3 Immobility: The Immobile Pattern of Mobility

The three narratives I will analyze in this section serve as illustrations of the social phenomenon of the pattern of immobility. I understand immobility as sedentariness after migration. The life stories will instruct us as to the ways in which individuals are immobile during their life courses and will inform us of those biographical constellations and experiences that led to this immobility. As for any kind of social phenomenon, the post-migration experiences of immobility are not homogeneous. In my respondents' stories immobility appears in various forms. I will analyze the narratives of Anja, Sandra and Janusz. In doing so, I will provide various interpretations of these stories, which all tell us something about the construction of immobility experiences in their post-migratory lives.

We shall see what kinds of discourses dominate their narratives and the kinds of sociological insights they provide. The discourses and experiences, inherent in my respondents' narratives, can only be adequately understood when we contextualize them. Anja's case includes the typical features of living a sedentary life after migration, yet it is at the same time exceptional for the way she negotiates her heritage and host cultures, and this can only be understood in the Canadian context of Toronto. Sandra's life story is absolutely typical for the German context; it is therefore all the more important to analyze her narrative in-depth as many other life stories are certainly similar (yet not the same)—even if her biography includes particularities that, again, we could not make sense of if we had not taken the German context into consideration. The last case to be discussed in this chapter is (one part) of the life story of Janusz. His life story is important because his mobility practices change over time, making him shift from one pattern to another and thus analyzing his life story sheds light on two mobility practices.

As a result, we will see what significant role the context plays: the respondents incorporate the national discourses of their (host) countries with its subse-

quent stances on immigration policies. By the same token, we will learn which *limitations* can come into being from these *nationally tainted discourses*.

3.1 ANJA: "THE ONE WHO TALKS ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM BUT PRACTICES ASSIMILATION"

Anja lives and works in Toronto, and she had strong reservations about doing an interview with me. I got in contact with her through my gatekeeper who first got me in touch with Anja's father. Her father invited me to a dance performance in which his daughter was professionally involved. His idea was to introduce us first, so that she could get to know me and see if she would agree to be interviewed for my study. Anja asked me about my study and my motivations; more specifically, she was interested in what I would be trying to prove, what my results would be. Surprised by such a bold question, I answered honestly that I would not be able to say as I did not know yet where my research would guide me. She was not happy with this answer and had already had negative experiences with journalists writing about her. It was then that it occurred to me that she might not be an unknown figure in her profession. I do, of course, understand these concerns, yet I could not help but point out that the work of a sociologist significantly differs from that of a journalist. I explained to her about the concept of autobiographical interviews, the kind of interviews I conduct for my study, emphasizing the fact that what she was willing to give me was up to her. Moreover, I pointed out that I follow strict ethical standards that oblige me to protect the privacy of my interviewees. I would, however, understand if she was not feeling comfortable and would respect her decision to decline the interview if need be. She proposed to keep in touch with me via e-mail.

After I got in touch with her a few days later, she expressed concern about how I planned to use my data. She asked me if I would provide an agreement letter that outlined in advance the questions I would be asking. She also wanted assurance of "a process that deals with interpretation of facts in the event of public use of name/image." (Mail from Anja/ 22 January, 2014) Again, I reassured her—this time in writing—that the data I gathered would be kept anonymous. It would neither be given to third parties, nor would there be public use of her name, her image, or her voice; but that "if I needed to quote something from the interview, the quotation would appear in writing and under a changed name." (Mail to Anja/ 23 January, 2014) She did not get back to me for a while. Annoyed and yet still curious, I wondered if was worth the effort. However, I de-

cided to approach her one last time to arrange an interview. This time she agreed. I interviewed her on 28 January, 2014 in a café in downtown Toronto. The interview lasted one hour and seventeen minutes. Anja was thirty-eight years old when I interviewed her. The comparatively short interview indicates that it was a difficult one as she did not easily fall into a narrative mode, so that I had to ask more questions to keep the interview going. But I was not left disappointed as she indeed gave me something to work with as we shall see in the following analysis.

Anja's narration is less a detailed recap of her life course than a subliminal discourse about the construction of contrasting imaginaries of her country of origin and her country of arrival. The imaginaries she creates are a reflection of her sense of belonging. Anja's narration therefore centers on the question of how she identifies with her heritage culture on the one hand, and with the multicultural Canadian society on the other hand. As a result, we shall see how these processes are influenced by her experiences in both countries, and how they impact her self-understanding in such a way that she has become estranged from one culture. Individuals not only celebrate or appreciate cultural experiences in various contexts, but it is also common that they evolve to prefer one over the other. This preference, however, is inconsistent with Anja's mobility experiences.

Sense of (no) Belonging? Aversive Discourses and Dark Imaginaries of Poland

The interview with Anja was difficult. Not only because she has picked a café that is overly loud and crowded—so that we had little privacy—but also because she did not really let herself in for the experience of an autobiographical interview. Anja spoke in English and gave short responses to my questions. It seemed almost impossible to draw her into a mode of narration (Rosenthal 2014). Her lack of (sharing her) memory relating to the experiences she had back in Poland is particularly striking; those memories of the time *before the immigration to Canada*. I did not come to know much about this time, except that she grew up in an artistic family (l.17ff) and that she attended school there for three years (ll.23-27). It was at this point of the interview when Anja, resisting my attempts to ask about her life in chronological order, says: "You know what, Poland is just an ugly dark place." (l.27) She elaborates:

"Warsaw especially. They modernized the whole country, but left out Warsaw. I mean, it looks pretty in the summer. For sure it is a great place [laughter]. Warsaw is a place full of dogs and they pee everywhere. That is also a great place to be." (ll.31ff)

Anja specifies that she means Warsaw when she refers to Poland. At the same time, however, she makes it clear that Warsaw differs from the rest of the country. She creates an image of Warsaw that is "not modern" and where "dogs pee everywhere." By using irony, she emphasizes that Warsaw is *not* a great place to be—at least not for her. In fact, most people would be repelled by such a description. Yet, it is the place where (parts of) Anja's family come from and where she lived for the first nine years of her life (ll.2,17,116). She reminds me to keep in mind that: "[…] by Poland I mean Warsaw, I mean that by Poland. I should be very clear 'cause I really don't like that place." (ll.81f) The imaginary Anja constructs of Poland is therefore an imaginary of Warsaw. She explains why Warsaw is such a "hard place" (l.44) to be:

"[…] people are bitter. Not all of them and I mean, it is like the belly button of war, right? […] it's just a graveyard and you are walking on bones. Every street corner had like one shot there or whatever." (ll.37ff)

Anja observed that people are bitter there, which she attributes to the country's history, referring to the historical events of both World Wars. Particularly World War II nearly completely destroyed the city of Warsaw. Several hundred thousand people lost their lives in the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. In Communist Poland, however, Warsaw was also a central place where people would gather to protest against the government and where a few people were killed, but more often they were violently taken into custody. For Anja, it is "impossible not be aware" (l.48) of these events. As she knows from her Polish grandparents, people would speak about it all the time. They would watch documentaries, celebrate different victories, commission statues on so forth (ll.49ff). Accordingly, the outcome of this is "basically […] a cycle of war." (l.51) She does not see a lot of hope: "I think if you'd go to a place where there is almost no hope, Poland would be that place. I think now it's different, but at that time it was like that." (ll.75ff) Anja rejects Poland as she remembers it being a hopeless place at that time she left; yet she acknowledges the possibility for it to have changed over time. Nevertheless, she also points out that: "It's just there are really depressed people and mothers and everybody over twenty eats fat and ugly [laughter]." (ll.77f) Anja considers people in Poland to be depressed—something that has apparently not changed. She refuses certain aspects of Polish culture like the eat-

ing habits, which she assumes to be the same for everyone over the age of twenty. What is more, she thinks of Polish people as being generally too loud (l.364) and—according to her sensibility—they are also too harsh and too rude (l.378f).

Anja constructs the imaginary of Poland as follows: she mixes visions of Poland's historical past, infused by wars and conflict, with subjective ideas about what she thinks current Polish society and culture is. The ideas about current Polish society are partly based on her own experiences: not only did she spend a year abroad there as a seventeen-year-old (ll.222f), but she also undertakes regular visits every three or four years (l.468). While Anja did not experience the two World Wars herself, she was nonetheless born and raised in a difficult time in Polish history. The Communist regime suppressed the population and deprived them of their civil rights. Anja probably remembers something from her childhood in Communism, although she does not share any specifics. In addition, her historical vision of Poland is, in part, also based on general historical knowledge and the stories told to her by her grandparents and parents, creating a sense of "collective memory." (Halbwachs 1950) Anja believes that Poland's history and her idea of current Polish society both show that in Polish culture "there is a lot of definition of 'us' vs. 'them.'" (l.104) History lessons in Polish schools "brainwash" the students, stressing the image of "the evil Germans, the evil Russians, the evil West." (l.106) Anja sharply criticizes the nation's lack of reflexivity about the part they have played in past wars and conflicts. To use her own words:

"But when you go to other schools, what do you have? The evil Polish people, who raped their grandmothers. You know, the evil Polish people who had the concentration camps and did betray this many people on race levels." (ll.107ff)

According to Anja, school children are given a limited understanding of Poland's role in World War II. She underlines the shared responsibility of the Polish nation in the Holocaust and does not credit many Polish people as possessing such views. For her, it is a black and white and highly nationalistic culture (l.110). She rejects such a model for herself:

"I especially don't appreciate people create [a] nationalistic point of view to define themselves, so I feel like I have a strong connection to the idea of being a Slavic person […] 'cause we come from the same ethnic cultural origin. And you don't need these stupid borders in there. You are creating wars actually […]." (ll.87-95)

She distances herself from Poland as her country of origin. She does not see herself as being Polish, proposing instead another frame of reference to describe her cultural heritage as a "Slavic person." She refuses a nationalistic stance or even the concept of the nation state itself. She sees the fight over territories as needless though costly. Poland's history is characterized by shifting territorial borders, which are strongly linked to the two World Wars. Anja's sense of identity is broader, one that may be described as a form of "pan-slavism." (Lüdke 2012, Karl/Skodos 2013)

Pan-Slavism
Pan-ideologies generally aim to unify members of the same ethnicity, religion, or language group, regardless of single nationalities. These ideologies were most prominent in the nineteenth and twentieth century. They generally reject the nation-state, which, historically, gave rise to imperialist discourses, particularly in the case of pan-slavism (Lüdke 2012). By now, pan-ideologies and movements have essentially disappeared from the political scene due to the dominance of the nation-state "as the most prominent unit of the international community." (Lüdke 2012: 1) Therefore, the concept of "pan-slavism" is scarcely of any importance in current political thinking.

For Anja, however, this similar frame of reference is central to her self-understanding: "I think I am starting more and more to identify as a Slavic person. In fact, I might even delete Polish from my bio." (ll.125f) She clearly refuses to identify as Polish as she rejects the culture on every level (l.422) thinking even of erasing this information from her CV. In Anja's opinion, Poland and "being Polish" is too strongly associated with wars and fights for borders (l.128ff), yet she fails to see the paradox that comes with pan-slavism: as history has taught us, territorial policy based on a pan-slavistic ideology is liable to trigger exactly what she opposes: conflicts and wars. Clearly, Anja has a negative attitude toward Poland. She describes Poland as an "ugly dark place," on account of cruel historical events and cultural features that she rejects. One thing is clear: Poland's history is still deeply felt by Anja, who resists belonging to this place and its culture. She, indeed, may have developed an aversion toward her heritage, but she cannot *really* delete her heritage from her biography. Whether she agrees or not, her past is a part of her biography. The "ghost of the past" follows her; it shapes her previous and current experiences and attitudes, her aversion toward Poland but also her celebration of Canada, as we will see in the upcoming section.

Assimilationist Behaviour in a Multicultural Context

Anja opens up more when it comes to her impressions and experiences in Canada. She presents the reason for the immigration as inevitable:

"Poland being the dark place that we talked about, it was impossible to live there, so my dad had to flee. He decided to flee and after three years he brought me and my mother." (ll.66ff)

The immigration from Warsaw to Toronto (ll.2) began with Anja's father's departure. During a brief discussion with him, he told me that he was a "state enemy" back in Communist Poland as he had some dissident attitudes, which indeed may explain his escape. We can assume that as a dissident, her father, might have faced persecution, and perhaps even arrest and mistreatment on the part of the Communist regime. After a time, Anja and her mother followed Anja's father to Canada. The reasons for the three-year gap are not clear. In Anja's version of the events Poland is a dark place that needed to be left behind. Her father is the central figure in their leaving and Anja gives the impression that he has the same image of Poland as she: "The great news is that [my parents] are also pretty much rejecting [the Polish culture] [laughter]. So, yes, my dad, he just hates everything [unintelligible, A/N], he is rejecting it so I am happy to hear that." (l.433) This revelation is not surprising given her father's experiences as a "state enemy" but it is also valuable in that it opens up an interpretational perspective: Anja' reasons for rejecting her heritage culture may be based on political and ideological reasons, a way of demonstrating loyalty to her father. Interestingly, she does not talk a lot about her mother. She briefly describes her mother as a difficult person, who inspires her in the following way: "She inspired me to be exactly the opposite of that. She inspired me really well [laughter] [9sec]. She is a great mother [laughter]. She does teach me to not be her [laughter]." (ll.434ff) The relationship between Anja and her mother seems to be conflictual. Yet, Anja gives no further comment on this matter. In view of the immigration, Anja first depicts her father's escape as inevitable, but she then mentions that it was, in fact, *a decision* her father made. She is convinced that immigration to Canada was a necessary step.

Obviously, the immigration is an event of major biographical relevance to Anja. She remembers arriving in Toronto during winter time. She was impressed by the snow: "[…] it was really cold when I moved. We have snowy winters. Snow like over where the cars are, so you walk in these tunnels. It was amazing, actually." (l.152ff) Anja's first impressions of Canada are positive. She empha-

sizes the climate differences in her narrative, and immediately articulates her belonging to the (host) country Canada through her use of the personal pronoun "we." As for her experiences in school, Anja recalls, it was a multiethnic school, to which many children of immigrants went. There were students of 52 nationalities (ll.155f); a reality Anja was not used to: "[…] it was really good, because I never thought it was abnormal. It was different, but it was not abnormal." (ll.159f) Though different from her experience in Poland, she does not perceive the multiethnic composition of the school's student body to be in any way undesirable or dysfunctional. Toronto is Canada's biggest city and, according to Saskia Sassen can be understood as part of a "global city" (2005) as well. A "global city" is an important node of localization, which is characterized by transnational interlinkages of industrial production and services, trade and finance. As a global economic center, it is significantly attractive to many foreign newcomers. Anja's experiences in school is one consequence of a "global city," which culminates into a "super-diversity" (Vertovec 2007) or an "increasing diversity of diversities" (Pries 2015b) of the society in general or—as in the present empirical case—of the residents of a particular local space. The "super-diverse" social formation of the student body of Anja's school divided into smaller groups: "[…] and then, there were all these cliques that start to formulate based on nationality." (l.160f) Effectively, the super-diversity decreases in view of everyday experiences in school when interactions are predominantly made between students of the same ethnic or cultural origin. Accordingly, Anja had many Polish friends, and yet she already felt an aversion to Poland and Polish culture:

"I think they clung to me, because I don't remember to pursue them; the Polish group. […] You know, they were like: 'Oh, you're Polish, blah blah blah.' So, it was something like that, but it was not me going to them." (ll.189ff)

Anja describes how the Polish students approached her, insisting on the fact that it was not the other way around. On the one hand, she admits to being part of the Polish group at school. On the other hand, she simultaneously distances herself from this group. In her view, there is a relevant disadvantage to only be in touch with persons of the same heritage in a multicultural environment:

"[…] if you are always being with Polish people, so they-they don't have to learn English. I was always kind of in and out of them, so I learned English very well, better than all my peers. So, I don't have an accent now. My peers do. And I worked really hard not to." (ll.161-164)

Here, Anja points to a clear difference between her and other Polish people, who would not see the need to acquire English. She points out that her English language skills are better than those of her peers as she worked hard to not have an accent while speaking. In a multicultural society like Canada, integration is a relevant topic (ch. 1.1). In that sense, it is important to be fluent in (at least) one of Canada's official languages; and as a matter of fact, in Toronto, English is more commonly used than French. For Anja, it was not enough to speak the language, which would prove her linguistic integration. She was rather eager to speak English flawlessly or, in other words, without an accent. Her stance on language acquirement is, in a way, rather assimilationist. Generally, language serves as a "marker of difference" as the language accent may indicate where the cultural origin of people lies. She intentionally "worked really hard" for that not to happen. Therefore, Anja tries to hide her Polish cultural origin on a linguistic level. Her accent-free proficiency distinguishes her from her Polish friends. Admittedly, Anja concedes that an immigration and incorporation experience requires time and effort:

"Immigration is always hard. I think it takes people three years before they start to adjust. It always takes three years minimum unless this person has really moved a lot and that has affected their capability to adapt more quickly […]." (ll.150ff)

As mentioned above, Anja assesses her families' immigration to Canada as positive, even necessary. Yet, she indicates that there are challenges that come with it. She suggests that it takes people three years to adapt to a new life unless the people concerned are more mobile than what she identifies as the norm. At first glance, Anja's estimated time frame seems arbitrary, but I assume that it is based on her own experiences, or even on the experiences of her father, for whom it took three years to reunite with his family in Canada. Once settled in Toronto, Anja did what most young people do. She attended school, met with friends, and pursued hobbies in her leisure time. Yet, her educational pathway was not so ordinary. Strikingly, Anja changed high schools six times altogether after immigrating to Canada (ll.213). She left the first high school after two years, and then again, after just half a year followed by a mobility experience in Poland (ll.216-221)—a life event I will discuss in detail later on. After returning to Canada, Anja switched high schools three other times:

"When I came back to Canada […] I went to three other high schools, which was really fun. Actually, I am glad I did that. I think I would always recommend going from high school to high school. It was a very useful experience. It was almost like immigration. It

was a shocker once, but when you continue putting yourself out there, especially when you are younger, it makes you feel less vulnerable in a way." (ll.235-239)

Anja does not mention what biographical circumstances led her to switch high schools so often. However, she evaluates these developments as positive because they encouraged her "to put herself out there", to take risks in order to go further and become a stronger person, in spite of the inconveniences. She uses her "high-school mobility" as an analogy for her experience of immigration. A consequence of this was Anja's making friends beyond the Polish group: "I went to six different high schools, so I have lots of experience […] with different groups. […] In the first high school, I had my Polish friends but after that, that was it." (ll.213-215) Anja's current social circle barely contains persons of Polish heritage (l.417). The multicultural context of Toronto enables her to have social relationships with persons of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Canada's multiculturalism plays a decisive role in Anja's discourse about her country of arrival, and therefore it also contributes to how she constructs her belonging to it. She describes society in Canada as different (l.263) from society in Poland; more westernized and multicultural (l.366). The multiculturalist way of living not only takes shape through the "super-diverse" composition of Canada's citizens, but also takes into account "the other":

"A lot of that has to do with 'the other' like there is a lot of mindfulness about what that could be. […] It is always that consideration for the other point of view […] It's definitely present much more here as anywhere else in the world [5sec] and I find that actually really amazing." (ll.388-393)

In a multicultural society, the social interactions, habitual practices, and gestures of people in daily life are shaped by a shared desire to reconcile different points of view. Anja sees this as a guiding principle of "everyday multiculturalism," which she appreciates very much. As an example of how to take "the other" point of view into consideration, Anja explains how people in Canada communicate good wishes for religious celebrations:

"You can say 'Merry Christmas,' but you can also say 'Hanukkah,' so you just say 'Happy Holidays.' So, you don't know what people are celebrating, whatever, you have no idea and you have to care, you have to care." (ll.395ff)

Since people come from various backgrounds, they do not always share the same festivities. Anja highlights the diversity of peoples' traditions, customs, and reli-

gions in a multicultural society like Canada. Anja is very explicit when she points out that Canadians demonstrate a degree of openness toward traditions they might not have grown up with. She sees multiculturalism also happening through food:

"[…] so in [Canada], it is nice, because you can get more ethnic food, and when I go to other places I feel actually shocked 'cause I am craving my Indian food, and I want to have a sushi bar, and my Thai food [laughter]. But I think through that, through the food itself […] it is indoctrinated to have the multicultural perspective without knowing." (ll.408-412)

Anja talks here about the availability of multiethnic food and how it subliminally promotes multiculturalism. From her *emic* perspective, she refers to what Kymlicka, from an *etic* perspective, criticizes as "a feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity, encouraging citizens to acknowledge and embrace the panoply of customs, music and cuisine that exist in a multi-ethnic society." (2010: 89) Kymlicka argues that multiculturalism, as a set of policies, should not be about inculcating an ethos of cultural consumption. Anja's choice of the word "indoctrinating" is interesting as it highlights a kind of normativity behind the concept. However, Anja bases her observation of multiculturalism on everyday experiences rather than the political project. She generally pleads for sensitivity toward "the other" and celebrates cultural diversity, and its outcomes—multiethnic cuisine for instance. In Poland, she finds the opposite: "In Poland, even when you have a Pizza, it is not going to be the Italian Pizza. It is the Polish version of what it could be […] it's just ridiculous." (ll.399f, 408) Anja compares her country of arrival with her country of origin. She not only implicitly points to the differences in the ethnic composition of both countries, but she also explicitly favours Canada over Poland. By using multiethnic food as a metaphor for the society behind it, Anja is critical of Poland. Food can be a symbolic marker of belonging in the context of migration (Wessendorf 2013: 37), but Anja literally rejects it: "I don't like Polish food." (l.174)

Antagonisms and Aversive Mobility

Overall, Anja is appreciative of Canada's multicultural society. She celebrates what she understands as multiculturalism like the different nationalities she encountered in school, a sensitivity toward or interest in "the other," and multiethnic cuisine. She constructs an imaginary of Canada that is entirely positive: "I love the society. I think it is probably the best that I hear of." (ll.263f) She al-

ludes to problems in Canadian society only once, yet she backpedals immediately, stating that they are not so serious as they might be elsewhere (l.264). She mentions First Nations peoples but does not elaborate. Anja celebrates (Canadian) multiculturalism. The policy emerged as an ideological and political counter to assimilation: immigrants and their descendants are not required to give up their heritage in favour of the new "dominant" culture. Rather, multiculturalism approves of the existence of multiple cultures in one society. Immigrants are, in other words, free to maintain their cultural traditions and customs and are invited to participate in the institutional and social realms of Canada (ch. 1.1).

Anja is strongly in favour of multiculturalism, yet she does not subscribe to it when it comes to her own cultural heritage because she rejects her Polish origin. It seems paradoxical that instead of preserving, displaying or living her heritage in a society like Canada, she rejects it. When it comes to her own heritage, Anja would rather assimilate. She is generally very wary of being identified as Polish; she "worked really hard" to be culturally assimilated into Canada. Only occasionally, when getting together with her father's friends, does she even speak the language (ll.418). In the narrative about her life, Anja constructs two antagonistic imaginaries of her country of origin and her country of arrival. Poland is characterized by darkness, bitterness, and war, while Canada is the place where people care about each other and "the other" and generally live in peace. She further illustrates these antagonisms by using "summer" as a metaphor:

> "I know Poland, I know it has summers, but it doesn't feel like it has summers. Just thinking about it, I don't know, it's shorter. There's something wrong with it […] I remember short summers, but not like in here, in Canada, you have a summer that burns your brain because it's so hot and so warm, and you sweat so much, right. You just feel like you're in summer, but I don't remember any summers there." (ll.142-147)

Summer is usually associated with warmth, sunshine, and holidays, things most people enjoy. In her post-hoc narrative, Anja does not remember having experienced this in Poland. She cannot remember Poland even having summers, meaning she cannot remember the good times she may have had there. Anja's sense of belonging to both places are quite polarized. Her appreciation for Canada is strong, even strong enough to make her want to assimilate in this multicultural country where assimilation is an unofficial part of the official discourse.

At the end of the day, Anja's narrative is about integration in Canada. As mentioned earlier, Anja is professionally successful as choreographer. Already as an eleven-year-old, she was determined to pursue this profession (ll.269ff). In order to achieve her professional dream, Anja did what Canadian society expects

her to do: “Well, in Canada you have to [work hard]. People expect it from you and if you are dancing, this is what you are expected to.” (ll.255f) She did what needed to be done to become successful in the career path she chose, and in this way, subscribes to the values held by her host society. However, Anja left Canada when she was seventeen years old in order to perform in a musical in Poland. The move was for one year. This mobility experience is surprising given the image she constructs of Poland as being the “ugly dark place” she is glad to have left behind. Yet, somehow her aversion toward all things Polish did not hold her back from taking up a professional opportunity there. The move is in keeping with her professional ambition, but does not account for the antipathy she developed toward the culture. Anja does not say a word about how this opportunity came about, yet this mobility experience shows that she was not completely cut off from her country of origin. In contrast to the image of Poland she constructs in her narrative, her mobility experience to Poland was a positive one: “It was really fun. I was in the only musical in the whole country [laughter] and it was so great and busy.” (ll.223f) Once Anja returned to Toronto, she never relocated her center of life out of Canada again, and she does not intend to do so. According to her (up-to-now) life course, Anja remains *predominantly* immobile or sedentary after her immigration from Warsaw to Toronto. Then again, she did relocate her life center for a year to Poland; the country that she does not remember as having summers. When taking into consideration the overall context of her life course and the narrative she constructs out of it, we can understand her relocation “after migration” as *aversive mobility*. We will now learn how immobility comes about in the German context by looking into the life of Sandra.

3.2 SANDRA: “THE ONE WHO TEACHES HER PARENTS HOW TO SPEAK GERMAN”

Sandra is a young adult of Polish descent who lives in Berlin. She responded to my inquiry on *Facebook* and we arranged an interview right away for the upcoming week. As for all my respondents, I suggested that we meet either in a public space like a café, at my place or, if she would prefer, at hers. She decided on a public meeting. We met in a café in Berlin Mitte on 23 April, 2014. She immediately opened the conversation and explained to me that, by responding to my inquiry, she finally dared to “try out something new”; something she usually would not do. After we sat down and ordered coffee, I posed my initial question and she instantly fell into a narrative mode. The interview lasted two hours and ten minutes. Sandra was thirty-one years old when I interviewed her.

Sandra's autobiographical narrative is, generally speaking, a discourse about her and her family's experiences of settlement and incorporation into Germany. Her narrative is what we might call a "success-story of integration," albeit not without challenges, particularly in the early years following immigration. Sandra focuses her narration on her personal experiences about the consequences and outcomes of immigration. Her narrative is driven by the themes of language acquirement, family structures in both countries, processes of cultural identification or alienation, her personal networks as well as her general educational and professional pathway. As we shall see these are biographical dimensions, which are, from a sociological perspective, all interrelated in her life course.

When Kids Educate Their Parents: Collective Integration through Reversed Family Roles

Sandra's mastery of the German language is flawless. It is not only due to her young age upon arrival; and, of course, the assimilationist stance of current policy-making in Germany, but also because the biographical constellation of language in general and the acquirement of the German language in particular is striking in her life story. Her family immigrated to Germany when Sandra was four years old (l.13), so the process of incorporation started in her childhood. Not long after her family's settlement, Sandra attended preschool. She remembers that she was not able to speak German at that time, not only due to her lack of language knowledge, but also because she was afraid of the situation she was put into:

"I know that I got into preschool and I couldn't speak German. I somehow understood German. I already understood the [others] in parts, but I did not speak at first, because I didn't dare to. I was afraid […] they all spoke differently and the new country and these fears from my parents. I think, as a child, you can feel it." (ll.270-276)[1]

On the one hand, Sandra was afraid of the unfamiliar circumstances like the new country and people who speak a different language. On the other hand, she indicates that her fear was also influenced by her parents' worries that she could

1 "Ich weiß, dass ich in die Vorschule gekommen bin und da kein Deutsch konnte. Ich hab' irgendwie Deutsch verstanden. Ich hab' die [Anderen] schon teilweise verstanden, aber ich habe nicht gesprochen die erste Zeit, weil ich mich nicht getraut hatte. Ich hab' Angst gehabt […] es sprechen alle anders und neues Land und diese Ängste von meinen Eltern. Ich glaube als Kind spürt man das."

sense even as a little child. Her parents were, she says, very concerned about adjusting to German society, within which acquiring the German language played a central role:

"Well, my parents always wanted my sister and me to speak German to them, so that they learn the language. They would speak Polish to us and we were to respond always in German. In our family, it was like that and, I think, my parents also wanted very much to adapt. In public, they were more like: 'Ah, speak rather German,' so that we don't attract attention." (ll.278-282)[2]

Sandra's parents insisted that the girls speak German to them so that they might *learn from them*. The assumption that parents are the educators of their children was undercut as family members switched roles: the children became the educators of their parents in their efforts to integrate. The linguistic adjustment is a collective familial project, in which the parents benefited from their children's early embeddedness in social institutions (preschool), their young age and, hence, the children's ability to acquire a new language very quickly. Sandra's parents used their children's newly acquired abilities to improve their own language skills. This required a (moment of) quasi-bilingualism on the side of the children. They had to have an understanding of both languages in order to be able to transmit their knowledge of German to Polish native speakers.

As a matter of fact, integration is interrelated with language acquirement ("cultural integration," see ch. 1.1). There is no doubt that Sandra's parents took integration into Germany very seriously. Their motivations became especially apparent when they asked their daughters to speak only German in public, indicating an assimilationist stance on integration, which presumably stems from the social expectations that were directed at the young immigrant family in the form of societal norms and values. Generally, fulfilling the assimilationist expectations of German society was supported by the distinctive institutional infrastructure of the welfare state. Sandra and her family immigrated to West Germany in 1986 (ll.14). They were considered "ethnic Germans" (*Aussiedler*) by the state; people of German descent who lived outside the borders of the territory of the German state as a result of state building conflicts in central and eastern Europe

2 "Also, meine Eltern wollten auch immer, dass meine Schwester und ich mit ihnen Deutsch sprechen, damit sie die Sprache lernen. Sie haben mit uns Polnisch gesprochen und wir sollten immer auf Deutsch antworten. Das war bei uns so und meine Eltern wollten sich auch, glaube ich, sehr anpassen. In der Öffentlichkeit waren sie auch eher so: 'Ah, sprecht' doch Deutsch,' dass man nicht negativ auffällt."

in the nineteenth and twentieth century, and they were granted German citizenship (see excursus in PART II).

The Polish Socialization of Ethnic Germans

For some, it might sound surprising that the vast majority of ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*), who settled in Germany neither spoke any German, nor did they know German traditions and cultural habits. There were, however, significant historical reasons for this: after World War II, Poland's Communist regime introduced the policy of "Polonisation" of minority groups, including the German minority living on Polish territory. The regime forbade and punished the use of German, it banned German names of places and persons and changed them into Polish ones, and closed all German cultural associations. Ethnic Germans did not only have to reckon with reprisals, but they had to face ethnic discrimination, too, e.g., wage cuts and low food rations (Brinks 1999, Helmich et. al. 2005). In reaction, many ethnic Germans hid their heritage. For decades and across generations, ethnic Germans forgot the German language and culture, but sometimes their German identity remained. The ethnic Germans, who came to Germany during the 1980s, were thus socialized as Polish, while earlier immigrants could, for instance, still speak German when they settled in Germany during the 1950s (Loew 2014: 214f). This is why, paradoxically, ethnic Germans need(ed) to culturally adapt to their own ethnicity. The German state not only granted ethnic Germans access to German citizenship, but also a range of social rights, services, and support before the assistance was heavily reduced in 1988 (Bommes 2012b: 45-50). Language training programs, for instance, were a central part of the services offered to them.

Sandra, interestingly, indicates that her parents engaged in these services. They attended language school:

"[…] especially since the German teacher explained everything in German in my parents' school. But if you cannot speak any German, it is a bit silly. My parents did not really learn German in this school, but rather through the children and later through work. They worked and they watched television, but [they didn't learn German] because the school was [not] so good." (ll.287-291)[3]

3 "[…] Zumal [der Deutschunterricht] für meine Eltern so war, dass der Deutschlehrer alles auf Deutsch erklärt hat. Wenn man aber kein Deutsch kann, ist das ein bisschen

Sandra justifies the reversed roles of educators and educated in her family as a result of the ineffectiveness of the German language classes her parents attended. The institutional support provided by the German welfare state was apparently not sufficient for learning the language, which Sandra explains as being a result of poor didactical methods employed in class. Rather, her parents developed other strategies within their everyday life, such as talking to their children, watching TV, and taking part in social interactions with colleagues at work. The temporal imbalance between the parents and the children in the process of language acquisition is characterized by another particular circumstance in Sandra's socialization:

"I mean, I could never take my parents as the example of how to speak German, because, indeed, they have the accent. So as a child, I just always had to watch out and orient myself toward my girlfriends in school." (ll.364ff)[4]

Sandra's parents did not serve as "best-practice" examples. Contrary to their experience, Sandra's linguistic adaptation succeeded within the German institutional landscape; mainly through the institution of school, which provided her with social interactions that turned into friendships. These friends became her role models when it came to learning German faultlessly, meaning without an accent.

In sum, the familys' efforts of (linguistic) integration brought about two significant outcomes. First, it transformed the family dynamic. It is commonplace that parents are the linguistic role models of their children. This is, in part, also true for Sandra's family as her parents taught her how to speak Polish. Yet, the situation changed drastically when the family immigrated to Germany: the children were suddenly the ones mastering the German language. The children contributed to the integration of their parents, even though it may have been irritating for the family as the question arises: who teaches what to whom? Such a biographical constellation rarely occurs for children whose socialization does not coincide with the process of integration. Second, acquiring German, even to the

blöd. Meine Eltern haben eigentlich nicht über diese Schule Deutsch gelernt, sondern über die Kinder und über die Arbeit dann später. Die sind arbeiten gegangen und haben Fernsehen geguckt, aber nicht weil die Schule wirklich so gut war."

4 "Ich meine, bei den Eltern, da konnte ich mir nie das Beispiel nehmen wie ich Deutsch zu sprechen habe, weil sie ja den Akzent erstmal haben. Also musste ich halt immer als Kind schauen, dass ich mich orientiere in der Schule bei meinen Freundinnen."

detriment of the Polish language, is the foundation for social mobility *in Germany*, at least for the children of the family. The parents aimed, I argue, to ensure their children's chances of participating in German society because immigration most often (and this is also the case for ethnic Germans) causes a disqualification with regard to the local labour market (Boswell/D'Amato 2012: 14, a.o.). The linguistic role-switching was a "foundation for social mobility" *at place*, while it hindered the acquisition or solidification of other (foreign) languages as the focus lay solely on the German language. Certainly, insufficient (foreign) language skills (also those of the first acquired tongue) hinder or prevent geographical mobility to other destinations than the "country of arrival."

About Successful and Unsuccessful Integration: The Effect of the Social Milieu

Sandra's early (linguistic) integration worked out so well because it was positively influenced by the neighbourhood she was living in. Sandra's family lived in a wealthy area of Berlin for the first few years after arriving in Germany. Sandra points out that the other children who lived there and with whom she played all came from good homes; from families who lived in villas (ll.282f). Sandra's housing situation was quite the contrary:

"Yes, then we crossed [the border, A/N]. First, we stayed with my aunt. Yeah, and my parents found work quickly. […] Then another brother of my aunt [and] my mother came after us. He came, I dunno, maybe a year later? […] I can still remember that we lived with my family for a long while, all in one room—four people […] because back then, it was difficult to find an apartment." (ll.15-22)[5]

The private housing situation of Sandra's family stands in opposition to the one she describes as typical for the neighbourhood. While other families lived in spacious houses, Sandra shared an apartment with six people, four of whom she was living with in one single bedroom. Inconvenient housing situations with lit-

5 "Ja, dann sind wir auch rüber [über die Grenze, eig. Anm.] dann sind wir erstmal zu meiner Tante. Ja, und meine Eltern haben recht schnell Arbeit gefunden […] Dann kam noch ein Bruder von meiner Tante [und] von meiner Mutter nach. Der kam dann, ich weiß nicht, vielleicht ein Jahr später? […] Ich kann mich noch daran erinnern, dass wir sehr lange bei meiner Familie gewohnt haben, in einem Zimmer—vier Leute […] weil damals war das noch so, dass man Schwierigkeiten hatte eine Wohnung zu finden."

tle space are not unusual when individuals or families first settle in a new country. Sandra's family had the possibility to move in with her aunt (her mother's sister) who had immigrated to Germany prior to them (l.4). Other ethnic Germans, who immigrated during the same migration wave, were often accommodated in public housing (Bommes 2012b). It generally took some time until the immigrants were able to "get back on track," that is when they received formal registration and legal recognition, when they found jobs in order to support themselves and when they were able to find suitable apartments in housing markets that were often very dense. As Sandra indicated, it took some time until the family found its own place. According to Sandra's narration, it must have been about five years. The housing situation, however, did not bother Sandra as she did not know anything different. Living within such limited space made her feel part of a community, which is why she does not question it (ll.116-124). Generally, she goes into raptures over her childhood years in the wealthy Berlin area:

"Yes, the first three years I went to school in ****[name of Berlin suburb, A/N]. All the kids had a lot of money there and […] then they celebrated their birthdays inviting the whole class. I can still remember only beautiful houses and the families, who pedagogically handled their children very well. I found it always very impressive and beautiful and the first three years at school in ****[name of Berlin suburb, A/N] were absolutely beautiful." (ll.351-357)[6]

Living in this wealthy neighbourhood, despite having little space, impacted Sandra in a significant way:

"I think it was important to me to simply integrate there, so I had this demand for myself to feel comfortable; especially in the first years. I also had these good examples of German families and they were also always very warm. You wanted to belong […] In elementary school, [we] had two other Polish kids, and perhaps another foreign kid. So out of 25 children, we had 85% or 90% of this German influence and I wanted to be a part of it. My

6 "Ja, ich bin ja die ersten drei Jahre in ****[Name des Berliner Vororts, eig. Anm.] zur Schule gegangen. Die Kinder hatten dort alle sehr viel Geld und […] die [haben] dann auch Geburtstag gefeiert mit der ganzen Klasse. Ich kann mich immer nur an schöne Häuser erinnern und an Familien, die pädagogisch total gut mit ihren Kindern umgegangen sind. Fand' ich immer sehr beeindruckend und schön und die ersten drei Jahre [auf der Schule] in ****[Name des Berliner Vororts, eig. Anm.], die waren total schön."

parents were always meddling; emphasizing the need to integrate. They felt it was important." (ll.368-374)[7]

Sandra was almost exclusively surrounded by Germans who treated her very well. It stimulated her desire to belong to them. In addition, this desire was nourished by her parents who expected her to integrate. Because Sandra was welcomed warmly by the Germans in her immediate surroundings; it was easy for her to fulfill her parents "imperative" to integrate.

Sandra had to leave the wealthy Berlin suburb when her family moved to another well-known area in Berlin, which had developed into a "problem neighbourhood." (*sozialer Brennpunkt*, ll.28ff) She attended third class in a new school there and noticed that things were different: the families were not as wealthy anymore and the children were less well behaved. She felt it was a different standard, although she was also comfortable there as she has made good friends (ll.358-362). Yet, she was happy to have started school in the other Berlin suburb where she had the "warm and wealthy" families as role models for her integration. Sandra points out that a lot more foreigners attended school in her new neighbourhood than in the old one (ll.363). That, she believes, has negative consequences for the integration of immigrants. Sandra's assumption is rather typical for the German context while in Canada such an assumption would be rather uncommon (as we have seen in Anja's narrative in the preceding section). However, Sandra tells me a story about her cousins in order to make her point:

"I also have two cousins. They are 20 and 21 years old. They have already attended high school in **** [name of the so-called problem neighbourhood in Berlin, A/N]. When I attended high school there, 40% of the students were foreigners. When [my cousins] were there, they had 80% foreigners and maybe 20% Germans, so that the German students also appropriated these accents from the foreigners. My cousins, for instance, […] they […] do

7 "Ich glaube, es war mir wichtig mich da auch einfach einzugliedern. Dass ich schon diesen Anspruch hatte, besonders auch in den ersten Jahren sich wohlzufühlen. Ich hatte auch diese guten Beispiele von deutschen Familien und sie waren ja auch immer sehr herzlich. Man wollte dazugehören. […] In der Grundschule hatten [wir] noch zwei andere polnische Kinder, und vielleicht noch ein ausländisches Kind. Also von 25 Kindern, da hatten wir zu 85% oder 90% diesen deutschen Einfluss und da wollte ich dann dazugehören. Meine Eltern haben mir auch immer so-so einmischend mitgegeben: 'Integrieren.'[…] [S]ie fanden das schon wichtig."

not master the German language correctly. They also do not speak in complete sentences." (ll.376-383)[8]

When Sandra's cousins attended school in the "problem neighbourhood," the proportion of foreigners in the student body of the class had increased. Foreigners outnumbered those Germans not included in the category of "people with a migration background." Sandra's observation is that these figures have had a negative impact not only on the immigrant children but also on the few Germans who began to take on the foreigners' way of speaking. The result is that her cousins are not proficient in German. She gives me an example for that:

"For three or four years, my cousin always said 'çüş' or something. I don't know. You're from another city, right? In Berlin, the Turks, they have such a slang, which my cousins have totally taken on. And I think to myself: 'No employer would give you a job. You cannot talk like that. As if you're coming out of the ghetto and through language, one instantly recognizes where you come from.'" (ll.383-388)[9]

Sandra's cousin used a Turkish expression, which expresses amazement or contempt in colloquial terms.[10] In this interview situation, Sandra addresses me explicitly in order to give me contextual information about Berlin (since I come from another city), explaining to me that it is the Turkish immigrants who have a slang like that, which her cousins have adopted. With regard to integration, she thinks that too many foreigners in a classroom hinder their successful integration

8 "Ich habe auch zwei Cousins, 20 und 21, und bei denen ist es so, die sind schon in **** [Name des Bezirkes bekannt als sozialer Brennpunkt, eig. Anm.]. Als ich auf die Oberschule gegangen bin, hatte ich halt 40% Ausländeranteil und bei denen waren es 80% und 20% vielleicht Deutsche noch, so dass sich die deutschen Schüler auch diese ganzen Akzente von den Ausländern mit angeeignet haben. Meine Cousins z.B. […] die beherrschen […] die deutsche Sprache nicht richtig. Die sprechen auch nicht in vollständigen Sätzen."

9 "Mein Cousin hat quasi eine Zeit, da hat er drei, vier Jahre so 'çüş' gesagt oder sowas. Ich weiß nicht. Du bist ja aus einer anderen Stadt, ne? In Berlin, die Türken, dann haben die so einen Slang und den haben sich die [Cousins] total angeeignet. Und ich denk' mir: 'So stellt dich doch kein Arbeitgeber ein. So kannst du doch nicht reden. So wie aus dem Ghetto und durch die Sprache ist ja sofort erkennbar, wo du herkommst.'"

10 It is similar to the colloquial use of the German expression "krass" and the English expression "damn."

as the few Germans who do not have a "migration background" are not the norm or simply "not so cool." Speaking what Sandra considers bad German or in "slang" is a barrier for the integration of immigrants and, more generally, reduces their employability as language is the first thing that tells others where you come from, not only in terms of cultural heritage, but also in terms of social class (Bourdieu 1987). I understand the cousins' use of this expression as what Lamont and Lareau call a "marginal high status signal." (1988: 157) In critical conversation with Bourdieu's cultural capital, the authors define high status cultural signals as attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, etc., used for social and cultural exclusion (ibid.: 156). Lamont and Lareau acknowledge that power relations exist within all classes, even the lower ones:

> "It is important to note in this context that we believe that lower class high status cultural signals (e.g., being streetwise) perform within the lower class the same exclusivist function that the legitimate culture performs in the middle and the upper middle class." (Lamont/Lareau 1988: 157)

The "marginal high status signals" subsequently fulfil exclusionary functions within the realm of the lower classes. Sandra's cousin who uses the expression "çüş" does so in order to be of "high status" in a comparatively "low class;" assuring his inclusion in the social milieu within which he is embedded. Sandra, however, wants to move beyond this lower social milieu. In so doing, she implicitly formulates linguistic claims, e.g., speaking without an accent and avoiding specific colloquial and/or foreign vocabulary. Such tactics, she proposes, allow one to more successfully integrate into German society and facilitate upward social mobility. Sandra rejects a way of speaking that is specific to a certain milieu or class as it hinders—in her opinion—occupational advancement for migrants; this expressed by her suggestion that no employer would give her cousin a job with his use of such a "marginal high status signal." Sandra thus clearly distances herself from members of her own family, i.e., her cousins.

What is more, the narration about her cousins' experiences and her interpretation of it reifies the (populist) discourse about immigrants of Turkish background, and more generally Muslim groups in Germany and throughout Europe, as not being well integrated or being generally "un-assmilationable." (Favell 2014, Vertovec/Wessendorf 2010, Kymlicka 2010, Amelina/Faist 2008)[11] Sandra, however, not only distances herself from her cousins, but also from the

11 For empirical studies, confirming the "low integration rates" of persons with Turkish background in Germany, see Esser 2001a, 2003, and Koopmans 2016.

neighbourhood as such: “But we live […] rather at the end, so not in the midst. It’s the last subway station in the direction of ****[neighbourhood in the south-east of Berlin, A/N].” (ll.28ff)[12] She expresses this distance by pointing to the geographical space between the area where her family lives in the so-called “problem neighbourhood” in Berlin and the neighbourhoods’ center. She underlines that, in fact, her family lives closer to another neighbourhood with a better reputation. Sandra, again, distances herself from a geographical place that does not match her endeavour of upward social mobility. To sum up, Sandra constructs a narrative about successful and unsuccessful integration. In this regard, she emphasizes the importance of social milieu. In doing so, she contrasts her early experiences in the “idyllic” neighbourhood she grew up in with her later one, but more strikingly, with those of her cousins’ even more “problematic” Berlin neighbourhood. For her, successful integration is linked with processes of social advancement in the system of social stratification. In order to make that happen, the acquisition and the regulated mastery of German, which is—according to Sandra—dependent on social contacts with the “dominant majority” (middle-class Germans), is a must. It simultaneously shows an effort for successful integration.

Reintroducing the Polish Language after Successful Integration?

Not only does the German language play a role in Sandra’s narrative about her life, but Polish (as the language of her cultural origin) is also relevant in her biographical experiences. Polish was the first language she spoke. After immigrating to Germany, however, Sandra acquired German, but this acquisition was at the expense of Polish in her everyday life. She spoke German when she was in public and, at first, also within her family. She only spoke Polish when she travelled to Poland. During her childhood, Sandra’s family commuted to Poland almost every weekend (ll.157ff). Later in her life course, around puberty, Sandra and her sister refused to commute so often, preferring to stay in Berlin (ll.166ff). Meanwhile, Sandra leveled out the commute to four to five times a year (l.686). As mentioned before, her parents first got Sandra and her sister to speak German with them, but then:

12 “Aber wir wohnen […] so am Ende, also nicht drin. Es ist schon die letzte U-Bahnstation in Richtung ****[Stadtteil im Südosten Berlins, eig. Anm.]. ”

"It is strange. When we were 12 or 13 my mother eventually said: 'Hey, speak more Polish here at home, too. We have to speak Polish after all,' because she didn't want to neglect the Polish language, wanting it to remain intact." (ll.295-298)[13]

It is axiomatic that Sandra's mother requested her children to speak again in Polish when the parents improved their German skills sufficiently. Her mother's fear reversed: in the first years of settlement, she was afraid of not being able to learn German until, after a considerable time living in Germany, she was afraid of losing touch with the heritage language. She called for a reintroduction of the Polish language within the family sphere. Sandra therefore lists the languages she speaks with various family members:

"Yeah, then I spoke German with my sister, I spoke Polish with my mother and I spoke German and Polish with my father. It's a total mix." (ll.298ff) [14]

Sandra's experiences of acquiring German and the code-switching she practices within her family unit provide her with sufficient skills in both languages. Yet, her Polish is not as good as her German. People in Poland would recognize that she does not live there due to mistakes she makes in grammar and pronunciation. While she considers her oral skills to be good (ll.303-309), her writing skills are not sufficient. She makes a lot of mistakes as she never learned to write in Polish. She basically writes how she speaks (ll.340f). As a countermeasure, Sandra looked into Polish orthographic classes at the community college, but she could not find any that focused on the orthographic training only. She was not interested in general language training (ll.340-348). However, her lack of writing skills restricts her. To use her own words: "[…] I would never be able to work in Polish." (l.342)[15] That is probably one reason why Sandra considers German to be her main language (*Hauptsprache)*: "German is my main language, because I

13 "Es ist komisch. Irgendwann hat meine Mutter dann als wir 12 oder 13 waren auch gesagt: 'Mensch, sprecht doch zu Hause hier auch mehr Polnisch. Wir müssen doch Polnisch sprechen,' weil sie die polnische Sprache auch nicht vernachlässigen wollte, so dass sie dann auch noch erhalten bleibt."

14 "Ja, dann habe [ich] mit meiner Schwester Deutsch, mit meiner Mutter dann Polnisch und mit meinem Vater dann auch auf Deutsch und Polnisch [geredet]. Das ist ein totaler Mix."

15 "[…] Ich würde niemals auf Polnisch arbeiten können."

grew up with it in school with friends." (ll.302f)[16] The term *Hauptsprache* seems to me quite unusual in the German context. Surprised by her choice of word, I ask her about the notion of "mother tongue." Her reaction is instructive:

"[Laughter] Yes, mother tongue is associated with the roots somehow, right? Yeah, I think mother tongue is/ but actually I would have to say that German is my mother tongue, even though I stop now to say: 'Oh, no.' Actually, it is about the roots and I have not learned German from my mother." (ll.312-315) [17]

Sandra associates the notion of mother tongue with cultural roots, which makes her uncertain about claiming German as her mother tongue. She refers to the reversed roles between parents and children in her own biographical experience of acquiring German as she takes the notion of mother tongue quite literary. According to this line of thought, German cannot logically be her mother tongue as it was not her mother who taught her that language. Thus, Sandra considers Polish to be her mother tongue, because, in fact, this is the language her mother taught her, even if she does not master Polish as she does German.

Sandra not only separates both languages into the realms of private and public life, but also, more specifically, between communicating with her family and everyone else. For the most part, her social circle consists of Germans: just like her friends and her colleagues, her partner is also German (ll.189, 396). Apart from her family, she is not in touch with other Germans of Polish origin. From time to time she meets others, but usually she is not interested in maintaining a social relationship with them (ll.419-438). However, there is one interesting incident; an exception. When she met a young woman of Polish origin within her work context. Sandra works for an association in Berlin. The other Polish woman worked there as a student for a while and Sandra immediately related to her because they were— according to Sandra—on the same wavelength (ll.407ff). Yet, the new colleague approached the use of "mother tongue" and "main language" in a fundamentally different way. Sandra tells me about it:

16 "Deutsch ist meine Hauptsprache, weil ich einfach—ich bin damit aufgewachsen in der Schule mit den Freunden."

17 "[Lachen] Ja, Muttersprache verbindet man ja mit den Wurzeln irgendwie, ne? Ja, Muttersprache ist, denke ich/ aber eigentlich müsste ich schon sagen, Deutsch ist meine Muttersprache, auch wenn ich jetzt so stoppe und sage: 'Oh ne.' Eigentlich sind es ja Wurzeln und Deutsch habe ich von meiner Mutter nicht gelernt."

"I have always talked to her in German. During the break, she sometimes tried to approach me in Polish, but I always switched into German, because I don't know why. It is at work. I also don't want to close myself off if someone else joins in. There are only Germans." (ll.409-412)[18]

Sandra had the possibility of speaking in her mother tongue to someone who also speaks Polish but she consistently rejected this offer, switching instead to German. Sandra makes a point to adapt in the different contexts she faces in her everyday life. She fears excluding herself and/or being excluded when speaking Polish in a German work environment. She prefers to speak German in order to stay socially accessible and to allow German speakers to join the conversation. For Sandra, this generally applies to any interactions in her public life, but—intriguingly—in her private life as well, as the continuation of the same story shows:

"[This colleague] no longer works there. Also, she had a baby. She speaks with her child only in Polish and she wants me to speak Polish with her too; for she does not hear any German. In that case, I speak Polish with her. But somehow, that's not very good. I always speak German with my sister, although she is Polish, too." (ll.412-416)[19]

When the young women meet in their leisure time, her colleague insists on speaking Polish so that her child does not hear German (ll.417). Perhaps Sandra's colleague thinks that the child will get confused with Polish-German code switching. In this situation, however, Sandra gives in and speaks Polish. Yet, she does not agree with her colleague's stance on the use of the heritage language and parenting. In order to emphasize her discontentment, Sandra refers to her sister, with whom she speaks German, who is of Polish heritage, and has a little daughter herself. In other words: for Sandra, there is no need to speak Polish just because two persons have the same heritage. Sandra's use of the Polish language

18 "Ich habe immer mit ihr Deutsch gesprochen. Manchmal in der Pause hat sie versucht Polnisch mit mir zu sprechen. Ich bin aber immer so ins Deutsche gewechselt, weil ich weiß nicht wieso. Man ist ja auch auf der Arbeit. Ich will mich da auch nicht abgrenzen, wenn jemand anderes noch dazu kommt. Es sind ja nur Deutsche."

19 "[Diese Arbeitskollegin] arbeitet jetzt nicht mehr da. Sie hat auch ein Kind bekommen. Sie spricht mit ihrem Kind auch nur auf Polnisch und möchte auch, dass ich mit ihr Polnisch spreche, damit es nicht Deutsch hört. Dann spreche ich auch mit ihr Polnisch. Aber irgendwie, das ist nicht so schön halt. Mit meiner Schwester spreche ich auch immer Deutsch, obwohl sie auch Polin ist."

is mainly restricted to her core family (but, interestingly, apart from her sister) and to the extended family back in Poland. Whenever she can, she avoids speaking Polish in Germany, regardless of work or leisure time. She only speaks Polish when she is explicitly requested to do so by her mother, for instance, who fears of losing touch with her cultural roots, and her colleague who demands respect for her way of parenting.

As pointed out before, Sandra considers Polish to be her mother tongue. She values it culturally, but, barely uses it. This is a somewhat paradoxical situation because Sandra distances herself from the use of Polish as she basically neglects the Polish language, but, at the same time, she calls Polish her mother tongue. If we define mother tongue according to language proficiency, German would be Sandra's mother tongue, but, arguably, because her mother could not teach her German, Sandra does not feel entitled to call German her mother tongue. She is thus faced with the situation in which none of these languages could be *legitimately* her mother tongue, so she sidesteps the issue by using the term "main language." When we take a look into her language use, it clearly mimics the rather assimilationist history of her integration into Germany: speaking Polish is rare and selective and used as a cultural symbol while speaking German is comprehensive and her dominant pattern of social action. This is *peculiar* to the German context, while it is safe to state that in the Canadian context there is a good chance that immigrants integrate their heritage language more into their everyday lives.

Cultural Ambiguity in a Settled Life

When I interviewed her, Sandra had been living in Germany for twenty-seven years. Following immigration, she has lived in one specific geographical space, Berlin. Sandra's trajectory is characterized by conformism. She completed her education with a general certificate of secondary education (*Realschulabschluß*). At the age of seventeen, she decided not to take the *Abitur*, which would entitle her to higher education. She did not know what to study, but she knew she wanted to work in an office. She therefore continued with an apprenticeship as a paralegal (*Rechtsanwaltsfachangestellte*) and worked for several organizations. She is currently working for a registered association of journalists and publishers. This job position has inspired her to progress in her profession. That is why she decided to study journalism as a correspondence course and to train further in the field of public relations, besides having gained additional qualifications like a certificate as a training supervisor (ll.54-84, 87-99). I believe that her life-path tells us a story of a "successful integration." Some realms of her life are charac-

terized by an assimilationist stance on integration (e.g., the language use), while others are more informed by her heritage culture; even when it comes with reluctance. A realm that cuts across the biography, but is at the same time its precondition and effect, is her self-understanding. Sandra tells me that she has often been asked about how she feels and understands herself. Whether she is more Polish or more German. This is her answer:

"When people ask me, I say, I am a Pole, because we often speak Polish at home. But I don't feel like a real Pole […] I wouldn't call myself a German either, but how can I put this? [10sec] Actually I'm feeling equal […]. I got this passport here. I have both citizenships [4sec]. It's kind of odd." (ll.179-182, 185f, 195f)[20]

Sandra does not provide a clear answer to the question she has been asked so many times. She usually replies being Polish, but in the same breath admits that this is not accurate. And yet, neither is it accurate to self-describe as German. Sandra's self-understanding is ambiguous as she cannot align herself entirely with either the Polish or the German culture. Owning both citizenships strengthens her affiliation with both cultures. Numerous studies have shown that hybrid identity constructions or a transnational sense of belonging are not anomalous in the context of migration; yet, Sandra feels at odds about it. Presumably because, on the one hand, her self-understanding differs from those Germans who are not or have never been embedded in migration or transnational contexts and who make up a big part of her social relationships. On the other hand, it seems to me that she would prefer to call herself a German, but that she has no full legitimization to do so, not least due to her Polish-sounding real name. This is paradoxical, because she is fully assimilated but nevertheless she *must not* understand herself as a German since her name does not really allow it. It seems as if assimilation has no endpoint or at least not the endpoint of becoming a *real* German, not because—I argue—she isolates herself, but rather because her case irritates the self-conception of German society that promotes a culturally homogeneous picture: the *real* German is a German with, for instance, a German-sounding name; and thus an assimilated person (even if ethnic German) can never be a *real* German, because s/he is or was faced with more than one cultural influence, com-

20 "Wenn mich Leute fragen, dann sage ich, ich bin Polin, weil zu Hause wird oft Polnisch gesprochen. Ich fühl' mich aber nicht wie eine richtige Polin […] Ich würde jetzt auch nicht sagen wie eine Deutsche, aber wie kann ich das denn ausdrücken? [10sec] Ich fühl' mich eigentlich gleichwertig […] Ich habe jetzt hier diesen Pass bekommen. Ich habe beide Staatsangehörigkeiten [4sec]. Es ist irgendwie komisch."

pleted with foreign-sounding names or different socialization experiences. This homogeneity of the German self-perception, makes Sandra suffer and it forces her to claim a feeling of cultural (and national) ambiguity, even if she would prefer to be perceived by others as a *real* German. Sandra has trouble expressing this feeling. She tries to be more concrete:

"There are many qualities I like better in Poland, but then again, there are other qualities of the Germans that I like. I guess, I just pick out […] what I think is simply good and I live the traditions or the things that I like from both sides." (ll.196-199)[21]

Sandra finds affinity with elements from both cultures. In her everyday life, she tries to bring these elements together and to combine them in her social practices. Her self-understanding—as I see it—is (out of necessity) ambiguous, but compatible. Sandra's everyday life is not anchored in strong Polish social networks, but she makes "ethnic choices" (Waters 1990) and picks these cultural practices that best fit the context. She leaves out, however, those elements that she does not approve of or that she finds difficult to deal with without rejecting her background altogether (Wessendorf 2013: 59) because—in that case—she would become culturally homeless *(heimatlos*) in a state of not being a Pole and not being a *real* German. Confronted with two cultural sets of values and practices, she sometimes needs to negotiate them in specific biographical constellations that she comes upon in her life course.

An example is her father's funeral, who passed away a few years ago as a result of a car accident (ll.210f, 498). Her father was buried in Poland. Part of the Catholic liturgy is characterized by the eating of a Eucharistic bread (*Hostie*). However, the tradition dictates that one makes a confession at the priest's confessional in order to be granted absolution for the committed sins. Only then, it one allowed to eat the Eucharistic bread during the funeral ceremony (ll.593-596). Sandra did not want to go to the confessional because she feared the priest would disapprove of her living together with a man with whom she is not married (ll.597ff). But Sandra's mother insisted and Sandra gave in:

21 "Es gibt viele Eigenschaften, die ich in Polen besser finde, aber dann auch wieder bei den Deutschen. Ich glaube, ich nehme mir das für mich heraus […] was ich einfach gut finde und lebe die Tradition oder die Sachen, die ich eben gut finde, von beiden Seiten aus."

"I really didn't want [to do it], but then I saw my mother and we all were in an exceptional state. And then I thought that I don't want to make her life harder and that I'll go to the confession." (ll.604ff)[22]

Sandra did her mother a favour by going to the confessional, although she really did not want to. She was afraid of making her mother's life even harder and feeling guilty about it afterward. Yet, Sandra's fear turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy:

"I didn't much know what to say. Then the priest was really disgusting and he said: […] 'Say, have you got a boyfriend?' I was like yes. He was then like: 'Are you married?' I was like no. 'Do you live together in an apartment?' I was like yes. […] He detained me there for twenty minutes and he said it's not okay, and he said I would have to marry. […] And I thought what is it that he wants to decide, this kind of thing and he was really disgusting he/ it was sort of sadistic how he approached me. Yeah, and then he said to me that he couldn't grant me absolution." (ll.608-618)[23]

Sandra tells me about this negative experience to illustrate the kinds of values and social practices of Polish culture she does not agree with. Interestingly, most of my interviewees tell me stories relating to Catholicism in one way or another. They usually intent on pointing out how their opinions diverge from religious traditions. Sandra is not the only one, in other words.[24] However, the story about the confession at her father's funeral certainly underlines the cultural difference between Poland and Germany: To share an apartment with your partner in Germany is widely accepted, while in Poland, extramarital living conditions are

22 "[…] Ich wollte es partout nicht, aber, ich habe meine Mutter dann gesehen und wir waren ja alle in einer Ausnahmesituation und dann dachte ich, mache ihr das Leben nicht schwer und gehe jetzt mal auf den Beichtstuhl […]."

23 "[…] Mir ist gar nicht so viel eingefallen [was ich sagen sollte]. Dann war der Pfarrer richtig ekelig und er hat dann gesagt: […] 'Sag mal, hast du denn einen Freund?' Ich so ja. Er so: 'Seid ihr denn verheiratet?' Ich so nein. 'Lebt ihr denn in einer Wohnung zusammen?' Ich so ja. […] Er hat mich 20 Minuten da festgehalten und meinte, das geht so nicht und er meinte, ich müsste heiraten. […] Und ich dachte mir was will er denn entscheiden, gleich schon dieses Ding und er war richtig ekelig wie er mich so/ es war schon so sadistisch irgendwie wie er auf mich so eingegangen ist. Ja und dann meinte er halt er kann mir nicht die Absolution erteilen."

24 Other interviewees, by contrast, complain about the lack of religious values in Germany.

(still) widely discredited, as directed by the Catholic Church. The impact of this conservatism even goes as far as landlords in Poland refusing to rent or sell apartments to non-married couples. For Sandra, this religious normativity prevented her from being granted absolution. She was hurt by this:

"Then I left the confessional, completely desperate, realizing that I could not take this Eucharistic bread and then I started to cry […]. Then there was the funeral and all others went to the altar to take the Eucharistic bread while I remained seated." (ll.624f)[25]

The priests' refusal of absolution hindered Sandra from fully participating in her father's funeral ceremony. She was excluded from this part of the ceremony and, hence, from the collective mourning over her father's loss. The ceremony, generally intended to provide a space for mourners to say goodbye to their loved ones and to come to peace with their loss, was instead a further source of grief, and aggravation. This painful incident led Sandra to distance herself from Catholicism as part of Polish culture (ll.628f). Besides the conservative Catholic stance of Polish society, Sandra is not fond of the traditional and normative way of life, one her mother carefully adheres to. Sandra explains this conformism with higher social control by a people who tend toward gossip (ll.203-218). By contrast, Germans, she proposes, tend not to concern themselves with the choices, moral or otherwise, of others. Sandra assumes that Germans have more interest in pursuing their hobbies or travelling, since they have better incomes. This is what they talk about, while people in Poland do not earn much, which increases their dependence on—and their attention toward—the family and community (ll.218-224). Likewise, there are some aspects of Polish culture that she cherishes, like people's kindness and warmth. Sandra believes that Polish people are more welcoming than Germans whom she has not often seen serving food to visitors. For Sandra, Polish people are better hosts (ll.203-208). What is more, the cohesion of the family is a bigger topic for Polish people while, in Germany, "it often happens that older people—yeah, we put them into an old people's home [laughter]—and that's not happening so much in Poland. (ll.228ff)"[26] Sandra cannot identify with this particular social practice, which she sees more often in

25 "Dann bin ich da raus aus dem Beichtstuhl, total verzweifelt, und dachte jetzt kann ich nicht diese Oblate nehmen und dann habe ich angefangen zu weinen […] Dann war die Beerdigung und alle sind zum Altar gegangen und haben sich diese Oblate geholt und ich bin da sitzen geblieben."

26 "[…] Ist es ja oft so, dass ältere Menschen - ja die schieben wir mal ins Altersheim ab [Lachen] und bei Polen gibt's das nicht so."

Germany: it is something she would not do (l.232). Generally, Sandra feels that the Polish culture comes with a range of expectations, which she finds arduous. Germans, in contrast, are more relaxed. Considering her cultural heterogeneity, she tries to pursue something in between the two poles in her own life (ll.230f).

All in all, Sandra's narrative about her life course shows a successful story of integrating into German society, in which she most often puts forward an assimilationist stance, regarding, for example, language acquirement and use, and at other times, her social practices and attitudes correspond more to a transnational or a "reluctant multicultural" view, which is mirrored in the narrative about her self-understanding. It is clear, however, that Sandra "arrived" (in the sense of *angekommen sein*) in Germany and found her place there. After initial difficulties of language acquirement, establishing social relationships, her parents' job search, and, in particular, after finding their own apartment, the family settled: "[when] we found an apartment […] and I got my own room […] Yeah, that's when we arrived." (ll.32f, 39)[27] Besides, Sandra has never had any difficulties being accepted as a valued member of German society (though not as a *real* German). She did not experience any form of ethnic discrimination, even when people around her speak derogatorily about foreigners:

"At work, the Germans sometimes complain: 'Man, there are so many Turks or foreigners.' They somehow don't refer to me [laughter] and I also don't feel addressed. Yeah, I could get worked up over it like: What? Do you have something against migrants?' But I somehow don't feel like [a migrant]." (ll.190-193)[28]

Sandra does not feel like a migrant and she is not perceived as one in her working environment, so the xenophobic statements of colleagues are not addressed toward her. She indicates that they are instead addressed toward people of Turkish heritage living in Germany. Interestingly, she must not claim to be a *real* (culturally homogeneous) German neither, as was pointed out earlier. She is in a state of being denied from understanding herself as *real* German, but she also does not understand herself as a *real* migrant. As a "successfully integrated" eth-

27 "[Als] wir dann eine Wohnung gefunden haben, […] [und] ich ein eigenes Zimmer bekommen [habe] […] Ja, so sind wir erstmal angekommen."

28 "Auf der Arbeit, also die Deutschen meckern auch manchmal: 'Mensch, hier sind so viele Türken oder so oder Ausländer.' Damit meinen die mich irgendwie nicht [Lachen] und ich fühle mich auch nicht angesprochen. Ja, ich könnt' ja auch ein Fass aufmachen: 'Was? Hast du was gegen Migranten?' Aber ich fühl mich irgendwie nicht [als Migrantin]."

nic German, Sandra's biographical experiences clearly show that her life is settled in Germany: she has her friends and core family, she has a satisfying job that she claims would take her further in her career, and, last but not least, her partner is German. Her pronounced settledness and embeddedness in Berlin make the interest or necessity of post-migration mobility unnecessary. In fact, Sandra's orientation toward mobility is aversive:

"Well, my roots are in Poland. I know that these are my roots, and if I were to die, I would rather be buried in Poland, but I would not want to live there. Weird, right? What a contradiction [laughter]." (ll.182ff)[29]

Sandra's aversion to mobility is directed toward her country of origin, Poland. She indeed acknowledges her Polish roots, but at the same time does not wish to live there. This is similar to what Vickermann (2002) calls a "transnational consciousness," that is an awareness of ties with the parents' homeland but without concrete transnational engagement. This is opposed to an assimilationist stance that denies this homeland. In Sandra's case, it is less about her parents' homeland, but about her country of origin as she is not a member of the second generation. However, a transnational engagement is not completely absent from Sandra's narrative. Sandra visits Poland regularly, which is according to Wessendorf (2013) a transnational activity. Yet, in terms of mobility practices, which I have defined as (*temporally-restricted*) *relocations of one's center of life,* transnational mobility is non-existent and in Sandra's life course and neither does she seek it: Poland is a place good enough to be dead, but not for living. Sandra herself admits that her wish to be buried there may not be consistent with her wish not to live there, not even for a restricted amount of time (ll.692). Until death, she wants to remain in Germany and, in this way, give her descendants the possibility of completing Sandra's assimilation efforts. We can assume that, as a mother, Sandra will teach her children German so that German can be legitimately their "mother tongue"[30] and that her children will have German-sounding names. Certainly, Sandra is an individual who lives a sedentary life in Berlin following her immigration in order to—according to my interpretation—complete her assimilation project within subsequent generations. Similar to Sandra, we shall now get

29 "Also, meine Wurzeln sind in Polen. Ich weiss, dass es meine Wurzeln sind, und würde ich sterben, würde ich lieber in Polen beerdigt werden. Das schon. Aber ich würde dort nicht leben wollen. Komisch, ne? Was für ein Widerspruch [Lachen]."

30 Conversely, it does not mean that she won't teach them to speak Polish.

to know Janusz, who at first remains immobile in Berlin, but for quite different reasons.

3.3 JANUSZ, PART I: "THE ONE WHO SPEAKS POLISH WORSE THAN HIS BROTHER"

Janusz is a young adult of thirty-three years who was living in Berlin when I interviewed him. I got in touch with him through my gatekeeper who gave me his contact details. He was open to my inquiry and we arranged an appointment for the interview straight away. The correspondence was short and unproblematic. We met in a quiet and empty café in the area around his neighbourhood, on 6 May, 2014. Our get-together was quite regular: after introducing ourselves, Janusz asked me some questions about my study before the interview started. After I posed my initial question, he fell into a narrative mode immediately. The interview lasted two hours and three minutes.

Janusz autobiographical narrative is a detailed summary of his life, in which he also reflects about the events and situations he has been telling me about. His life course differs from the ones analyzed before as it is based on different preconditions. His narrative focuses less on integration into Germany. In contrast to Anja and Sandra, Janusz does not have his own experience of immigration as he was born in Germany. In view of my study interest, I divide the analysis of his narrative into two parts. I have identified these parts based on a specific *key moment* in his life that opened up new future possibilities for him and changed his further life-path. In this section, however, I will deal with the first part of his narrative. The second one will be part of the next empirical section. In the first part, however, Janusz focuses his narrative on language and language education. We shall now see how he constructs a narrative about his life experiences, in which *the lack of language education* plays a significant role.

Two Educational Models in a Bi-Ethnic Family

Janusz has Polish roots, indeed, but with respect to my understanding of migration and mobility it would be too odd to state that he is a migrant in Germany. Following the definition of the *Mikrozensus* (2013: 6), Janusz falls under the category of "persons with a migration background," and more specifically, he would be categorized as a "not immigrated German." (*nicht zugewanderter Deutsche*, ibid.: 578) We might think that it would be the same as to simply call him a German, but the crucial difference is, by definition, that one of his parents

was born outside of Germany, and in his case, in Poland. Accordingly, Janusz father is a Pole and his mother is a German (l.17). He tells me the story of how his parents met. Janusz's mother grew up in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) in East Berlin. In GDR times, many schools offered East-European language classes of countries with whom they maintained a so-called "friendship between nations." (*Volksfreundschaft*) (ll.21-24) Therefore, Janusz's mother learned Polish for several years and developed an affinity for the language, the country, and the people:

"She started learning Polish very early and developed a certain affinity and then she travelled a lot and […] then she developed a network, a circle of friends, and through that she later […] met my father when she was in her 20's." (ll.27-30)[31]

Through the acquirement of the Polish language, Janusz's mother was able to travel to Poland where she met new people. It so happened that she met her husband to-be in the wake of her mobility experiences. Janusz's mother soon got pregnant and the couple got married. Janusz's father then moved to East Germany, where Janusz's brother was born first and two years later Janusz himself (ll.33-41). He was brought up in a bi-ethnic household until the age of 6, when his parents separated in 1987 (l.48). The educational language model, which his parents followed, is particularly striking in Janusz's narrative about his life course: it not only required an idea of how to educate the children language-wise, but the parents also put forward two different models of (language) education for each of their sons. Since the Polish language skills of Janusz's mother were quite proficient, the family mainly spoke Polish within the household at first. For Janusz's brother, the situation turned out as follows:

"Within the household, my parents talked to each other in Polish until my birth and so my brother was educated in Polish at home. He learned German through the German grandparents and the kindergarten […] as far as the family legends and family histories go, he spoke Polish first than German." (ll.70-74)[32]

31 "Sie hat also sehr früh Polnisch angefangen zu lernen und eine gewisse Affinität [entwickelt] und ist dann viel gereist und […] entwickelte dann ein Netzwerk, ein Freundeskreis und dadurch hat sie dann später […] in den 20ern meinen Vater kennengelernt."

32 "Meine Eltern [haben] bis zur meiner Geburt Polnisch miteinander gesprochen im Haushalt und mein Bruder wurde also auch zu Hause Polnisch erzogen. [Er] hat Deutsch über die deutschen Großeltern, über den Kindergarten [gelernt] […] soweit

Janusz's parents continued his brother's Polish language education and sent him to a Polish school in addition to the general school system in East Germany. The GDR provided extra-curriculum language schools for some other communist nations, such as Poland (ll.78-85) and his parents took up this offer for his brother. When Janusz was born, however, his parents had the idea to put forward a different language model: "My mother spoke in her language, in German, to me and my father spoke in Polish to me. That was the idea." (ll.87f)[33] Yet, this idea was not put into practice as he remembers always having spoken German with his father (ll.93). Consequently, Janusz did not acquire Polish to the same degree as his elder brother (l.90). As mentioned before, the lack of Polish language skills is very present in Janusz's narrative about his life course; not least because it takes a certain turn later on.

Janusz has had conversations with his father about the upbringing he and his brother each had. He was wanting to know why the initial idea failed:

"According to his recollection, [my father] said that it was much easier to speak German with me, because he felt that I didn't understand Polish very well. He said, he didn't have patience and it was more important for him to communicate with me quickly, rather than to be consistent, so to speak." (ll.125-128)[34]

Janusz has been preoccupied for quite some time over the fact that he cannot speak Polish, otherwise he would rather have not touched on the topic. As a result, the brothers had different language proficiencies, even though Janusz's parents also sent him to the Polish language school, but he stopped after six months (l.609). It was easier for him to communicate in German. As a child, he basically developed a defensive attitude toward communicating in Polish:

"[…] I also spoke Polish very reluctantly as a child. I always tried to escape from it, which is, of course, related to the fact that I was not able to [speak the language]. And you feel so powerless as a child, right, at least that is the way I see it. Of course, language is a very

die Familienlegende und Familiengeschichten es immer beschreiben, [hat er] auch erst Polnisch gesprochen als Deutsch."

33 "Meine Mutter hat in ihrer Sprache, also in Deutsch, zu mir gesprochen und mein Vater hat in Polnisch zu mir gesprochen. So war die Idee."

34 "[Mein Vater] meinte in der Rückerinnerung, dass es viel einfacher war dann schon mit mir Deutsch zu sprechen, weil er das Gefühl hatte, ich hatte Polnisch nicht so gut verstanden. Er meinte, er habe keine Geduld gehabt und es war für ihn wichtiger dann schnell mit mir zu kommunizieren, anstatt dann sozusagen konsequent zu sein."

important instrument in the social world and if you cannot express yourself, then you are so degraded." (ll.102-106)[35]

Janusz was often confronted with situations where others communicated in Polish. These memories are negative ones: He remembers that he did not at all like to speak Polish and that he always tried to get away from it. He felt uncomfortable. His denial of Polish has been based on the feeling of powerlessness and degradation, as Janusz explains *ex post*. It was nurtured by the fact that he was just not able to express himself. Those situations, in which he was exposed to the Polish language, promoted a set of psychological factors, which linked the Polish language with negative emotions. The negative emotions of powerlessness and degradation solidified during his childhood:

"During my childhood, we were also often in Poland […] as long as my parents were married […] we were always there in the summer for several weeks, sometimes without our parents, I think." (ll.140-143)[36]

During Janusz's childhood years, the family often visited relatives in Poland. The brothers would spend their whole summer holidays there. Even when their parents had to go back to work, they stayed with their grandparents (ll.144). This kind of "holiday transnationalism" (Wessendorf 2013: 33) and spending so much time in a Polish-speaking environment was stressful for Janusz, even though his elder brother always translated for him (l.623f). Nevertheless, his family teased him about his lack of Polish. Interestingly, the boys held Polish citizenship up until their parents separated and the *Wende* occurred: the German turnaround and the reunification of Germany. Janusz's German grandmother made fun of him, imagining a future scenario, in which Janusz would have to struggle due to his lack of Polish language skills:

35 "[…] Ich [sprach] auch sehr ungern Polnisch als Kind. Ich habe mich da sehr dem versucht immer zu entziehen und was natürlich auch damit zusammenhängt: Ich konnte es auch nicht. Und […] so meine Erklärung, man fühlt sich als Kind so machtlos, ne. Sprache ist natürlich ein ganz wichtiges Instrumentarium in so 'ner sozialen Welt und wenn man sich nicht ausdrücken kann, dann ist man so degradiert."

36 "Wir waren ja auch viel in meiner Kindheit in Polen […] solange meine Eltern verheiratet waren […] wir waren immer im Sommer mehrere Wochen dort, teilweise auch ohne unsere Eltern, glaube ich."

"She then alluded to my non-existent Polish that I will be left empty-handed, because I would have to serve in the Polish army eventually. This was my greatest fear as a child." (ll.266-269)[37]

Jansz' grandmother painted a picture of his future, which scared him very much. What was meant as a joke, ended up being a "horror scenario" in Janusz's childhood and most likely contributed to his dissociation from one of his cultural origins.

Marginalizing "Polishness"

Janusz was certainly familiar with the Polish environment, but he never understood it as a part of himself:

"Polish has become a marginal phenomenon, which was not entirely unfamiliar to me […] but it was rather 'the other.' I conceived of Polish rather as 'the other' and […] never as a part of me." (ll.136ff)[38]

People around him would often speak Polish, but Janusz himself would not. The language he used was German. He always perceived Polish as "the other" language, which he was not unfamiliar with, but which he did not see as a part of himself. After his parents separated, Janusz and his brother still travelled to Poland with their father, but the language fell out of daily use (ll.149-151). Puberty was a particularly decisive life phase, in which Janusz wanted to do his own thing. He withdrew more and more from any Polish influences:

"You become adolescent, you become a teenager, and then you get an incentive to do your own thing. […] Perhaps because I never spoke Polish, I was not interested. I continued to distance myself more and more, I didn't necessarily want to have anything to do with it." (ll.153-155)[39]

37 "Sie hat dann angespielt auf mein nichtexistentes Polnisch, dass ich ja irgendwann das Nachsehen habe, weil ich werde am Ende ja irgendwann in der polnischen Armee dienen müssen. Das war immer als Kind meine große Angst."

38 "Das Polnische [ist] zu einer Randerscheinung [geworden], die mir zwar nicht vollkommen unvertraut war, die […] aber doch eher das Andere war. Ich habe das Polnische doch eher als was Anderes begriffen und […] nie als ein Teil von mir."

39 "Man wird dann pubertär, man wird dann jugendlich, man kriegt dann auch so einen Anreiz sein eigenes Ding zu machen. […] Vielleicht weil ich auch nie Polnisch

His interest in the Polish part of his heritage decreased continually. He not only visited his relatives in Poland less and less, but at one point he completely stopped (ll.168f). As a teenager, Janusz would not even mention his Polish roots:

"I never liked this 'Polishness' as a child and teenager. I met friends, and I never mentioned it. […] Only very close friends knew about it, those who also entered into my family world. They knew I had a Polish father, but otherwise, I have never discussed it with my friends. It was as if I wanted to ban it." (ll.653-658)[40]

Other people, and even his circle of friends—except for a few exceptions did not know of Janusz's Polish roots. He intentionally concealed this biographical fact from others. As he states himself, he was eager to "ban" it from his everyday life in Germany. In a way, he was ashamed of it (ll.660), but—according to his *ex post* reflection—not because he feared being stereotyped by others, but rather because he connoted it with a kind of pressure and expectation, that he did not feel able to fulfill (ll.667ff). Janusz did not go to Poland for many years. He was still in touch with his father, with whom he spoke German, but he basically broke off contact with his relatives in Poland. He refused to go there due to his lack of the Polish language: "I didn't go there for years. It was more and more so, because I had no desire to encounter this lack of understanding in the very strict sense." (ll.208ff)[41]

In the interim, Janusz's life in Germany proceeded quite normally. First, he completed his education in Berlin with the certificate of *Abitur*. Then, he "was lucky to have been rejected as unfit for military duty" (ll.307), but did not know what to do professionally. Janusz took a year off to try out different internships. It was at this point in time that he attempted to learn Polish of his own volition: "At one point of time, I started to take a test course at the community college […]. [The idea] emerged out of a conversation with my brother, I think, if I re-

sprach, mich hat es nicht so interessiert, ich habe mich immer weiter distanziert davon, wollte auch nicht unbedingt was damit zu tun haben."

40 "Ich mochte als Kind und Jugendlicher, ich mochte nie auch dieses 'Polnisch-Sein.' Ich habe Freunde kennengelernt, und ich habe das nie erwähnt. Das fiel immer runter. […] Es wusste nur ganz enge Freunde, die auch eingedrungen sind in meine familiäre Welt. Die wussten, dass ich einen polnischen Vater hatte, aber ansonsten, ich habe es mit meinen Freunden auch nie thematisiert. Es ist wie als ob ich das verbannen wollte."

41 "Ich bin ja seit Jahren nicht mehr hingefahren aus diesem Grund immer mehr, weil ich keine Lust hatte, auf dieses Unverständnis im eigentlichen Sinne zu stoßen."

member correctly [4sec]." (ll.179-182)[42] He only attended the class for a few months because he considered it to be of no great use (l.183). Since his knowledge re-activated very fast, the class for beginners was not challenging enough for him. Retrospectively, he assesses the class as "didactically unconvincing" (l.188) and so he stopped. In the further course of his life, he decided to study history, political science, and economics (l.193) and moved from Berlin to Greifswald. For the time being, Janusz's student years signified a biographical "cut" in which he did not concern himself with Poland or the Polish language until toward the end of his studies (ll.189ff). In this first part his story, the lack of his Polish language skills and the outcomes of it in the form of a loss of Polish cultural and familial ties dominate Janusz's narrative about his life. However, this is not to last as Janusz develops a strong will to learn what he was initially denied and also denied himself.

3.4 IMMOBILITY: INCORPORATION, AVERSION, AND SEDENTARINESS

The results of analyzing these three life stories show us that *language*, a *sense of belonging* and *family structures* play a role in the respondents' narratives about their immobile experiences of being in the world. These discourses interrelate with experiences about integration, aversion, and predominant post-migration sedentariness. Anja constructs contrasting imaginaries about her country of origin and her country of arrival, in which she rejects her Polish cultural heritage and puts forward a strong sense of belonging toward Canada. Constructing senses of belonging, however, is not necessarily an "either/or question."

While both Anja and Sandra are well-integrated into their countries of arrival, they have different relationships toward their countries of origin. They both are quite successful in their career paths and this is something that "non-migrants" and "migrants" alike are usually proud of and like to share, yet for those labelled "migrants" professional success is always interrelated with integration. Conversely, Sandra constructs a narrative about successful and unsuccessful integration, viewing her own process as successful. Adjusting to German society was a mutual project of the whole family. The acquisition of German was so central to this endeavor that the familial roles of the "educators" and "ed-

42 "Irgendwann habe ich so an der Volkshochschule angefangen einen Probekurs zu machen […]. Es kam aus dem Gespräch mit meinem Bruder, glaube ich, wenn ich mich richtig erinnere [4sec]."

ucated," were reversed with Sandra's parents learning German from their children. Once integrated, Sandra puts forward an assimilationist stance on her language use, yet she also makes "ethnic choices" (Waters 1990), but rather reluctantly. By contrast, Janusz's narrative is not about incorporation. Not least because I choose neither to label him as a "migrant," nor to call Germany his "country of arrival" only because his father is Polish-born (as the definition of the German federal bureau of statistics indicates). "Country of arrival" and "country of origin" are categories commonly used in migration research, but I doubt their analytical value in Janusz's life story. Understanding Germany as his "country of arrival" and Poland as his "country of origin" would distort social reality. Germany is certainly Janusz's country of origin and Poland is also a country where (parts of) his cultural roots lie. Therefore, I argue that Germany as well as Poland both account for his *countries* of origin ("travelling origins," ch. 5.2).

In addition, all three respondents construct discourses in their narratives, which include more or less strong aversions. Anja is averse to Poland and Polish culture. When I think of Anja retrospectively, I find her reservations about doing an interview with me perfectly understandable, even logical. Now it makes all sense: since she generally rejects her heritage culture, she was probably not thrilled to do an interview that focuses on exactly that: her life as a young adult of Polish heritage in Canada. Anja, however, could proudly display her heritage in a multicultural society like Canada, but she chooses to reject it, which seems "unnecessary" as some of Canada's federal governments officially perceive Canada as a country without a dominant majority culture (not so in Quebec, ch. 4.2), enabling people with different ethno-cultural backgrounds to be perceived as fully-fledged Canadians. Anja's rejection of her heritage culture is, according to my interpretation, rather based on the contempt of Poland's history and policy. Anja has political or ideological reasons for refusing her Polish heritage and she openly proclaims her rejection because her father—as her most important familial attachment figure—is of the same opinion. In fact, Anja's father was a political refugee, a dissident in the eyes of the former Communist regime in Poland. Her dislike of everything that is Polish therefore is a way to show understanding of her father's situation and to assure her loyalty toward him. With this in mind, Canada's policy of multiculturalism appears even more desirable for Anja as it strongly reflects her political attitudes, arguably, not least because Canada accommodated her father and his family. Interestingly, Anja's life course contains a post-migration mobility experience in the form of a *temporally restricted relocation of her center of life* from Canada to Poland. At first glance, it seems paradoxical: Why would she go to live in a place she rejects? Her going

"abroad" for a year is inconsistent with her aversion toward Poland, yet it is quite consistent with her career ambitions. What is more, Anja maintains social networks in Poland, which can only have been established through her family relationships *in situ*. This "mobility capital" (Kaufmann et al. 2004) means knowing about professional opportunities and, potentially, moving for them. Besides, Anja's language skills in Polish are good. She immigrated to Canada at the age of nine. Thus, she attended school in Poland for three years and, accordingly, gained basic writing skills in addition to her oral proficiency in Polish, diminishing the risk of encountering language barriers. Anja left Canada in order to work in a musical in Poland for a year. She thus connects spatial mobility with social mobility. She gained valuable career-related experience, though she is mainly based in Canada. Her aim to become professionally successful outweighed her aversion. In a way, we can understand her temporary move to Poland as a factor contributing to her professional success in Canada, and thus also supporting her integration and social advancement there. In this case, mobility is the means to an end, not the objective.

Sandra, however, avoids mobility experiences, most notably those that would take her to Poland, but also elsewhere. Apart from her initial migration, Sandra's life takes place in only *one geographical space*, Berlin. She has not experienced any kind of spatial movement (domestic or border-crossing): she never moved out of Berlin. In fact, this kind of immobility is rather rare. Sandra lives a settled life in Berlin where she has everything she needs. Relocating her life center is not a potential possibility for her. Mobility seems out of the question. Sandra maintains transnational connections with her family in Poland and can thus potentially establish social networks there, but she does not activate this "mobility capital" (Kaufmann et al. 2004) because she lacks an important resource: language, or more precisely, the writing skills in Polish. Going abroad to Poland would mean that Sandra would not be able to work in her profession there, since she works in an administrative profession for which writing skills are key. This kind of capital is simply not available to her because the families' integration endeavour focused on the acquirement of the German language, leading to a neglect of other languages, namely Polish. Poland, however, does not need to be the only "eligible" destination to which my respondents direct their mobility experiences. But again, Sandra does not have any other foreign language skills, making it difficult for her to pursue a professional life in any country other than Germany. The lack of (foreign) language skills hinders mobility experiences, but her focus on German aids her in her project of upward social mobility in the highly stratified German society. Sandra tries hard to climb the social ladder as becomes obvious when she distances herself from her cousins, who demonstrate

milieu-specific behaviours of a lower class. For her, successful integration is linked with processes of social advancement. In her case, geographical mobility would, arguably, imply a lower social standing due to lack of writing skills in Polish and a general lack of knowledge of foreign languages, but also a lack of social contacts. I interpret Sandra's immobility as a means to improve her social standing in Germany and to prepare the "best conditions" for the intergenerational completion of her assimilation project. In her lifetime, she will not be perceived as culturally-homogeneous, i.e., the *real* German, but her children may. All these factors make sedentariness after migration plausible in her life course. In sum, both young women, Anja and Sandra, fulfill their (parents') original migration project (Juhasz/Mey 2003).

Janusz developed an aversion toward the Polish language. He grew up in a bi-ethnic, and, in fact, in a bilingual family, but he was not bilingually educated. In contrast to his brother, his parents never taught Januzs the Polish language. From early on, he had a defensive attitude toward communicating in Polish. He distanced himself more and more from his Polish cultural roots, which resulted in him breaking off contact with his relatives in Poland for many years. The analysis shows a reversed migration narrative: since Janusz did not immigrate into Germany, he is not struggling to learn German as it is his mother tongue, yet not having learned the language of his other country of origin burdens and restricts him. Janusz does not construct a narrative about integration success or failure, he constructs a narrative about the consequences of the lack of language skills. His lack of the Polish language is a barrier for maintaining ties to the Polish side of his family, and it certainly hinders him from potential mobility experiences to Poland.

Anja, Sandra, and Janusz all incorporate the national discourses of immigration policy of either Canada or Germany, i.e., of that country in which they are sedentary. The effects are often paradoxical, limiting, and even painful. Anja celebrates the Canadian multicultural tolerance of cultures, but she does not tolerate her own heritage culture. It leaves me wondering: what remains of multiculturalism if one refuses one's cultural roots? Conversely, Sandra would like to understand herself as *real* German, not least because she subscribes to the German assimilationist policy, yet she cannot or perhaps she *must not* due to her real name that reveals her heritage to be non-German, *even though* she is integrated. Last but not least, Janusz's discourse is not about integration into Germany, but rather about *disintegration from Poland*. However, he will not leave it at that and this will result into a shift of mobility patterns later in his life course. As we will see in the following, immobility evolves into transmobility.