German one but it's more like German bread. But I mean when I bought some bread I couldn't eat a whole one by myself before it was gone. But my host Dad, he really liked it and Hayden, the middle one, he liked it too.

Okay, so you could share it with them?

Yeah, I made them try it and they really liked it. It's a bit more hard, a bit more crusty, crunchy, then a sandwich.

Since Lotta did not live in Auckland during her sojourn in New Zealand, she was only occasionally able to source German bread from two Auckland bakeries. She introduced the host father and host son to the German bread, sharing the mundane consumption of this typically German food item with them. In that sense, this reverses or reciprocates the efforts

made by the host families who try to include the au pair in their daily routines. Here, the au pair shared a typical home consumption practice with the host. As previously illustrated, au pair sojourners use the opportunity to introduce the host family to home foods and meals and thereby act as reverse acculturation agents as well as socialisation agents (Ekström, 2007).

As seen before, not only were mundane meals shared but also branded products such as the typical German breakfast spread Nutella as illustrated by Christina: *“I introduced Nutella and now my host dad pretty much eats all of my Nutella [laughs].”* In this case, it is the branded product that facilitates the consumption of a mundane meal. Thereby, the branded product acts as a reverse material acculturation agent that allows the sojourner to introduce the host to their particular home culture. For some, the host actively asks the sojourner about differences and similarities between mundane consumption practices, which triggers au pairs to share those practices. This was the case for Jessica who was then able to introduce the host family, in particular the host children, to German pudding:

I mean they often want to hear comparisons about like food. So “what German food do you have and what do you miss here?” The kids, the kids really like those German treats. My parents sent me pudding, pudding ‘pulver’. [...] And they really like that stuff, so when they have been good they get a special treat called German pudding. Especially when Lana is away because she is a stewardess so she is away for a few days sometimes. Especially when she’s away and I think that the kids have been good I can come like “so who wants German pudding for dessert tonight?” They’re like “can I have chocolate? Can I have vanilla?” It’s really funny. [...] So yeah they, but German culture not really, it’s more like, yeah, food and language.

Here, Jessica was proactively asked by the host family to share comparisons between Germany and New Zealand which she interprets as learning more about *“food and language”* rather than culture. However, through the sharing of this *“special treat called German pudding”* with the host children, she effectively lets them into her home culture and allows them to experience a part of Germany, at least what Germany means to her. Again, this sharing of a mundane dish, which is seemingly special and extraordinary for the host children, allows for intercultural exchange and cultural adaptation. Creating this *“special treat”* not only introduces the host children to a home food item but also strengthens and manifests the bond between au pair and host children. Certain food products can thereby act as material acculturation agents that have the ability to manifest social bonds, as illustrated in section two of the findings chapter.

4.6.2.3. Transformation of Ordinary into Extraordinary

As was seen in Jessica's account above, a mundane food item from home was turned into a special, extraordinary item for the children in the host family. However, some au pairs experienced this transformation themselves where meals and products they liked changed from seemingly mundane, everyday items to special, extraordinary items. For example, the consumption of bread which is strongly embedded in and represents an extensive aspect of the German culture (Boyes, 2009) was not possible for au pairs on a daily basis in the host country. When they did have the chance to eat German bread, this mundane home consumption practice turned into an extraordinary consumption practice as seen in Christina's account:

What was also cool was after 2-3 weeks, I think 3 weeks we [Christina and other German au pairs] went to the German bakery for the first time. We went in there with really huge eyes, "whoaaaa". And then he realised right away that, yes, we were German how we were standing and looked. Now we are at the German bakery every 2 weeks almost and get something, it's just 2 kilometres away from me or something. [...] We just did, on a Saturday morning we went to the German bakery, had a really nice German breakfast with Nutella and bought salami especially for that and cream cheese and stuff like that.

After being in the host country for three weeks, Christina and her fellow German au pair friends discovered a German bakery which they entered with enchantment and "really huge eyes", surprised and at the same time happy to have found a product that is crucial to representing their German identity. The limited availability of German bread in New Zealand elevated the status of this seemingly mundane good. Coupland (2005) coined the term 'invisible brands' which are defined as "seemingly ordinary brands that are part of the lifestyle of the household" and which blend "into the household environment in an inconspicuous manner" (p. 106). This insight can be linked to the findings here: au pairs regarded bread as a mundane food product that was always on hand in the home country and hence invisible in their everyday lives. However, upon entering the host brandscape, this mundane meal time favourite was not freely available. The occasional consumption of it is then elevated to from an ordinary to an extraordinary consumption experience and the food item becomes very visible.

Christina also explained that the au pair friends shared the consumption of this particular food product and created a ritual around it. In Germany, breakfast on the weekend consisting of bread, salami, and cream cheese is quite typical for most German families. In line with Cappellini and Parsons' (2012) distinction between weekday and weekends meals,

the German breakfast on the weekend is a time when the family gathers together to enjoy each other's company rather than rushing to finish their regular weekday meal. Due to the absence of the home family whilst residing in the host country, sojourners are not necessarily able to enact this weekly ritual. However, as seen in Christina's account, au pairs are able to recreate this home ritual. For another participant, Sabine, sharing mundane foods from the home also meant that she could establish and to some extent, recreate home rituals:

Tonight we also go for dinner together. Not Lotta because Lotta lives to far away, she just arrives tomorrow. And we want to go to Mission Bay this evening, to the, uhm German?

Oh, yes, in Kohi, "Der Metz".

Yes exactly. We want to go there, have a look. We Germans in the restaurant [laughs].

So you do miss it a little, German food?

That too, yes, and also those rituals, that you just say in the evening, a bit like a group meeting, that you say once a week "ah, there and there we will meet from now on", so and then you go there, so. That's what I had in Germany anyway and I miss that here quite a bit. Such a ritual, we always, we had movie night once a week, us girls got together and went to the movies together. Because it was students' night and then we just went there and uhm, uhm, yes, was just cool. And such a ritual, I miss that here a little, yes.

Sabine discusses how she tried to recreate a ritual from Germany in New Zealand. For her, consuming a German meal (ritual artefact) at a German restaurant with her German au pair friends (ritual performance roles) on a regular basis (ritual script) would allow her to incorporate more of her home culture into the host country (Rook, 1985). In addition, establishing a ritual around the mundane consumption of a German meal, shared with her German friends, would elevate or transform this mundane consumption practice to an extraordinary consumption practice, similar to what was described in Christina's account. So it appears as if mundane foods and consumption practices can be transformed into extraordinary experiences during a sojourn. However, it seems to be necessary to share those activities with home others to achieve this elevated status.

The previous findings have illuminated how host families and au pairs share mundane consumption practices to introduce the respective other to their culture, effectively using (branded) food products as (reverse) acculturation agents. In addition, some mundane home consumption practices have the ability to transform into extraordinary consumption activities in the host country. However, the data suggests that certain constraints exist for the au pairs when it comes to the shared consumption of mundane meals and foods, both throughout the sojourn in the host country and upon the return home.

4.6.2.4. Constraints of Shared Mundane Consumption

In this thesis, it has been found that au pairs are more often than not included in the host family as an integral member of that family, which appears contrary to prior research in sociology (Búriková & Miller, 2010; R. Cox, 2007; R. Cox & Narula, 2003). This in turn means that it is expected that they participate in the family meal and adhere to the family's prescribed meal times. For many au pairs, this posed a constraint as the meal time consumption is different from Germany. Sabine discussed how she was not able to find any sauces for meal times other than tomato sauce:

Sauces, they don't really have sauces here and if they do then it's always like tomato sauce [Ketchup]. But other different, like a roast sauce or something like that, so, such things that you know from Germany, you get it everywhere, always, always, with everything you get a sauce. And if there is no sauce, then something is really weird, well [laughs]. [...] Yes, because yes, because otherwise, something is missing for me, for meal times.

Sabine had previously not thought about whether she would miss certain preferred food products when sojourning abroad and aspired to be adventurous in trying out new food. However, upon being confronted with dry food without any sauces, she had to resort to using tomato sauce (or Ketchup), the only available type of sauce. This in turn led to the following occurrence: “*And I always get laughed at because I eat ketchup with it.*” Rather than asking her parents to send sauces from Germany, Sabine took the amusement of her host family in stride and used tomato sauce to make the meal taste somewhat familiar. Again, this seemingly mundane item, a sauce, has taken on a more special role in Sabine's life, even making her talk about it at great length. In Sabine's case, it is not necessarily a particular personal brand that she misses but she is rather dissatisfied with the local meal consumption practices which cause her to miss aspects of her home meals. As explained by Marshall (2005), food consumption routines regulate “the sequence and order of dishes”, such as the consumption of particular sauces for particular meals, “and provide guidelines on appropriateness and comportment in certain situations” (p. 72). In Sabine's case, the use of ketchup instead of a particular sauce breaks the script of her familiar routine which ultimately disrupts her meal consumption. This breaking of script is mostly brought upon her by the consumption constraints unconsciously imposed by the host family. However, despite the provision of practically free food, au pairs did not always agree with their host family's choice of locally available options in particular and meal time practices in general as can be seen in Christina's detailed account:

In the beginning I ate with my host family. Just bread for lunch or something like that and eventually I said “I don’t eat in the evenings because I am not hungry then”. I am used to eating warm at lunch, so I talked to my host mum and now she either cooks for me and puts it in the fridge and I heat it up or I cook something myself and eat in the evenings with kids, just bread, when they eat real food. [...] I did try it in the beginning for the first 3-4 weeks but eventually, I just couldn’t eat anything anymore in the evenings, for a week eating in the evening is not a problem, eating hot, or 2 weeks, I am used to that from holidays but for longer, I am just not hungry at night. I eat in the evenings in Germany, I always ate the latest at 5, just a slice of bread and that was enough for me and then a real, full meal every evening was just too much. [...] Yes, when I started [my au pair time], I especially bought a scale because I thought “I don’t want to gain anything”. I had heard from many others before “I gained weight, I gained weight”.

In Germany, the main, hot meal is consumed for lunch whereas dinner only consists of bread, deli meats and cheese. Conversely, in New Zealand, lunch consists of a small meal whereas dinner is considered the main meal of the day. Christina tried to adjust to this schedule initially but had to revert to her home meal times upon finding that “*a full meal every evening was just too much*”. It appeared as if her host family understood this as the host mother even prepared meals for her to heat up the next day for lunch. In turn, this meant that Christina would not take part in the consumption of mundane dinners on a regular basis due to feeling constrained by those prescribed times. Similar to many other au pairs, Christina also did not want to fully adhere to the host family’s meal time schedule for fear of gaining weight. Nadine was one participant who was actively trying to lose weight at the time of the interview during her sojourn. She would visit the gym regularly and had cut down on her food consumption dramatically to lose weight before her return to Germany. In line with Christina, she associates her weight gain with the need to adhere to the host family’s meal time schedule and the change in her consumption practices while living with the host family:

I’ve put on so much weight here [laughs]. [...] Well I’m quite used to having dinners at night or in the evenings, warm, because we, I used to eat warm in the evenings too. But I wasn’t eating much in Germany, I just had breakfast and dinner, nothing in between really and we never had, we never really had chips or cookies at home. Now with kids in the house, there are biscuits, chocolates, everything around so I wasn’t used to it. I was like, “oh yes, so nice”, I’m having biscuits every day and then the bread, I would eat a whole lot of bread in Germany but the bread here is so totally different and I had heaps of bread, all this just really toast stuff, and I think I’ve put a lot of weight on through that too. [...] [laughs] I put on 10 kilos!

Being used to consuming hot dinners, Nadine put her weight gain down to the availability of snacks throughout the day and the consumption of toast instead of nutritious bread. In contrast to Christina, she did take part in all family meal times when living with the

host family and took her weight gain in her stride, even (self-) consciously laughing about it. However, one participant in this research clearly stood out from the rest due to her explicit unwillingness to adapt to the host family's routines and meal consumption practices: Melanie left New Zealand after only completing three months of her twelve-month sojourn, during which she had gained more than twelve kilograms. The following excerpt clearly demonstrates her "disappointment" in the whole sojourn experience which is closely tied to the mundane consumption practices of the host family:

And the problem is I have those prescribed times, when they have to eat. And that was really bad, and another really, really bad part was: I gained 12 kg's! [...] I think even more, I think I ate a lot, because of all the stress and the kids were hungry at specific times, they have to have morning tea at 11, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and you eat in the mornings, and you are just eating all day and you are at home all day in the kitchen, which drove me insane. But I am pretty positive that I will lose that in Germany again. [...] I can't wait to go back to Germany and eat German food again, I really miss that a lot. [...] I also miss just bread with Salami, you know? Because if you eat toast with salami, afterwards you're still super hungry. And then you just keep eating more and more, which is different to eating proper bread. Um, I do find that terrible, yes. What else do I find bad? How they eat here, they eat so many raisins, even the kids. I just don't understand how they live here in New Zealand, I don't like it at all. I don't even want to adapt! I do so, yes, but I'm happy to go back to Germany and live my life. So I can buy what I want. Then I can do what I want and can leave the house when I like. I just can't explain it. It's just really not, what I want to do. [...] Not at all, it really was a great disillusion and disappointment.

Melanie's experience is an isolated case and truly unique in that she was negative about the whole au pair experience. Melanie initially tried to adapt to the host family but in all honesty knew that she did not "even want to adapt" because from the beginning she could not "understand how they live here in New Zealand". Despite Christina and Nadine mentioning that they felt constrained in their consumption practices at times, they either took part in (some) of the host family's mundane consumption practices or tried to integrate both home and host consumption practices into their daily lives. However, Melanie could not "wait to go back to Germany and eat German food again" and where she could "buy what I want" and "do what I want". For her, taking part in and adhering to the host family's prescribed meal times and eating host foods was such a great constraint that it led her to cut short her sojourn and return to Germany. Despite being open-minded at first and aspiring to present an adventurous self, Melanie portrayed the most extreme version of a reserved self. As can be seen, whereas most accounts of sharing mundane consumption practices with their hosts were seen as intercultural exchange and regarded as a learning experience, this shared

mundane consumption of foods on a daily basis also led to certain constraints. This was not only the case for au pairs during their sojourn but also a post-return experience.

Having lived abroad, independent from the home family, some au pairs saw adhering to their home family's consumption practices as constraining. As established in past research, the aim of young consumers undertaking an international sojourn is to gain independence and establish their own individual self-project (L. Brown, 2009; L. Brown & Graham, 2009; Searle & Ward, 1990). Sabrina had not only gained independence but had also got to know a very healthy lifestyle in her host family which she planned on continuing at home. However, upon her return home, she realised that this was quite difficult:

Yeah, but my parents are still like, mh, not so healthy but yeah, I don't know [laughs], just different. So sometimes I just cook for myself and yeah, go food shopping and buy more stuff that I want like fruit, I don't know. So yeah, I try to, yeah as I said before, try to have a mixture of both lives.

Sabrina had to realise that her home family would not eat as healthily as her host family, thereby constraining her in continuing her newly adopted healthier lifestyle which ultimately resulted in her shopping for and preparing her own meals. Here, re-entering the shared mundane home consumption practices caused the constraint of not being able “to have a mixture of both lives”. Tinka explains the issues with her re-integration into the home family and the adherence to the home family's consumption practices in the following way:

And yeah, it was also, living again with my parents was weird because you're just not used to it anymore, to always tell them what you're doing and where you're going. [...] I mean for the last 8 months I just did whatever I wanted. Yeah, I didn't always have to tell everyone “I'm going there and I'm going to be back home at that time and I'm going with that person and that person” and I don't know, it's just weird to tell again what you're doing and where you're going, yeah. [...] Mh, now I'm somehow back in that role [of being a daughter] because it just, you don't have to do it [cook] here because they do it for you but that's what's getting really on my nerves because I'm just really used to doing everything on my own and being independent. But at home it's hard to do that, especially if you're living with your parents.

The above account has already been used to illustrate the struggle of re-integration into the home culture when elaborating on participants' belongingness to Generation Y (Part One of the findings). For Tinka, moving back in with the home parents was “weird” because she had been able to live her life independently whilst sojourning abroad. Despite living with the host family and being integrated in their mundane everyday life, she was still regarded as an adult and care-taker in this situation compared to her role of the daughter at home. In Tinka's eyes, being served food and consuming meals at certain times with her home family

was “*getting really on my nerves*” because she had gained great independence during her sojourn. Many au pairs felt the same way when it came to the re-integration into the home family and regarded adhering to shared meal times as limiting, due to their newly gained independence.

4.6.2.5. Re-Acculturation through Consumption of Mundane Foods

Despite constraints experienced by the sojourning au pairs upon re-entry into the home culture and family, particular family meal consumption practices seem to actually ease the transition and re-integration back into the home. The longitudinal design of this research allows for the investigation of not only the *anticipated* re-integration and re-acculturation in the home but also for the exploration of the *actual* re-entry and transition and how this might be facilitated by the use of food products and consumption practices.

Prior to their return to the home country, participants acknowledged that they were looking forward to consuming particular home foods. Jessica states: “*I look forward to German food. Like some things you just don’t have here, I haven’t had for a year. [...] I’m looking forward to that.*” This general sense of looking forward to German food products was evident in all of the participants’ accounts. Celina was one who had a particular food item in mind when thinking about her return home: “*Oh I thought about, I ask her [mother] if she could send me Spaetzle but I thought “no, I will have that when I come back home”. It’s something I can look forward to. Because I really like Spaetzle.*” In the interviews conducted during their sojourns, both Jessica and Celina expressed their thoughts on foods they looked forward to. However, other participants had thought a lot about particular German foods that they looked forward to throughout their sojourn, and they made specific “*food list[s]*” as seen in Jasmin’s account during and after her sojourn:

Jasmin, interview during sojourn: *I have a whole list what I’m going to eat, even though I want to lose weight, but I want to eat a Currywurst, I want to eat breads, I want to have white yoghurt with nothing in it. I’ve really missed melon. [...] My grandma’s coming for a whole week and she’s going to cook everything I want. [...] Well she has her specific recipes, she always does, and she promised me she’d do our Christmas dinner for me when I come back. So Rinderouladen [beef roll-ups] and Rotkohl [red cabbage] and Kloesse [wheat balls], just because I really missed it.*

Jasmin, interview post-sojourn: *Bolognese [spaghetti bolognese], then we had Zwiebel-Schnitzel [Schnitzel with onions], Rotkohl, Kohlroulade und Kloesse [red cabbage, cabbage rolls and dough balls] and everything I wanted to have. So I was just telling her “Grandma I want that, and this and you have to cook this and this and this”.*

And she did, she made all of it for you?

Yes she did and all cakes and cookies, yeah.

Jasmin's account illustrates how she anticipated consuming certain foods her grandmother would prepare upon her return home. Once back in the home country, Jasmin's grandmother indeed prepared many dishes for her that they consumed together whilst she was visiting for a week. Those seemingly ordinary meals that participants were used to prior to their sojourn allowed them to re-integrate into the home post-sojourn. In addition, those foods took on a special role in providing them with the necessary tools to transition back into the home. This was particularly evident in both Jessica and Anna's accounts:

Jessica: It was the weekend when I came home so the next day it was a Sunday and we spent it all together. And I, at some stage it felt like I never really was away. We were sitting at the breakfast and it was like, it was the same breakfast, we had Broetchen [bread rolls] and butter for breakfast like we have every Sunday and we had this every Sunday before I left, and we do have this because we came home, every Sunday we do have this breakfast, so it felt like I was never away. And we had a special lunch that day that I ordered from New Zealand because I said "I want German food so can you please prepare some German food when I come home for lunch on Sunday". [...]

Oh nice! And you had told your parents before already that you wanted that?

Yes, because I never had that [dish] during my time in New Zealand. I really like that food and it's something that we only have on Sunday's so I said I want something special when I come home on a Sunday and I want this for, and my mum said "okay I'm going to prepare this for you when you come home". And the following week she had to go to work that week, but she bought all the stuff and I cooked all my favourite meals during the following week. Like some kind of special chicken with curry, and another German food called Schaschlik and all this stuff that I hadn't had for a year in New Zealand I cooked it myself and had it that week. So that was a really happy week coming home after New Zealand having all my special, having all my favourite food.

Like Jessica, Anna also discussed how sharing the typical German weekend breakfast with her home family and friends made her feel like she "hadn't been away for a year". Consuming this meal with home others upon the return home seems thereby to ease the transition, re-integration and re-acculturation back into the home. As illustrated earlier, the German weekend breakfast is a time where the family gathers together, in line with Cappellini and Parsons' (2012) understanding of weekend meals. Upon the return home, participants are immediately transported back into their old, pre-sojourn life by actively participating in this mundane family consumption practice. For both Anna and Jessica, it appears as if this provides great relief and comfort to know that nothing "really change[d]" while they were away. The relationships and bonds that existed pre-sojourn had remained

stable and through the shared consumption of this Sunday breakfast, they were able to re-enter the home where they had left off a year before. This mundane consumption practice and the foods au pair sojourners were looking forward to thereby act as re-acculturation forces, easing the transition back into the familiar home by allowing them to ‘continue where they left off’ before the sojourn. Despite challenges or constraints mentioned above, consuming familiar meals and undertaking familiar mundane consumption practices with home family and friends was crucial for successful re-acculturation post-sojourn.

Based on the findings in this section, it appears as if the sharing of mundane meals does provide important opportunities for intercultural exchange and multi-directional cultural adaptation between au pair and host family. Sharing mundane meals with the host family allows the au pairs to experience the host culture whilst they are also able to introduce the host family to their mundane home consumption practices. Additionally, sharing mundane home meals with home others appears to transform some mundane consumption activities into extraordinary consumption experiences. Further, some au pairs created rituals around the consumption of mundane meals to recreate and embed home practices into the host culture. However, despite the positives of sharing mundane meals between two cultures, challenges might arise which, if severe, can lead to the cessation of the sojourn and issues with the re-integration into the home. Nevertheless, the successful re-acculturation into the home was often achieved through the shared consumption of mundane foods and re-enactment of mundane family consumption practices post-sojourn.

4.6.3. Extraordinary Production and Consumption

The previous two sections have provided unique insights into the mundane production and consumption that sojourning au pairs experience during their sojourn. However, most au pairs participate in both ordinary and extraordinary family food consumption practices which include taking part in the host family’s celebrations, particularly Christmas. In addition, many au pairs shared holiday food consumption practices with other au pairs.

4.6.3.1. “A Way In” – Collectively Shaping Host Family Rituals

It is usually difficult for outsiders to take part in family celebrations unless they have some ties to the family as is the case for girlfriends or boyfriends in Wallendorf and Arnould’s (1991) study of Thanksgiving Day. In an acculturation context, Thompson and Tambyah (1999) found that expatriate professionals are included in local cultural events only on rare occasions which for them, stand out “as the apotheosis of their traveling stories” (p.

226). Whereas it is easier for an outsider or guest to take part in extraordinary rather than mundane consumption practices (Cappellini & Parsons, 2012; Holttinen, 2014), this inclusion is still not guaranteed to every sojourner. However, for au pairs who take part in the everyday production and consumption of mundane meals, being included by the host family in local special events appears to be the norm. Jessica explains how inclusion in the host family's Christmas celebrations made her feel more at home within the host family:

Christmas especially was a very big day. So all the family came together. [...] And that was another time when I really felt part of the family. Because Christmas was like a family celebration and they just accepted me as one of them. And I never, never really felt like being [left] out.

The au pair, essentially an outsider, is included in the Christmas ritual that is usually reserved for immediate family members. As established by Wallendorf and Arnould (1991), sharing special meals strengthens bonds within the family. Therefore, this seemingly overt inclusion of the au pair into this practice covertly displays how many au pairs are regarded as an integral part of the family. For one of the participants, Nadine, taking part in this family celebration played an even greater role as her biological parents are divorced and she spends "Christmas day with one of them and then go[es] to the other one [the next day]". However, her host family "had a big family event going on which was nice and different from what I have". In this particular case, being included in the host family at this special time of year made Nadine nostalgic for the family Christmases of her childhood before her parents' divorce (Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012).

In addition to taking part in the host family's celebrations, some au pairs were also actively involved in shaping this family event. Initiated by the host family to counter any homesickness that might arise during the holiday season, Saskia and her host family prepared a traditional German dinner for Christmas Eve:

My family sent me for Christmas 'Lebkuchen', uhm, gingerbread, and a Stollen. [...] Yeah, so typical Christmas. [...]

So did that make you, especially at Christmas, did it make you miss home for Christmas?

Not really because I was, like, because it was summer here and it was hot and so different, I didn't really feel like Christmas, it was just like a random other festival or something, just not Christmas and so I didn't get into the Christmas spirit, so I didn't miss it really. It was alright, not too bad, I expected that I'm going to be homesick for that time but... [laughs] [...] Yeah, it was quite nice because my host family was trying to make me a Christmas which is like a little bit in Germany so that I'm not going to be homesick. So for example we had, we [host family] never have a Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve but this time we had one because actually in Germany you have

everything on Christmas Eve. So we made that, it was really cool. And yeah, and I shared the gingerbread and the Stollen with them and was quite nice to show them something of German Christmas.

In return for the host family's thoughtfulness, Saskia shared some typical German food products that are essential for a traditional German Christmas celebration with the host family. Saskia was thereby able to retain some of her traditions and feel more comfortable within the host family while the family was able to experience another culture and other traditions through this sharing of food consumption practices (Belk, 2010). Not only is Saskia able to take part in this extraordinary consumption event but she is invited to shape it by reproducing and sharing rituals, traditions and foods from home. This might represent the pivotal inclusion into the local which does not seem possible for any other acculturating group. This was also the case for Nadine where the host family specifically asked her to share "something German" with them for their Christmas lunch:

My host family asked me if I could do something German for the Christmas lunch and I said, "well, we usually have a Christmas dinner so there's nothing in food that I could really make for Christmas lunch". And then I said "I could make a Christmas plate just with German cookies and biscuits", because we used to have them around Christmas every time, so also during Advent. [...] So that's why I also asked my dad if he could send something, to make a plate for them. So I shared it really with the family and introduced them to this German stuff I have usually, to share a little bit of my culture with them. [...] Christmas pudding, which I knew from England because it's English tradition too. But we still celebrated more German Christmas when we lived in London so we celebrated on the 24th and not the 25th in the morning, so that was so different. And then my host mum made some special Christmas cookies too that I'd never had before, that was quite nice, some minty stuff. And then having a lunch really with the whole family and not a dinner, so cold food.

Nadine initially struggled to identify typical, traditional German Christmas foods until she asked her father to send German Christmas cookies and biscuits. On Christmas Day, Nadine and the host family then shared all of the foods that were prepared communally. Saskia and Nadine's cases are representative for many au pairs in that many host families tried to integrate both German and New Zealand traditions for the Christmas season. Thus, Christmas rituals and traditions were mutually shared allowing for both parties (au pair and host family) to gain a cultural understanding of the respective other. Both types of sharing (participating, shaping) extraordinary food consumption brought au pairs and host families closer together, also bridging the gap between the two cultures in the form of being fully integrated in this celebration, something cosmopolitan and nomadic consumers do not seem to be able to achieve (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Cosmopolitan and

nomadic consumers are only able to immerse themselves into the local culture through being proactive (Bardhi, et al., 2012) and/or on invitation of locals to participate in specific rituals, such as a wedding (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). The participants in this thesis are actively involved in shaping extraordinary family meals together with the host family through the sharing of traditions, typical dishes and rituals. For au pairs, this might represent ‘a way in’ to the local culture but through which they can simultaneously “sustain a sense of identity and connections to home through consumption of [...] foods” (Bardhi, et al., 2010, p. 151), particularly when spending traditional family celebrations away from home. Building on Wallendorf and Arnould’s (1991) work, this communal sharing of the family meal for celebrations also manifests and strengthens bonds between au pairs and host families.

4.6.3.2. Intercultural Exchange Amongst Sojourning Others

In addition to preparing and taking part in celebrations with the host family, au pairs also share special meals with other (German) au pairs. Often, this means that au pairs collectively create German meals and dishes that are then shared amongst the au pair group of friends as well as with the host family. This sharing among social networks comprising people from the home country helps mobile consumers not to lose their sense of belonging to the home culture (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Peñaloza, 1989). This was the case for Lotta who had received an advent calendar from her mother, a typical German ritual artefact in most German households in December, leading up to Christmas. Lotta re-created this ritual artefact, the advent calendar, with the help of and in collaboration with other German au pairs to give to her host children:

My Mum, she sent me an advent calendar. Yeah, a self made one with sweets and stuff so that was really nice. And I made one for the kids as well. [...] Yeah, it was a bit of work but I made it together with a few other [German] au pairs. We all made the kids an advent calendar. They knew because the au pair before me made it too. So they knew what it was and they were really happy to have it. I mean since the boys were little they were only allowed to open one, once a day. But yeah, we handled it, it was alright [laughs].

Having been sent an advent calendar by her mother, Lotta was able to maintain this ritual even during the sojourn, providing a strong tie to home for her. The German au pairs then shared in the creation of this ritual artefact and the host children were gifted this traditional German Christmas artefact. For the au pairs, this ritual of making the advent calendars allowed them to demonstrate Christmas practices they were all familiar with from home, thereby recreating home rituals in the host country based on nostalgia for home and

childhood Christmases (Havlena & Holak, 1991; Holak & Havlena, 1998; Zhou, et al., 2012). For the host children, receiving an advent calendar meant that they were able to experience a traditions and rituals from a different culture. This communal sharing allows for the recreation of home rituals whilst also facilitating the intercultural exchange of an extraordinary consumption practice. This was also the case for Tinka, who got together with a German au pair friend to do traditional Christmas baking:

We did some cookies, some Zimtsterne [cinnamon stars] and that. Yeah, that was pretty good. [...] I did it with a friend, she came over, she was also a German and yeah, we made some cookies and then, yeah, but we, like, told the family to try them and they liked it. [...] We already planned with another girl that we really wanted to do it. I know, I mean in Germany you bake so much during the Christmas time and in New Zealand they actually didn't really do it so we just thought we'd have to do some cookies.

For her and her German friend(s), baking during the Christmas period is seen as an essential practice in the time leading up this celebration. Therefore, she wanted to preserve this tradition during her sojourn which in turn would also allow her host family to try out a typical German Christmas artefact, traditional German Christmas cookies. The previous accounts illustrate how participants shared the production of typical special foods with fellow German au pairs and how those foods were then shared with the host families. However, participants would also engage in extraordinary consumption practices with their au pair friends without including the host family. For example, Lotta met up with her au pair friends on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to celebrate:

Yeah, and I saw my au pair friends on the 25th as well so celebrated with them. [...] Yeah, we gave presents as well, but no we didn't make anything special. We'd been to Christmas Eve at the pub, on the 24th in the evening together in Te Kauwhata, and the Christmas Parade. That was really fun. It was weird because we thought on Christmas Eve we're at the pub, but we were all together and that was cool, that was fun. No, not really [anything German to eat] other than having German Christmas cookies together, sent by our mums [laughs].

Lotta participated in her host family's Christmas celebrations, but also spent time with her German au pair friends. They did not specifically engage in any traditional German Christmas rituals but spent the festive season together. They also did not prepare any traditional foods but shared German Christmas cookies that their mothers had baked and sent them. Despite Lotta only mentioning this shared consumption later on in the interview, it does illustrate how some foods can take on a special role for festive consumption practices.

Here, the au pairs “*were all together and that was cool*”, sharing foods that they were all familiar with from home.

Other participants actively tried to befriend au pairs that were not German to be able to learn something about a different culture. Sabrina had quite a few au pair friends from Scandinavia with whom she shared general food products and specific and particular Christmas consumption practices:

My mother sent me chocolate, I think it was 3 kilos chocolate. [...] Yeah, I invited my friends to eat chocolate because I didn't want to eat it alone. [...] And I think it's really good, we can talk, like, we went to the Scandinavian Christmas market last Sunday and then we compared all our traditions, the Christmas traditions, like in Sweden and Denmark and it's really interesting how different everything is. And yeah, then we saw the, yeah, the Danish things and the Swedish things and everything so it was really interesting. So it was really good that we share our experiences, yeah. [...] I think we au pairs, we will have a Christmas party about a few days before Christmas I think. [...] We thought about, like, everybody brings a traditional dish and yeah.

Here, au pairs from different cultures share traditions and rituals typical of Christmas in their respective countries. Sharing “*experiences*” and “*a traditional dish*” with other sojourners allows participants to gain an understanding not only of the host culture but also other cultures that they come in contact with during the sojourn. Certain “*traditional dish[es]*” then act as material acculturation agents, facilitating the exchange of cultural knowledge amongst sojourners. The sharing of festive traditions, foods, and rituals with other sojourners both from home and other countries allows au pairs to anchor themselves in the host country whilst allowing for nostalgia of Christmas celebrations in the past. In addition, the shared production and consumption of Christmas meals and artefacts allows for intercultural exchange between those different parties.

4.7. SECTION III – SUMMARY

This last section of the findings addresses the third research question: *How does the shared production and consumption of foods aid the sojourners' acculturation and re-acculturation process?* Sharing occurred in the form of the production and consumption of ordinary, mundane as well as extraordinary meals. First, it was explored how the joint production of mundane meals allows sojourners and host families alike to share aspects of their respective culture, lets them experience unfamiliar yet country-specific mundane foods, and integrates the sojourner into the host family. The sojourners' production of host meals for

the home post-sojourn allows home others to experience their sojourn retrospectively. Second, it has been established that au pairs are integrated into the host family and country-specific consumption practices of mundane meals, which is not possible for any other mobile consumer group. Sojourners also share home consumption practices with their hosts, introducing them to their country and/or family-specific consumption practices. During the sojourn, some mundane meals and consumption practices are transformed into extraordinary, special occasions with a different cultural context and setting for the sojourner. In addition, limitations of shared consumption practices for sojourners in both host country and home have been illuminated. However, certain particular shared mundane food consumption practices can ease the transition back into the home culture. Third and last, findings on the inclusion of sojourners into extraordinary production and consumption were discussed, in particular with regard to Christmas celebrations. Sojourners not only share those special occasions with their host family but also with other sojourners. Overall, the shared production and consumption of foods aids intercultural exchange and multicultural adaptation (Luedicke, 2011) between sojourner, home and host others and other sojourners.

4.8. FINDINGS SUMMARY

This chapter has detailed the findings of the longitudinal research conducted for this thesis. Each of the three sections was dedicated to one research question. Rich data, mostly from the multiple in-depth interviews conducted at various stages throughout the sojourn experience, was presented and explained in great detail. Rather than only providing exclusively descriptive answers to the three research questions, links to relevant theories and literature to discuss expected and unexpected findings have been incorporated throughout this section. Hence, the aim of this chapter was not only to present raw data and descriptive accounts but also some level of interpretation and discussion. The following Chapter Five will address the overall objective of this research by connecting the findings from all of the three research questions to provide a broader understanding of acculturation agents and forces at play for young, mobile sojourners.

CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Overview

This final chapter reviews and discusses the interpretations of the data presented in the preceding chapter. The overall objective of this thesis was **to explore additional acculturation agents and forces for young, mobile sojourners**. The longitudinal research design (a combination of in-depth interviews, participant observation in the form of shopping with consumers and a supplementary netnography) resulted in the collection of a significant data-set. This section reviews the main findings and discusses the major expected and unexpected theoretical contributions with respect to existing literature. Finally, this chapter provides various implications for theory, practice and methodology, illustrates underlying limitations and highlights ideas and recommendations for future research. Figure 9 depicts the structure of this final discussion and conclusion chapter.

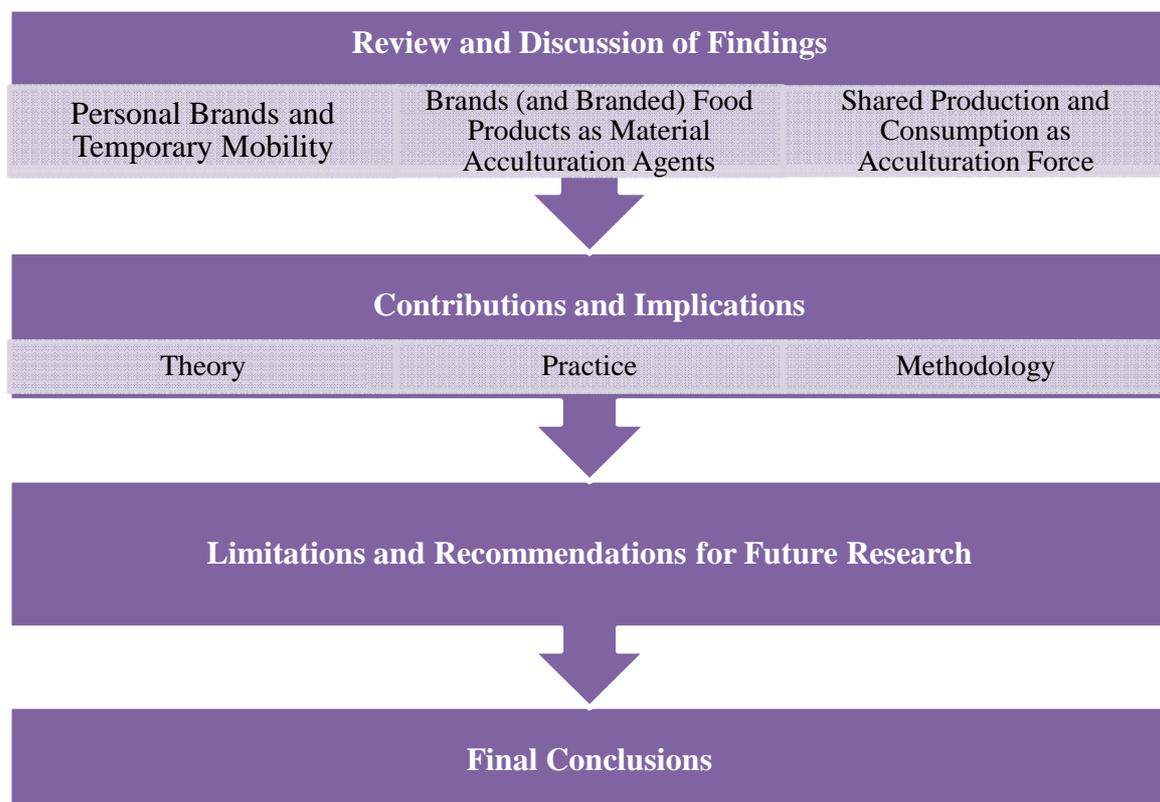


Figure 9: Outline Discussion and Conclusion

5.2. Review and Discussion of Findings

“All the world seems to be on the move” (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 207)

In today’s globalised world, consumers are more mobile than ever. Consumer acculturation studies have long explored the movement of various acculturating groups, focussing particularly on more permanent immigrants. A small but growing number of scholars have explored temporary and flexible sojourners who move more frequently than immigrants, predominantly for work placements abroad. Young consumers need to be on the move, too, necessitated by the need to create unique and individualised life projects that stand out from the crowd when applying for jobs in today’s saturated labour markets. This constant movement brings with it challenges: leaving social networks behind whilst having to acculturate to often unfamiliar surroundings can prove difficult, especially for young sojourners that lack sufficient capital to easily transition from one place of residence to another. In those liminal transition periods, young consumers in particular aim to maintain ties to the home whilst creating and forming new relationships and bonds.

Previous studies have focussed on the importance of possessions in mobility (Mehta & Belk, 1991) and how possession attachment can aid the acculturation process. It appeared surprising that the existing literature had as of yet not focussed on how brands can facilitate consumer acculturation processes since brands have long been regarded as markers of identity that provide meaning to consumers’ lives and define who they are. Therefore, to more fully understand consumer acculturation, particularly of young sojourners, researchers require an understanding of the ways in which brands can act as anchors and safe havens on one hand and potentially ‘a way in’ to the local on the other hand for mobile consumers. The following section discusses the relevance and significance of the findings of this thesis, in light of the three research questions – personal brands in temporary mobility, the ways in which brands can act as material acculturation agents and how shared production and consumption illicit acculturation forces. Subsequently, the section ties the findings together to provide a conceptualisation of young sojourners’ consumer acculturation.

5.2.1. Personal Brands in Temporary Mobility

The findings indicated that young sojourners initially aspired to an adventurous self. However, this shifted to a more reserved self once major differences between home and host brandscapes became apparent. Significant differences included the lack of familiar brands and products, differentiated global brand strategies, and a general dissatisfaction with “the

local” (local branded products and local instantiations of global branded products). The young consumers in this research had not yet acquired sufficient cultural capital to easily transition between diverse marketplaces in the same manner as global nomads or cosmopolitan consumers do (Bardhi & Askegaard, 2008; Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). The paradox between the ideal adventurous self and the actual reserved self can further be explained by looking at the nature of liminal transitions: Young consumers embarking on their first sojourn, considered as an important rite of passage (van Gennep, 1960), aspire to an ideal and hoped-for adventurous self (Markus & Wurf, 1987) to establish their individual life paths (Bauman, 1998a; Hannam, et al., 2006). However, the problem with liminal transitions is their power to cause intense and disruptive effects on individuals’ self-perceptions and their potential to significantly widen the gap between actual and ideal or desired selves, also referred to as self-concept discrepancy (Markus & Wurf, 1987; Noble & Walker, 1997). This thesis illustrates that young consumers experienced this discrepancy during the initial, liminal stages of their sojourn as their prior expectations and actual brandscape differences did not match, which in turn caused them to display and enact their actual reserved self rather than the aspired-to adventurous self.

The liminal transition period, young sojourners’ lack of cultural capital and their reserved self, all worked in concert to result in a reliance on familiar brands from the home for two reasons. First, this reliance on familiar brands was motivated by pragmatic considerations such as price differences, belongingness to Generation Y, and the duration of the stay abroad. Second, this reliance was motivated by emotional reasons which appeared to be even more important than the pragmatic ones. These emotional motivations were:

- 1) the maintenance of the home self, identity and physical appearance;
- 2) the preservation of home routines that stabilise and offer comfort and safety;
- 3) the established and imprinted consumer-brand relationships in the form of committed partnerships, dependencies, addictions and old married couples; and
- 4) the connections personal brands provide in the form of a) portals to the past and child self and b) bridges between home and host country.

Past research on liminal transitions has established that consumers use special possessions such as photographs, stuffed animals, and jewellery to create security blankets (Mehta & Belk, 1991; Noble & Walker, 1997) or identity kits (Goffman, 1961) to feel secure and protect themselves from total identity alienation. Research on consumer-brand relationships (Fournier, 1998), self-brand connections (Escalas & Bettman, 2009), self-

expansion theory (Reimann & Aron, 2009), loved objects (Ahuvia, 2005), and materialism's influence on brand connections (Rindfleisch, et al., 2009) has contributed to the knowledge of how brands can provide a sense of security for consumers. One original contribution of this research is the establishment of how young, mobile consumers use their favourite personal brands to create a branded security blanket so as to feel safe and secure and provide assurance and anchors when navigating an unfamiliar total brandscape during their sojourn. This appears somewhat paradoxical to Cushman's (1990) empty-self model which proposes that mundane goods are supposed to be quickly purchased and just as quickly forgotten. Indeed, participants in this research regarded personal, mundane brands as ordinary, even invisible (Coupland, 2005), prior to their sojourn. However, they realised the critical importance of those personal brands when those were absent from their daily lives, grooming rituals and routines during the sojourn. This is in stark contrast to Bauman's (1998a) understanding of the ideal, good consumer in today's consumer society who should throw habits and routines aside to explore ever changing options. This research suggests that young sojourners use personal brands to create a safe haven and maintain routines in times of constant change.

Further, like indexical possessions (Grayson & Shulman, 2000), personal brands can act as portals to the past-self, especially the child-self, in the home country. Thus they allow for the transportation of past relationships to the new role, like photographs discussed by college students in Noble and Walker's (1997) research. In addition, personal brands can act as bridges connecting home and host country by symbolically representing the home in the same way that trinkets and keepsakes can create this connection (Mehta & Belk, 1991). This reliance on particular items, specifically personal brands, from the home presents a major difference to the understanding of global nomads who value immateriality and short-term attachment to virtual, functional, flexible possessions in a liquid world (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Bauman, 2000). For young sojourners, the relationships with certain personal brands from the home, whether local branded products or local instantiations of global brands, are solid, concrete and irreplaceable mainly due to the knowledge of the ephemeral nature of the sojourn and the resultant imminent return to the home.

A further contribution of this thesis is the conceptualisation of young sojourners' heavy reliance on those relationships to personal brands in temporary mobility to remind themselves of who they are (Belk, 1988; Liu, et al., 2012; Mittal, 2006; Noble & Walker, 1997; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988), ease transition pain (McAlexander & Schouten, 1989; 1992; McAlexander, et al., 1993) and create a feeling of safety and normality (Ilmonen, 2001; Shove, 2003). Informants in this research see certain personal brands as extensions of their

selves which aid the solving of arising life themes. It needs to be acknowledged that those solid, concrete relationships with personal brands indeed tether and restrict young sojourners (for example through the display of a reserved self), which is one reason why global nomads value objects for their instrumental use-value (Bardhi, et al., 2012). However, young sojourners have not yet needed to acquire a mobile, flexible lifestyle in the same way as global nomads have. Participants in this research have only just left the family nest (Marchant & O'Donohoe, 2014) and still rely heavily on parental input and emotional connections to the home. A shift to becoming a global nomad might occur after consumers have engaged in frequent mobility rather than after their first stay abroad. The informants in this research acknowledge that tourists, young sojourners and more permanent immigrants possess different connections to home personal brands: sojourns, such as those of the informants, seem to necessitate a reliance on home brands due to the fixed time frame of the experience.

This research also provides insights into consumer-brand relationships in temporary mobility. Young sojourners had acquired a select few brands as loved objects (Ahuvia, 2005) prior to the sojourn. Committed partnerships (Fournier, 1998) marked by the dedication to stay together despite adverse challenges were uncovered in this research. An extension to the definition of a committed partnership to explain this type of consumer-brand relationship in an acculturation context was needed. This research has established that a committed partnership between a consumer and a brand can cross geographical boundaries and help facilitate the temporary relocation to a different brandscape, whilst also negotiating the liminal life stage of the sojourn. Stronger versions of Fournier's (1998) dependencies were also found: some young sojourners had established addictions to certain brands, hence, were engaged in an obsessive relationship with those brands. However, this research found that temporary mobility can help consumers shed burdening relationships and relieve the pain of being closely tied to a certain brand, opening up avenues for new and healthier consumer-brand relationships during or post-sojourn. A temporary sojourn can thereby act as a rehabilitation and recovery period. Lastly, the findings provided evidence of another relationship type, termed old married couple: participants relied on certain personal brands due to their common history and longevity and duration of the relationship. Unlike casual friends/buddies, those brands were used on a regular basis but lacked the deep emotional commitment found in committed partnerships or positive rewards received from best friendships (Fournier, 1998). The old married couple is a cosy, comfortable, low-maintenance long-term bond that can make consumer decision making easier in times of transition.

Another original contribution to theory is the extension of Fournier (1998) and Alvarez and Fournier's (2012) research on brand flings. Brand flings are filled with post-termination feelings of shame and regret, however, this research suggests that young sojourners engage in (more or less) temporary relationships with local brands or local instantiations of global brands without displaying these negative feelings. In this study, this usually occurred further along in the sojourn when informants had shed some aspects of their actual reserved self and made attempts to establish a more adventurous self. Three types of relationships unfolded during the sojourn, namely holiday romances, doomed love affairs and rekindled friendships whilst a fourth one, termed temporary travel companionship, might even extend beyond the sojourn. Table 11 in Chapter Four has provided definitions for each one of those relationship types.

This research found that the mundane everyday consumption of young sojourners' personal brands does change in various ways, but often regrettably so, hence the reliance on familiar personal brands from home. Nevertheless, despite the possession of a more reserved self, some young sojourners did engage in (temporary) relationships with local brands. Overall, this first research question focussed on the individual consumers and their relationships with and reliance on personal brands in temporary mobility. Figure 9 provides a summary of the key insights that were discussed above. Concepts highlighted in green are related to home personal brands whereas those in red refer to host personal brands.



Figure 10: Personal Brands in Temporary Mobility

5.2.2. Brands and (Branded) Food Products as Material Acculturation

Agents

Another major contribution of this thesis is that certain brands and (branded) food products can act as material acculturation agents. Two types of gifting took place between mobile sojourners, static home others and receiving host others: 1) giving and receiving of gifts at the start, during, end of the sojourn and post-return, and 2) shipping care packages between home and host country and vice versa. Both types of gifting revolved around the giving or shipping of branded products or other mundane items. The two most important findings addressing the overall broad objective of this research are elaborated on in the following section.

An original contribution of this research is that giving (branded) food products as gifts allows for the portrayal of different versions of me and self, the integration into the local and the overall creation, establishment, manifestation, maintenance and modification of social bonds and relationships between various players. Certain branded food products (e.g. German Haribo candy and New Zealand Pineapple Lumps chocolate) can be regarded as country-specific artefacts. Gordon (1986) established that local products, such as indigenous foods

and food paraphernalia, are one category of souvenirs and may be purchased as souvenir gifts for home others. This was seen in the accounts of young sojourners prior to their return home. However, rather than seeking out indigenous foods they purchased branded food products as country-specific artefacts that carry deeper meaning and embody the essence of what is typical of New Zealand to gift to home others. It was also revealed that usually, at the beginning of the sojourn, au pairs and host families gifted (branded) food products that are typical of their respective countries. Those products took on the role of the ritual artefact for the gift giving ritual (Rook, 1985) between au pair sojourner and host family. (Branded) food products gifted between both parties allowed for the portrayal of their respective cultural heritage, background and country-specific identities. Sojourners used those country-specific artefacts to portray their German me, regional me, private home me and home family me whereas host families were able to present their New Zealand self. Sojourners receiving New Zealand (branded) food products thereby gained an easier entrance into the local culture whereby the (branded) food products effectively acted as material acculturation agents through offering a glimpse into the local to the outsider. Conversely, the German (branded) food products received by host families acted as reverse material acculturation agents providing them with insights into the sojourners' cultural as well as personal background. Most importantly though, the gifting of (branded) food products as country-specific artefacts that represent aspects of me and self allowed for the creation and establishment of social bonds and relationships, the most critically important function of gift-giving (Belk, 1996; Carrier, 1990; Mauss, 1969; Schwartz, 1967), especially at the beginning of the sojourn. In addition, presenting (branded) food products as country-specific artefacts and gifts post-return, like tourists' gifting typical souvenirs (Belk, 1997; B. Gordon, 1986), allowed for the maintenance and modification of relationships with home others as those products portrayed the sojourners' New Zealand me and private sojourner me. Overall, the gifting of (branded) food products as country-specific artefacts provided recipients the opportunity to hyperexperience the giver's home culture, another way in which those (branded) food products can act as material acculturation agents. Hyperexperience in this thesis was demonstrated to be an empathetic (re-)creation of the other's history and background, allowing the recipient of a country-specific artefact to take on the giver's version of reality and experiences.

Another contribution of this thesis is the focus on the global movement of care packages (Sheller & Urry, 2006). The findings indicated that certain (branded) food products can act as inanimate proxies or stand-ins for absent loved ones. This was a particularly

interesting finding in the context of this study as the young sojourners ventured abroad alone for the first time, without the support of traditional acculturation agents (such as family and peers) (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Lindridge, et al., 2004; Peñaloza, 1989, 1994). Parents, particularly mothers, shipped (branded) food products to their daughters to provide moral and emotional support, to counter possible homesickness, and to help make new connections in the host country. Absent loved ones thereby extended their selves into those (branded) food products (Belk, 1988), transcended geographical distances and became part of the sojourn experience. Conversely, young sojourners also used (branded) food products as proxies or stand-ins to ‘keep up’ with home others by virtually taking part in, for example, gatherings by home friends that they could not physically attend. This shows another way in which particular (branded) food products can be regarded as material acculturation agents, acting on behalf of absent loved ones in easing the liminal transition for the sojourner and allowing absent sojourners to remain part of home social networks. As materials (or travelling objects) are constantly on the move (Hannam, et al., 2006), those findings are applicable to wider groups of mobile consumers who engage in the shipment of care packages. The understanding that consumers can extend themselves into branded products which then act as proxies or stand-ins for absent loved ones represent a contribution to theory, particularly consumer acculturation studies and the new mobilities paradigm (Sheller & Urry, 2006).

This research established that gifting can facilitate the sojourn in various ways, as extensively elaborated on in Chapter Four. Most importantly, Luedicke’s (2011) call to disentangle the influence of material acculturation agents was addressed. It was established that (branded) food products can act as material acculturation agents in two significant ways (see Figure 10): 1) as country-specific artefacts, and 2) as proxies or stand-ins for absent loved ones.

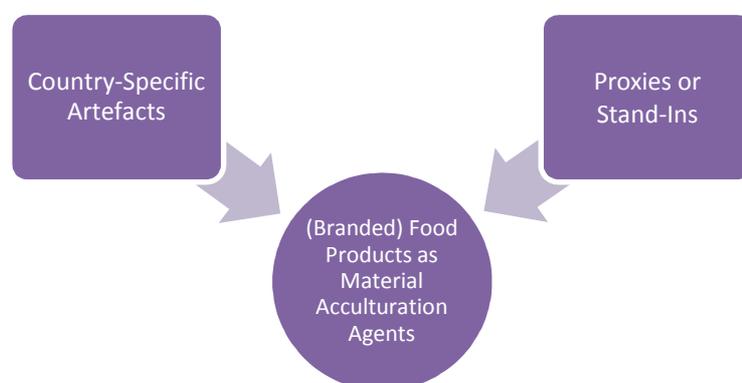


Figure 11: (Branded) Food Products as Material Acculturation Agents

5.2.3. Shared Production and Consumption as Acculturation Forces

In addition, the findings of this thesis lend themselves to the broader field of research on consumption and in particular, mundane consumption. Previous research has extensively studied extraordinary, special consumption and consumption practices in both the stable home context and the acculturation context (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). Only recently has research interest in exploring mundane consumption, in particular mundane meal time consumption practices, increased (Cappellini & Parsons, 2012; Holttinen, 2014). However, there is a lack of research into the shared production and consumption of (mundane) meals in temporary mobility (see Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012 for an exception).

With particular relevance to this research, the findings illustrated how the sharing of mundane meals (Belk, 2010; Cappellini & Parsons, 2012; Holttinen, 2014) allowed for a deeper integration into the host family and culture during the sojourn experience, which is not as easily achievable for other types of mobile consumers. Taking part in the production and consumption of mundane meals within the host family unit further manifested the sojourners' role of an integral member of the family rather than a guest or outsider, which is in stark contrast to prior studies on au pairs in sociology (Búriková & Miller, 2010; R. Cox & Narula, 2003).

Producing and sharing home family meal time favourites allowed young sojourners to share elements of their self and childhood with host others (Baker, et al., 2005). This provided host others with the opportunity to taste and experience foods unique to one cultural or personal background. Like the German branded food products discussed in the previous section, young sojourners' food creations acted as reverse acculturation forces. The production of meals based on family recipes provided a connection to the home and nostalgic associations for the young sojourners (Vignolles & Pichon, 2014), making them feel more secure and safe in the host context. This can be closely related to the way in which branded security blankets provide comfort and safety. Here, home meals produced in the host country ease the acculturation process and thereby act as an additional acculturation force.

The findings also showed the importance of shared consumption of mundane home foods with home others (for example other young sojourners) in the host country. Consumption practices regarded as mundane in the home (for example weekend breakfasts) were elevated to extraordinary consumption events due to the infrequency of those rituals and limited availability of accompanying foods. Again, those mundane products (such as German

bread) are regarded as ordinary and invisible (Coupland, 2005) in the home but attain extraordinary, special status in the host country through their shared consumption with home others. Creating rituals, such as weekly gatherings with others from the home, around particular meal consumption practices further elevated mundane meals to becoming extraordinary meals. Being able to rely on those rituals provided a sense of security within home social networks (Askegaard, et al., 2005) and paradoxically, a feeling of belongingness in the host culture for young sojourners, which is another way in which shared consumption acts as an acculturation force.

Being invited to take part in special celebrations represents the apotheosis of expatriates' travelling stories (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Young sojourners in this research were not only able to participate in extraordinary consumption activities and events (for example Christmas) but were even actively involved in shaping them. Recent literature has highlighted how being invited as a guest to mundane meal consumption practices illustrates the inclusion into the family unit, at least temporarily (Cappellini & Parsons, 2012). However, for young first-time sojourners, being able to take part in and shape extraordinary consumption practices appears to be a pivotal highlight of their sojourn. On one hand, learning about traditions and rituals and trying out particular festive foods and food consumption practices provided 'a way in' to the local culture for young sojourners and made them feel deeply embedded in it. On the other hand, sharing home country and home family festive dishes and rituals allowed for the maintenance of familiar traditions whilst being able to introduce host others to the ways in which they celebrate special occasions. Here, sharing (producing, consuming, shaping) festive rituals, particularly festive meals and dishes, acts as a further acculturation force and one through which intercultural exchange and multicultural adaptation (Luedicke, 2011) is guaranteed.

The richness of the longitudinal design of this research allowed for the exploration of the re-entry into the home country post-sojourn. Contrary to one-off snapshots of acculturating groups, this research was able to explore the entire sojourn experience from start to finish. Consequently, the research revealed how the mundane consumption of foods and the sharing of meals facilitated the re-acculturation process. Eating and sharing family favourites post-return not only virtually (Baker, et al., 2005) but also physically transported young sojourners back to their childhood and pre-sojourn self. Mundane food products and mundane consumption practices thereby act as re-acculturation forces allowing facilitating the transition into the home and the past self.

This research established that the sharing of mundane meals and foods in both home and host countries can ease the acculturation and re-acculturation process for young sojourners. Sharing in (Belk, 2010; Widlock, 2004) through being integrated in the production and consumption of mundane and special meals in the host country allows young sojourners to be included within the aggregated self (Belk, 2010) of host others, in this context the host family. Allowing young sojourners to enter the aggregated self of the host family unit might provide all the family members with a shared sense of self (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005), which allows for an easier sharing of common mundane and special meals.

5.2.4. Personal Brandscapes and Young Sojourners' Consumer Acculturation

The previous sections have drawn the reader's attention to the main findings of this thesis. It was shown how personal brands are essential for young sojourners in times of temporary mobility, how branded products can act as material acculturation agents and how sharing the production and consumption of mundane and extraordinary meals is seen as an acculturation force. On a broader level, the findings highlight how brands can provide security and facilitate relationships in mobility. Safety and the feeling of belongingness are fundamental, interpersonal human needs which are particularly important in times of transition where individuals' social networks are shaken up, challenged and disconnected.

First, this thesis established that brands provide an anchor and safe haven for individuals in mobility. Young consumers on the move, living and working away from established social networks, rely on familiar brands for their power to provide comfort, security and safety. When young mobile consumers enter foreign surroundings without prior knowledge of the (consumer) cultural environment, the status of seemingly mundane brands is elevated and sojourners' personal brandscapes take up a crucial role in portraying their life projects and important aspects of self. In mobility, certain brands are also symbolic markers of sojourners' past and childhood experiences. This deviates from prior understandings of mobile consumers and their attachment to special possessions (such as photographs and jewellery) and sheds light on how commercial, material objects can play such a pivotal role in mobile consumers' lives. Brands are also bridges, connecting two places of residence and thereby easing the transition from one to the other. Times of transition can be challenging: this thesis has found that brands can aid individual mobile consumers in multiple ways, thereby addressing the fundamental need for safety and well-being.

Secondly, brands facilitate and aid social bonds and relationships in mobility. Certain inanimate, material objects can act as proxies or stand-ins for absent loved ones: this allows mobile consumers to maintain ties to home social networks (for example family and friends) whilst allowing members of these networks to become part of the sojourn experience. Brands further aid intercultural exchange by portraying specific aspects of one culture to members of another culture: Especially through the gifting and sharing of branded food products can consumers form close social ties to others where the exchange of cultural knowledge, rituals and artefacts further enhances those ties. Brands can thereby aid the need for belongingness through their power to create and establish, modify, maintain and manifest social bonds and relationships.

5.3. Research Contributions

The following section highlights the contributions this research makes to academic knowledge, particularly consumer acculturation and brandscapes, presents the implications for practice and highlights the methodological contributions.

5.3.1. Contributions to Theory

Overall, this thesis has addressed the gap it set out to explore which was to intergrate and extend the extant literature on consumer acculturation and brandscapes. This research has extended existing theory and provided contributions to the creation of new theory in various ways.

Extant research has focussed on consumer-brand relationships, self-brand connections, immigrants' reliance on favourite possessions during liminal transitions, and global nomads' liquid relationships to possessions in isolation. This research moves the field forward because it is the first to establish linkages between those streams of work. This research has extended existing theory in those fields by exploring how personal brands impact on the consumer acculturation of young sojourners. Consumers' reliance on personal brands in times of transition provides new insights into the otherwise saturated field of consumer acculturation. The development of the concepts of branded security blankets, young sojourners' solid and concrete (rather than liquid) relationships to personal brands and mobility-specific consumer-brand relationships sheds new light on temporary sojourns. In addition, focussing on 'the mundane' provides relevant new insights since consumer acculturation studies have predominantly focussed on special consumption in times of transition.

Prior consumer acculturation studies have focussed on the four traditional acculturation agents (Lindridge, et al., 2004; O'Guinn, et al., 1985; Peñaloza, 1989) and transnational consumer culture as a recent addition (Askegaard, et al., 2005). In contrast, the current research has addressed Luedicke's (2011) call to identify more distant human and non-cultural acculturation forces, material acculturation agents and "the role of (unwillingly) shared consumption resources for multi-directional cultural adaptation" (p. 236). Thereby, one further original contribution of this thesis is the proposition that brands can indeed act as material acculturation agents, at least during temporary mobility, in the form of country-specific artefacts and inanimate proxies or stand-ins for absent loved ones.

This thesis further responds to Belk's (2010) call to explore the sharing of mundane meals. Focusing on an acculturation context where individuals from different cultural

backgrounds share a household extends recent research on sharing meals within stable single-household, home contexts (Cappellini & Parsons, 2012; Holttinen, 2014). It has been established how the shared production and consumption of mundane, as well as extraordinary, meals can act as an acculturation force for young sojourners: the shared production and consumption allows for the creation and maintenance of social bonds and relationships between sojourner and locals.

Prior research has predominantly explored permanent immigrants' acculturation processes and in increasing frequency the consumer acculturation of temporary sojourners (Bardhi, et al., 2012; Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). Sojourners are an interesting group to investigate: unlike tourists, sojourners do not only experience the honeymoon period in the host but are embedded, temporarily, in the local culture. Additionally, they differ from immigrants in the sense that they want and need to retain close ties to the home due to an imminent and impending return to it. Surprisingly, young sojourners that lack economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and social support (as provided by, for example, migrating parents) have not been explored extensively. By investigating young, mobile consumers' first solo sojourn, this thesis has shed light on the ways in which those young sojourners might become part of the future global elite.

5.3.2. Implications for Practice

This thesis provides various implications for marketing practitioners. As indicated by the findings, branded food products can act as country-specific artefacts. Just at the start of 2015, the German brand Haribo (mentioned regularly by participants in this research) started selling a special edition of their traditional gummy bears called "Happy Germany" in Duty Free Shops at German airports, hence emphasising tourists as the target market (Kyle, 2015). Other companies could follow suit by adapting their branded products as country-specific artefacts and highlighting the branded product's suitability as a souvenir. This would allow for an expansion of the target market and also for the establishment of national brands. Without taking an approach as extreme as manufacturing special souvenir versions of branded food products, companies selling local products could create country-specific marketing communication for certain branded food products incorporating elements of the country-of-origin (as for example seen in an advertising campaign by Tasti in New Zealand (Fahy, 2013)). This might persuade consumers in the country-of-origin (Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver, 2010b) to regard the branded food product as a suitable gift for outsiders, whether for visitors going abroad or when shipping care packages to loved ones in other countries.

Companies selling their branded products worldwide might want to emphasise the availability of their offerings in multiple countries, hence, assuring consumers of the worldwide availability of their favourite brands.

In addition, the findings of this thesis appear relevant for supermarkets in general and country specialist retailers in particular. The findings indicate that there is a market for branded products from other countries, whether in the form of speciality stores (such as the German bakery noted in the findings) or dedicated international aisles in supermarkets. Carrying branded products from one specific or multiple countries allows for targeting a wider circle of customers who might either be visiting temporarily or living permanently, in the destination country (immigrants and locals). The findings around the reliance on familiar brands provide further insights for companies exploring options of expansion into foreign markets: it appears that there are opportunities and demands from the market. As illustrated in the findings, adapting a diversification global brand strategy might lead to confusion for mobile consumers who might mistake the original product for a fake or me-too product due to a change in, for example, packaging and brand name. It appears that young consumers especially prefer consistent brand attributes; hence the recommendation for marketers would be to adopt a standardised strategy for their global brand products aimed at this age group.

The findings on care packages, particularly, provide interesting insights for marketing practitioners. For example, in the US, carepackages.com offers customised care packages for college students who have moved out of the family home. Parents and friends can order ready-made care packages containing a variety of branded food products and have them shipped directly to their absent loved one. Opportunities exist to expand the offer to include other recipient groups (migrants, soldiers away on military assignments, etc.). Further, companies selling branded food products could explore the idea of offering such a service online themselves: for example, Haribo could allow their customers to create care packages with their favourite products and ship them to their loved ones on their behalf.

Due to the specific context of this research, this thesis has further implications for youth and student travel and tourism agencies and providers. In particular, agencies placing young individuals in host families as au pairs or exchange or home-stay students will benefit from insights on the dynamics at play between young adults and host families and the challenges faced by the young adults. Whereas au pair agencies do prepare prospective au pairs for potential homesickness, they do not emphasise other issues such as not being able to find particular personal brands or being constrained in their mundane consumption activities.

Au pair agencies could also emphasise the importance of being involved in family meal time consumption practices to become part of the family unit.

5.3.3. Methodological Contributions

The main methodological contribution of this thesis is the use of a longitudinal research design to explore consumer acculturation. Noble and Walker (1997) called for longitudinal research to trace entire transition processes. Up to now, consumer acculturation research has provided one-off snapshots of informants' migration journeys, despite the fact that there are multiple stages involved in temporary mobility and permanent migration. The research design adopted here allowed for the exploration of young sojourners' feelings and experiences prior to, during and post-sojourn, hence providing rich insights not possible otherwise. Despite investing 20 months into the data collection for this thesis, this research approach has proven invaluable in gaining a deep understanding of the sojourn experience. Being able to explore preparations, hopes and dreams pre-sojourn and re-acculturation struggles post-sojourn allows for a deeper understanding of the entire journey.

In addition, the researcher was able to build trust and rapport with most participants. This was particularly true of the six participants who took part in in-depth interviews at all stages of their sojourn, allowing for the exploration of deeper issues, concerns, beliefs and ideas that would not have been shared and discussed in a one-off interview. Checking in with participants at various points throughout their sojourn allowed the researcher to be a part of their sojourn. It additionally made the participants feel comfortable with the researcher and some even stayed in touch after the final follow-up interviews. This ongoing connection due to the sharing of their sojourn experience allows for access to further data on how this sojourn has shaped their life journey, career, future travel plans, and so forth.

The Generation Y consumers who participated in this research appeared to be very comfortable being interviewed via video-chat technologies (such as Skype) without having met the researcher in person. This insight provides scholars with an alternative way to explore wider samples of young consumers than their usual student samples at their home Universities. In addition, academics investigating young consumers in different geographic locales might benefit from using video-chat technology. Further, participants in this research were predominantly recruited via online social networks such as Facebook. The advertisement placed in various Facebook groups was not regarded as intrusive and a large number (over 70) of potential participants replied to it. This proves to be an insightful method for scholars seeking young consumers as research participants.

5.4. Limitations

One limitation of this research stems from the homogenous nature of the group under study. Solely focussing on a subset of the youth and student travel market limits the generalisability of this work. However, it was not the intention of the researcher to generalise the findings. The homogenous group in this thesis (young, female Germans working as au pairs in New Zealand) was simply selected as a very appropriate means to study one group of young sojourning consumers and to provide a basis for future research on additional acculturation agents in (temporary) mobility. In addition, German au pairs were chosen as Germany is the number one country from which au pairs depart; hence this sample provides great insights into this particular sojourner group. Further, in comparison to, for example, Eastern European au pairs studied previously (Búriková & Miller, 2010; R. Cox & Narula, 2003), German au pairs do not undertake this sojourn to improve their financial status or gain permanent residency in a more economically stable country. New Zealand was chosen as host country as it is becoming increasingly popular with German au pairs, also because the researcher was doing her PhD in New Zealand and had personal deep insights into moving from Germany to New Zealand. The researcher acknowledges that choosing au pairs as participants represents a particular case that could limit the study's generalisability, however, the findings could be transferred to other contexts. For example, the particular live-in arrangement would be hard to find in any other mobile consumer group but the shared production and consumption of meals between sojourners and host other might be possible for other mobile consumers. Further, it needs to be acknowledged that the interpretations in this thesis are based on how the participants' reported perceiving their experience. As the researcher does not have direct, first-hand insights into the actual experience, the interpretations are based on verbal reviews of the au pairs' sojourns and might glorify or deviate from real-life experiences.

The particular focus on young sojourners rather than on older, more affluent sojourners (global nomads, expatriates, cosmopolitan consumers) might represent another potential limitation. Past research has found that these consumers form rather liquid relationships to possessions (Bardhi, et al., 2012) due to being accustomed to a lifestyle of constantly being on the move (Sheller & Urry, 2006). If this thesis had focussed on the same group of sojourners as those studies, it would probably only have replicated the findings and it would not have been possible to arrive at the rich insights provided by the findings of this thesis. Selecting a narrow subset of sojourners, namely sojourning au pairs, allowed for the

discovery of the importance of personal brands, branded (food) products and the shared production and consumption of meals during times of transition.

Finally, another limitation of this study could be possible researcher bias. As the researcher herself is a young female German and has immigrated to New Zealand after having sojourned in other countries, this might have impacted on her engagement with the informants and the interpretation of the data. However, it was the aim of the researcher to use this inherited knowledge about the German culture and immigration to New Zealand to help her understand the informants better and therefore, be of assistance throughout the research process rather than impose her beliefs, experiences and insights on the participants. Further, debriefings with the non-German supervisor as well as the German co-supervisor (who has hosted au pairs himself) helped overcome possible biases and aimed to ensure the representation of participants' perceived experiences rather than the researchers' understanding and interpretations of those experiences.

5.5. Recommendations for Future Research

A number of opportunities exist to extend this research further. In light of the aforementioned limitations, one recommendation for future research would be to explore other types of sojourners and their consumer-brand relationships and potential reliance on familiar home brands. For example, many business people who travel frequently keep "a kit of travel-sized toiletries and cosmetics packed at all times so [they] can just grab them and go" (Davis, 2002, p. 62). Whilst constantly mobile sojourners do not appear to form solid relationships to possessions, investigating the reliance on familiar personal care brands and products for frequent travellers might shed light on brands as material acculturation agents for other mobile consumer groups. Further, informal chats with personal networks have revealed that some more permanent immigrants have family and friends still residing in the home country ship certain familiar and favourite personal brands to them, whilst others compile extensive lists of products they 'need to' purchase during visits to the home country. Exploring this in depth might shed light on immigrants' reliance on certain personal brands and the reasons for this reliance.

Relying purely on the accounts of participants who expressed their desire to maintain a more mobile life post-sojourn, the scope of this thesis did not allow for further exploration of how young sojourners might actually become part of the global elite (Brooks & Waters, 2009). Follow-up interviews and personal contact with some participants reveal that they

have either enrolled in or commenced University degrees in, for example, Culture and Business, International Business and International Real Estate Management, which hint to a more mobile lifestyle post-graduation. It would be of great interest to either follow up with the participants or conduct a new study on how young, one-time sojourners might become part of the global elite and lead a nomadic lifestyle.

One supplementary finding in this thesis was the heavy reliance on social media to stay in touch with loved ones from home, with other sojourners throughout the stay and host others post-sojourn. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate how (young) mobile consumers use information and communications technology (ICT) in general, and social media in particular, during temporary and permanent migration. Epp et al. (2014) illustrated how co-located consumption practices can be reassembled through the use of technology. However, it would be of further interest to examine how, for example, online social networks can facilitate consumer acculturation processes.

5.6. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this thesis has achieved what it set out to do. The key purpose and overall aim of this thesis was to explore the consumer acculturation and (shifting) personal brandscapes of young sojourners because the lack of research on the combination of those two research areas became apparent in the literature review. Addressing this theoretical gap, the main objective of this thesis was to explore additional acculturation agents and forces for young, mobile sojourners. Utilising a longitudinal research approach, allowed the investigation of the importance of personal brands during temporary mobility, the ways in which (branded) food products act as material acculturation agents and how sharing acts as an acculturation force that aids (re-) acculturation processes. In light of the rise of temporary mobility, particularly for young consumers, this research has provided invaluable insights for academics and (marketing) practitioners alike. However, like all research, this research has limitations which have been recognised. Finally, recommendations for future research have been suggested. In a world where consumers are increasingly mobile, it is apparent that branded products, whether used for personal care, exchanged as gifts or incorporated in shared meals, play a critical role in connecting mobile consumers to new pseudo-families, their “old” families, and even to each other. Besides the benefits of brands acknowledged in the marketing literature, branded products can act as bridges and portals, but even more importantly, as anchors in a liminal world.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Nina Brosius

The acculturation of short-term German visitors to New Zealand brands

Interview Question Guide

As the interviews will be conducted by applying a semi-structured design, this interview guide allows for flexibility. The following questions will be used as guideline to initiate discussion with participants on the topics of acculturation and brandscapes.

As four individual interviews will be conducted with each participant, this guide is only very precise for the initial interview and will evolve for the remaining three interviews, based on the themes and findings from the first interview. However, a rough interview question guide for the follow-up interviews is presented.

INITIAL INTERVIEW

1. Pre-Interview

- Introduction
- Thank participant for coming and participation
- Explain the nature of the interview and go through the information sheet and consent form with the participant
- Have participant sign consent form
- Ask participant if they have any further questions
- Start the recording of the interview

2. Basic Interview Guide

- I understand you have temporarily moved to New Zealand from Germany – can you please tell me more about this?
 - ~ How long have you been planning your long-term visit?
 - ~ Did you contact a travel / Au Pair agency while planning your visit?
 - ~ How did you become aware of New Zealand and what drove you to choose New Zealand as your destination?
 - ~ What interested you about New Zealand?
- Could you please tell me a bit more about your general decision-making process to become an Au Pair in New Zealand?
- Could you please tell me more about your travel experiences to other countries?
 - ~ How did you prepare for short-term trips?
 - ~ Which countries did you visit?
 - ~ How did you feel when arriving in a new country?
 - ~ Did you engage with locals / in the local culture?
 - ~ How did you experience the new country overall?
- With regard to brands, do you have (a) favourite brand(s)?

- ~ Can you tell me more about your relationship with this (those) particular brand(s)?
- ~ How did this brand become your favourite brand?
- ~ If this brand was discontinued, how would you feel?
- ~ If you were not able to find this brand when travelling, how would that make you feel?

- Having arrived in New Zealand, how did you initially feel?
 - ~ How did you feel when you first arrived?
 - ~ How did that change over the first couple of days?
 - ~ In your opinion, how well have you adjusted?
 - ~ Do you miss Germany?
 - ~ If so, what do you miss about it?
 - ~ If not, why do you think you don't miss it?
 - ~ What is different in New Zealand?
 - ~ What do you like about New Zealand so far?

- Now that you are in New Zealand, have you been shopping yet?
 - ~ How would you describe your first shopping experience?
 - ~ Were there any obvious differences between shopping in Germany and New Zealand?
 - ~ How did you find your way around e.g. a supermarket?
 - ~ What do you think of the brands available?
 - ~ Did you find everything you were looking for?
 - ~ Were there brands that you had never seen before?

3. Closing

- Thank participant for the discussion, sharing their thoughts, and giving their time
- Ask participant if they have any further questions regarding the interview
- Ask participant if it would be okay to contact her if any further questions arise
- Thank participant once again

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

Themes and questions will arise from analysing the initial interview answers. However, some questions that are of interest in the follow-up interviews are presented below.

1. Pre-Interview

- Thank participant again for coming and for participation
- Ask participant if they have any questions
- Start the recording of the interview

2. Basic Interview Guide

- It is great to see you again, how have you been over the last 1-2 months?
 - ~ How well have you adjusted to New Zealand so far? (with regard to culture, host family, peers, etc.)
 - ~ Have you met any people your age (Germans, locals)?
 - ~ Have you travelled in New Zealand?
 - ~ Which Kiwi brands have you bought since we last met?
 - ~ How did you come across those brands?
 - ~ How comfortable are you with those brands?
 - ~ Have you bought any German brands recently?
 - ~ Have you actively searched for German brands?
 - ~ Are there any German brands that you miss?
 - ~ Would you like to tell me about any exciting / strange / different / memorable experiences you have had since we last met?

4. Closing

- Thank participant for the discussion, sharing their thoughts, and offering their time over a long period
- Ask participant if they have any further questions regarding the interview(s)
- Ask participant if it would be okay to contact her if any further questions arise
- Thank participant once again

Appendix B: Ethics Approval

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Research Integrity Unit



The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Level 10, 49 Symonds Street
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599
Extension: 87830 / 83761
Facsimile: 64 9 373 7432

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

19-Dec-2011

MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr Karen Fernandez
Marketing

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 7753)

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project titled **The acculturation of short-term German visitors to New Zealand brands** on 15-Dec-2011.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 19-Dec-2014.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to the Committee for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify the Committee once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of the Committee would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC secretary at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: **7753**.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

Secretary
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Marketing
Mr Richard Starr
Miss Nina Brosius
Prof Margo Buchanan-Oliver

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING



School of Business and Economics
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Telephone 64 9 373 7599
Facsimile 64 9 123 4567
www.business.auckland.ac.nz

Researcher: Nina Brosius / *Supervisor:* Dr. Karen V. Fernandez
Topic: The acculturation of short-term German visitors to New Zealand brands

Participant Consent Form

I, the participant, have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of this research project. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research project and my participation, and these questions have been answered adequately by the researcher.

I understand that participation in this research is completely voluntary and I am under no obligation to complete participation in this research, and that I am able to cease participation at any time.

Therefore:

- I agree / do not agree to take part in this research
- I agree / do not agree to take part in four individual interviews over the period of my stay in New Zealand
- I understand that the interviews will take approximately 45 minutes each
- I agree / do not agree to be audio-recorded and I understand that I may choose to have the recorder turned off at any time during the interview
- I understand that I may ask for my interview data to be withdrawn from this study up to one month after giving the most recent interview
- I understand that professional help / counselling is available in case I feel psychologically distressed at any point during the interview process
- I understand that this form, along with the transcripts, will be stored (separately) for six years in a locked cabinet at The University of Auckland. After six years have elapsed, the data will be destroyed.
- I understand that I may request a copy of my audio recording
- I understand that I may request a copy of my typed transcript
- I understand that I will be offered the opportunity to edit the transcript of my interview recording
- I understand that no cash payment is involved but that I will receive a gift voucher
- I understand that to preserve confidentiality, names and other identifying details will be changed in the final report

Participant Name

Participant Signature

Date

APPROVED BY UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 19/12/2011 FOR 3 years from 19/12/2011 to 19/12/2014, Reference Number 7753/2011.

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING



School of Business and Economics
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019 Auckland, New Zealand
Telephone 64 9 373 7599
Facsimile 64 9 123 4567

Researcher: Nina Brosius / *Supervisor:* Dr. Karen V. Fernandez
Topic: The acculturation of short-term German visitors to New Zealand brands

Participant Information Sheet

I, Nina Brosius, am a PhD student in Marketing at the University of Auckland under the supervision of Dr. Karen V. Fernandez. I am trying to understand how short-term immigrants (i.e. Au Pairs, international home-stay students, international exchange students, etc.) integrate and adjust in a new cultural environment. Further, gaining insights into this phenomenon through your experiences will also allow me to understand how short-term immigrants' relationship with brands changes throughout their stay in a foreign country. I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you have temporarily moved to New Zealand from Germany. This research is expected to last over the period of your stay in New Zealand with four individual interviews taking approximately 45 minutes each. Those interviews will take place at a time and location convenient to you. The interviews involve you answering a series of questions about your personal experiences and feelings with regards to your stay in New Zealand. Due to your long-term involvement in this study, you will receive a gift voucher as token of appreciation for your participation.

With your permission, I would like to audio-record the interview for transcription purposes. However, audio-recording is not essential, and if you prefer, I could take written notes instead. Even if you agree to the interview being audio taped, you may ask me to turn off my voice recorder at any time during the time. Should you feel psychologically distressed at any point during the interview process, I will be able to advise you of counselling services and other professional help.

You may ask for the original digital recording at any time during the interview, or after the interview. If you wish, I will give you a copy of your interview file (on a cd) and/or a printed transcript to keep. You may also edit the transcript of your interview recording if you wish to do so. If you further wish to withdraw your interview data from this study overall, you may do so up to one month after giving the most recent interview.

If the information you share with me is published in the future, it will be done in a way that does not identify you as the source of the information in any way. Your recorded interview will be transcribed by me or a professional transcriber who has signed a confidentiality agreement. The digital recording will then be destroyed by November 31, 2013. Your name, personal details, location and profession will be disguised for this research project. Real names and identifying information will not be used in the final transcripts, my final thesis or any subsequent research publications. Digital copies of the transcripts will be stored on a password-secured hard drive that only I or my supervisor will have access to. The hard-drive, any printed copies of the transcripts and your completed consent form will be kept in locked cabinets in the University. The University requires data to be kept for up to six years for the purpose of preparing a research publication. After that period, the transcript files will be deleted and any printed documents will be shredded.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and help with this research. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research at any stage, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Supervisor.

My Contact Details

Nina Brosius (Student, PhD)
Department of Marketing
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel: 021 025 16578
n.brosius@auckland.ac.nz

My Supervisor's Contact Details

Dr. Karen V. Fernandez
Department of Marketing
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
(09) 373 7599 ext. 88796
k.fernandez@auckland.ac.nz

_____, Date _____

_____, Date _____

If you have any concerns of an ethical nature please contact the Chair of The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee at (09) 373 7599 ext. 83711.

**APPROVED BY UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS
COMMITTEE ON 19/12/2011 FOR 3 years from 19/12/2011 to 19/12/2014, Reference
Number 7753/2011.**

Appendix E: Transcriber Confidentiality

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING



School of Business and Economics

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Telephone 64 9 373 7599
Facsimile 64 9 123 4567
www.business.auckland.ac.nz

Topic: The acculturation of short-term German visitors to New Zealand brands

Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

(This confidentiality agreement will be held for six years from the date it is signed.)

I hereby declare that all material deriving from or used in the transcription services rendered by myself, will remain strictly confidential. The resulting transcriptions and/or related communications will not be transferred to any person other than the researcher.

I agree that I will treat as confidential all information that I have access to as a result of transcribing tapes for the project titled "The acculturation of short-term German visitors to New Zealand brands".

I understand that assurances have been given to participants in the audio/video recordings I am transcribing that information in these recordings will be kept confidential to the researcher and me as a transcriber of the data for this project.

Transcriber Name

Transcriber Signature

Date

APPROVED BY UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 19/12/2011 FOR 3 years from 19/12/2011 to 19/12/2014, Reference Number 7753/2011.

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