THIS IS YOUR LIFE.

DO WHAT YOU LOVE, AND DO IT OFTEN.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE SOMETHING, CHANGE IT.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE YOUR JOB, QUIT.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME, STOP WATCHING TV.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE, STOP; THEY WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU WHEN YOU START DOING THINGS YOU LOVE.

STOP OVER ANALYZING, ALL EMOTIONS ARE BEAUTIFUL. LIFE IS SIMPLE. WHEN YOU EAT, APPRECIATE EVERY LAST BITE.

OPEN YOUR MIND, ARMS, AND HEART TO NEW THINGS AND PEOPLE, WE ARE UNITED IN OUR DIFFERENCES. ASK THE NEXT PERSON YOU SEE WHAT THEIR PASSION IS, AND SHARE YOUR INSPIRING DREAM WITH THEM.

TRAVEL OFTEN; GETTING LOST WILL HELP YOU FIND YOURSELF.

SOME OPPORTUNITIES ONLY COME ONCE, SEIZE THEM. LIFE IS ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU MEET, AND THE THINGS YOU CREATE WITH THEM SO GO OUT AND START CREATING.

LIFE IS SHORT. LIVE YOUR DREAM, AND WEAR YOUR PASSION.

Transformation through Travelling:
Catalyst for Change?

Narratives of Repatriated Travellers

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Date:	6 July 2011

WAGENINGEN UR
For quality of life

"Changes only happen when we go against everything we're used to doing"

Paulo Coelho, 2010

Abstract

This thesis explores the transformative potential of travelling. It looks at the positive side that travelling can bring to us. This is done within the philosophical framework of transmodernity, a claimed paradigm shift that moves beyond (post)modernism towards a more harmonious, sustainable world. The **purpose** is to provide a better understanding of how experiences (and associated positive change) from long-term travels can be integrated upon arrival back home. This thesis seeks to contribute to the tourism and repatriation literature by examining how long-term travellers can be included as sojourners in repatriation studies and how repatriation can contribute to tourism literature by providing useful concepts regarding the post-travel phase. **Qualitative data** from autoethnography and memory-work from repatriated travellers that have profoundly changed due to their long-term travel experiences are used to explore the transformative power of travels upon individuals and their social surroundings.

The **results** support the transformative potential of travelling and that travelling can enhance transmodern thoughts. Travelling abroad opened their eyes, as they viewed their lives from a distance. All participants drastically changed their lifestyles, in which values of environment(al) (education) and intercultural understanding were highly valued against a negative attitude towards a western materialistic, hurried society. All personal stories reveal an increased level of awareness; that is an increase of self-awareness and simultaneously an increase of global (environmental and cultural) awareness. The changes they made in their lives can be considered as deep change which was sometimes hard and contradictory.

In addition, the **results** emphasize that long-term travellers cope with problems in integrating their lived travel experiences in their daily lives which illustrates the need allies with repatriation studies to include long-term travellers as sojourners and to acknowledge the impact of travelling upon return home. Plus, for tourism studies to pay increasing attention to the post-travel phase as all repatriated travellers experienced a process of change – something which is still undermined.

Key words:

Transmodernity; transformative travel; long-term travels; repatriation; re-entry; sojourn; social change; memory-work; post-travel phase

Acknowledgements

A master thesis, which is the end of my academic journey, should not only capture all the things I have learned about before, but should also mirror my passion. All the loose lines should come together, be connected, making the circle round. It was actually quite the opposite of what I thought, prior to the start. It will be a horrible six months behind my computer, pertaining a contrasting feeling of freedom, constantly being pulled between friends, joy, play and tough theory, stuffy books, endless articles. I *thought*. Somewhere along the process of writing this thesis, I realized that everything *did* came together. I did enjoy it (mostly). If I look back on the process of thesis writing, from beginning to an end, it much coheres with a w-curve model I present to you later on.
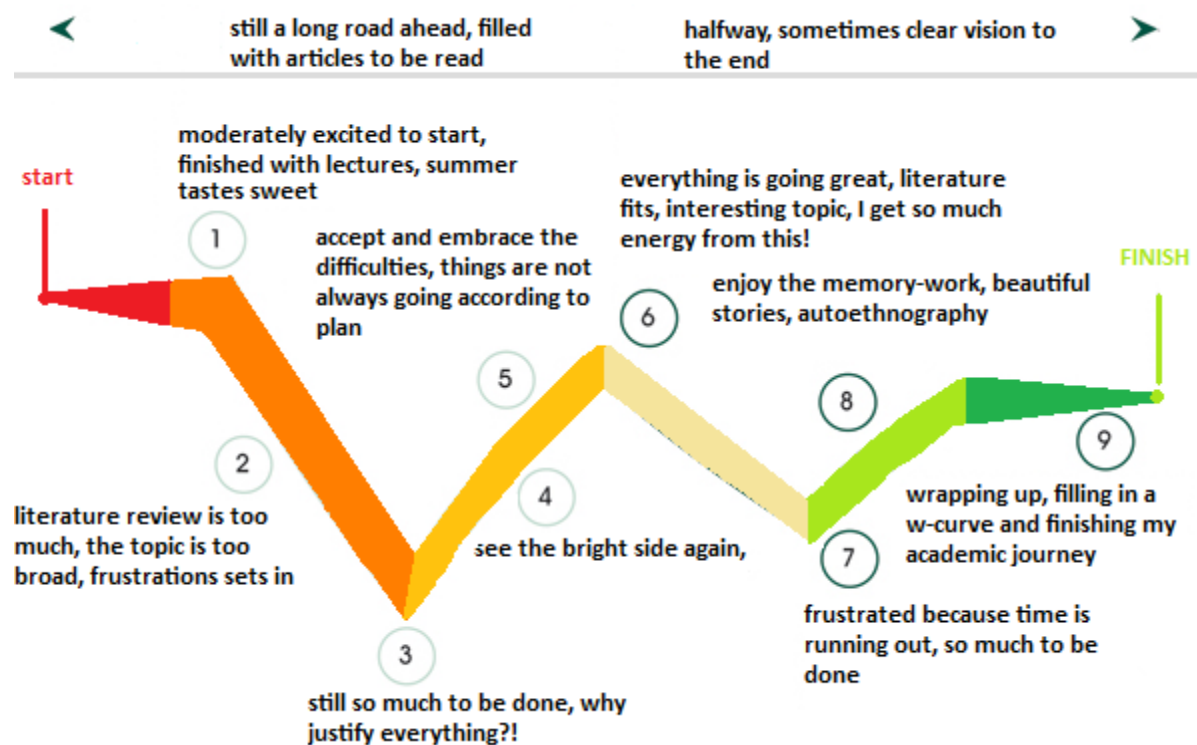
This thesis reflects the interesting things I (sometimes coincidentally) heard about, my standpoints about life, about the academic world.

For instance, the memory-work was something I first heard about during a lecture about the Memory Box given by Judith Coullie, when I was an intern at NZTRI. The interest of the topic derived from my own curiosity around the term 'sojourner', that I accidently heard of during the NZTHRC conference, late November 2010. Carolyn Deuchar, a colleague at the same company, inspired me with the beautifulness of qualitative research methods during small talks at the workplace. Recognition in the

academic articles of Brown, Kottler, Zahra & McIntosh and Noy who kept the constitution of my theoretical framework more than interesting. The use of autoethnography, brought to my attention by my supervisor, a method that allowed me to write in a certain emotional style, away from the static. This static 'objective' writing that makes you justify almost every sentence was often a major reason to dislike the academic world as I fancy a more personal writing style. This then relates back to my personal interest in journalism, a narrative style of writing that, I experienced up to a year ago, is not allowed in the academic world. It was the course of Maarten Jacobs during my masters when I discovered a whole new field, the psychology of experiences and the way of describing it through the means of emotionally lived experiences. Senses, hearing, feeling, it was academically allowed and I enjoyed it. This mirrors my own autoethnography in the memory-work assignment.

Not only have I engaged with interesting and beautiful research methods of memory-work and autoethnography (as sadly enough a large part of academic research remains too quantitative!), but also with inspiring stories provided by my participants. Friends whom I have met during travels that shared their deepest thoughts with me. And to whom I owe a great thanks. I know the assignment was quite demanding, but I am more than grateful for the interesting perspectives you shared with me. It was certainly something that kept my enthusiasm and inspiration about the topic going.

Was it the master that inspired me? The variety of people certainly did. My classmates of whom some became close friends of mine sharing tears and laughter, love and frustrations and the teachers of whom some truly inspired me. I would like to end with acknowledging to someone that to me, has been a great source of inspiration, a bubbling source of energy and optimism. That is how I got to know first my teacher and now my supervisor Irena Ateljevic. Getting introduced to transmodernity, constituting hope about the tourism industry and providing me with a wealth of enthusiasm and criticality during my research. You have done a great task at Wageningen University; I wish you all the best for the future and ascertain that you will reach out to more people with your truly inspiring personality! ☺

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Guide For The Armchair Traveller

Armchair travelling – virtually travelling from your armchair.

As today's society is characterised by hurry, hassle and little time and as this thesis contains quite some pages, this small guide helps you to find the right direction.

Regardless your particular interest, I highly recommend you to read the introductory chapter (**1**).

In addition, if you are interested in:

Sojourn and transformative travelling

If you are wondering why we go travelling in the first place and what is meant with a sojourn, sections **2.4 – 2.6** are all yours.

Repatriation and the post-travel phase

In a theoretical sense, returning home from travelling is discussed in sections **2.7 – 2.9**. In a more practical way, chapter **5** (from §**5.2** onwards) plus the <u>third</u> paragraph of all participants' stories (chapter **4**); further illustrate the re-entry of travellers.

Transmodernity

If you are curious to find out what transmodernity means, sections **2.1 – 2.3** provide sufficient explanation. Please note that in contrast to the other chapters, it is quite a <u>philosophical</u> journey. Chapter **6** explores what road lies ahead in terms of transmodernity.

Methods of memory-work

If you are interested in finding out more about the methodology of memory-work, §**3.3** and §**3.5** provide the theory. Chapter **4** is the result of memory-work put into practise.

Experiences of repatriated travellers

If you want to know all about the participants, §**3.4** and chapter **4** dedicate writing to them.

Whatever chapters you chose, I hope that this thesis will take you on a journey of self-discovery and I hope you aboard with me on this journey. It would be another type of armchair travelling☺!

1   Going on a Philosophical Journey

This introductory chapter provides the main fundaments where the subsequent chapters are build on. Transmodernity, the main philosophical tenet of this thesis will come to the fore in this introduction (§1.1-1.2), as understanding the rest of this thesis requires some familiarity with the concept. Furthermore, as I analyze tourism through transmodern lenses, it forms an inevitable part of my own positionality. Before taking the exit to Utopia (§1.1), as the picture in the right corner illustrates, you can read the line of my thoughts in box 1.1. To fully grasp the essence, I invite you to continue reading.

Subsequently, as tourism can be understood as metaphor of the social world (Dann, 2002), the first relation will be drawn of how travelling in a novel environment can bring about changes in a person. Tourism is about being away from home and I argue that exactly these out-of-the-daily-environment-experiences can open one's eyes and bring about potential change (§1.3). Yet, as voluntary return to one's home country is inevitable, the key lies upon sustaining the change. Therefore, a large part of this thesis focuses on the post-travel phase, which is repatriating home from travelling, and relates transmodernity and the transformative potential of travelling to come to a better understanding how a change in values can be sustained. Overall research aim and objectives will become clear in paragraph 1.5.

As literature considering the transformative potential and the impact of the post-travel phase has received relative scant attention, I will draw from the areas of repatriation, intercultural communication and tourism studies to bridge the existing gap in literature and create a vast theoretical body. Lastly, this section will summarise the gaps between tourism and repatriation studies and where they both meet and can aid each other. Future research (§1.6) will help these fields of study to become further aware of this gap and more importantly, to bridge it. Regarding this context, I argue that cooperation and recognition from both sides is useful, especially within the claimed emergence of transmodernity as the overall framework of this thesis.

The researcher's philosophy

*I decided to engage with transmodernity. This embodies a paradigm shift towards global consciousness, where we unite and become aware of our Earth Citizenship. Does that sound too philosophical to you? Honestly, I am Dutch and down-to-earth, but the philosophy of transmodernity inspired me. Yet, transmodernity is just an **emerging claim**. If you don't believe it, or see things differently, that's fine. It is just my vision. Therefore, I am not arguing that modernity has ended nor that postmodernity has ended and transmodernity is <u>it</u>. In contrary, transmodernity is very transparent and parallel advances with other paradigms. Yet, I have chosen to engage with it and you, for some reason, got inspired by my thesis topic and are now reading this box. Therefore, I want to make sure that you understand that it is my view I present to you and that I am aware of other paradigms, but simply not engage with those ones.*

The researcher's optimism

*I have operated from the belief that "positive benefits of tourism" (Ateljevic, 2009) should be celebrated. By focussing on the positive things tourism can constitute, the overall style of my thesis is optimistic. Does that make me naive or ignorant? No, as I acknowledge that the tourism industry has brought and still brings a lot of damage to e.g. nature, noticeable around the world. It is not my aim to neglect this happening as such, but in this thesis; I want to focus on the **positive things** tourism can bring.*

The researcher's perspective

*This makes me come to my last point: Eurocentrism. By focussing on travellers who can afford to travel for a significant amount of time, I am aware of a **western point of view**, as travelling remains a **fortunate** activity. Can I downsize this Eurocentric position? No. But by being aware of this, **reflection** helps to clarify this position. You should notice that a lot of people write and say things filled with Eurocentrism but are unaware of it. Does that make me some wholly person? No, often my supervisor reminded me of this, to whom I am very grateful. Secondly, my awareness creates a critical position. On the one hand I maintain my western perspective, but on the other hand I am critiquing this same perspective continuously. Throughout the thesis I am very critical about this position (see for instance box 1.2).*

I hope I have made you aware of some essential elements that influenced this thesis. By being aware of this and sharing this with you, I am able to bring forth by arguments.

1.1 Chasing the good Life

Utopia /yoo-**toh**-pi-uh/ ● *an imagined place or society where everything is perfect.* - ORIGIN the title of a book by Sir Thomas More, from Greek *ou* 'not' + *topos* 'place'.

A long time ago, about 500 years, there appeared a book describing a strange and unknown island, Utopia. The people that lived on the island, the Utopians, were the happiest persons one could imagine. The island had the highest level of equality in terms of communal ownership, a tolerance of multiple religions and equal educational levels between men and women.

Thomas More (1516) positioned Utopia as the perfect world opposed to the real society of the 16th century. By contrasting the religious, social and political problems that had to be dealt with, More critiqued the modern European society. Whilst Utopia offers a blueprint for a perfect society, More used it as a social satire rather than an applicable model. After all, "*it was not the institution of Commonwealths that More desired to reform, but the spirit*" (Donner, 1945).

But what if it would exist? Are we all not in search for the perfect world?[1] A place where we live in peace with each other and nature? If we think about The Beach, the perfect island written by Alex Garland where a young adventurous traveller is in search for a hidden paradise, away from the mass and ordinary or Jon Krakauer's Into the Wild, where a keen young man says goodbye to society in search for enlightenment through solitude and nature?

If we do not keep on dreaming, believing in a perfect world, we will never be able to find it. However, modern technology has enabled us to discover even the smallest distinct place in the world, which diminishes chances in finding a perfect society on this planet to zero. Reason to give up? No. The question is not whether the glass is half full or half empty, but instead we should ask ourselves: where is the tap to fill it? What if we would be able to change our pattern of thought, think about other possibilities? Being aware of the beauty of the earth and mankind, embracing various cultures and religions instead of abominating them. Sustain all for the coming generations. Start thinking about what is really **IMPORTANT** in **LIFE**, instead of criticizing everything, blending into the crowd.

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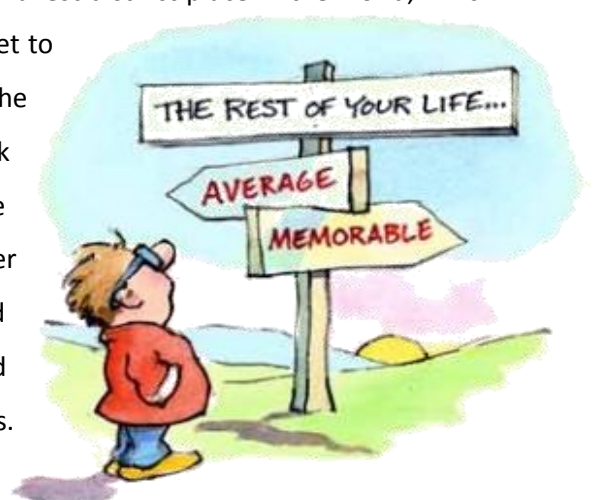
[1] I am admitting that the description of Utopia is paradoxical: the perfect world differs for everyone; the Utopia described might be concerned with Eurocentrism (whilst e.g. immigrants see Europe or America as the Promised Land) but it is conceptualised *within* the claimed emergence of transmodernity.

1.2   The claimed emergence of transmodernity

"A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty...We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive."
– Albert Einstein –

Amongst others, it is claimed that a new manner of thinking has the ability to liberate society from the contemporary post-9/11 world. To date, we are facing sky high oil prices, environmental problems that have surpassed national boundaries long time ago, increasing number of deaths due to wars (e.g. religious, strategic), due to natural disasters (earthquake, tsunami) and due to a serious lack of food and health care to name but a few (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008). Superior feelings over nature led to exploitation and inadequate management and partly contributed to the existence of problems at all levels, noticeable at every part in the world (Gare, 1995; Holden, 2008; Mowforth & Munt, 2009).

The materialistic mindset that still dominates our postmodern society has fed our greed with unlimited growth and consumption and further enhanced feelings of superiority and eternity (Gare, 1995). Though developments of (post)modernity have brought us to a stage where mankind is left without any natural enemies, it might be our own mindset that harms us most.

However, environmental consciousness and the discourse of sustainability have also reached us (Ray & Anderson, 2000: 141); as we have to deal with these increasing numbers of problems that are the (in) direct result of our lifestyles. Several sustainable initiatives (e.g. [with regard to tourism] zoning, carbon offsetting, codes of conduct, carrying capacity) are implemented, to minimize the problems and seek for solutions to carry on with our lifestyles without increasingly damaging nature (Mowforth & Munt, 2009). Yet, the predicament that directly arises from these initiatives is that we want to continue with the same lifestyle, we still tend to seek solutions in our existing economical and political framework which uses rationality, money and technology as measurements of progress (Ateljevic, 2009). In this sense, nothing changes in the end. We might act differently, but still with an unchanged objective. To really implement viable solutions for the best interest of all is to come to an understanding that we are part of a whole, to accept that we are part of our environment rather than living in the prison where we live separated from the universe as Einstein referred to. It is our

underlying values that need a thorough inspection. For this to happen, we require a global mind change, a paradigm shift.

This new manner of thinking that Albert Einstein discussed is difficult to establish, yet not impossible. The way we think, act, value and perceive the world is the direct result of how we view reality (Kuhn, 1962; Popper, 1959). Shared by society, this dominant pattern of thinking is labelled as a paradigm (Harman, 1998). Serving as a theoretical and philosophical framework, it is deep-rooted in the mind of society at a *subconscious* level, hence making the occurrence of a paradigm shift – a new way of thinking to address old problems – very unusual. So far, a (civilization) paradigm shift has happened only a small number of times throughout human history. Congruently, radically changing your shift in thinking happens only once in a lifetime (Elgin & LeDrew, 1997) – 'because it changes virtually everything in [y]our consciousness' (Ray & Anderson, 2000: 17-18).

Yet, it is alleged that society is currently in the middle of a paradigm shift. This entails a shift from the dominating hedonistic materialistic mindset towards a new way of thinking about the world, where peace, sustainability and reciprocal love can dominate our reality (Ateljevic, 2009; Elgin & LeDrew, 1997). Key characteristic is that it happens very slowly, few people are aware of it, but something is happening as scientists from different academic fields note a similar global change in consciousness (see for instance: Ateljevic, 2009; Dolan & Raich, 2009; Dussel, 2002; Elgin & LeDrew, 1997; Ghisi, 2001; Grosfoguel, 2008; Inglehart, 2008; Magda, 2004; Rifkin, 2004). [2]

In addition, a number of studies suggest that a growing amount of people is gradually changing their lifestyles to meet new values of e.g. self-expression, quality of life and autonomy (Dolan & Raich, 2009; Elgin & LeDrew, 1997; Ghisi, 2008; Inglehart, 2008; MarketResponse, 2006; Ray, 1996; Ray & Anderson, 2000). The big question however remains; how do people come to this stage, how do they change their values and worldview? How do we awaken our subconscious level, 'where we discover the extremely powerful motor of transformation'? (Ghisi, 2010: 40). It is as Ray and Anderson proffer, if you change your values, "*a change in worldview is never far behind. Your worldview is the content of everything you belief is real – God, the economy, technology, the planet, how things work, how you should work and play, your relationship with your beloved – and everything you value*" (2000: 17). Yet it is the human discomfort to accept anything that is new. It is therefore crucial to leave this comfort zone, to open our eyes, become aware of the changes need and <u>think</u> about our own values (Dolan & Raich, 2009: 126). A very powerful way of opening your mind is travelling

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[2] Elgin & LeDrew (1997) highlight a similar importance towards a global consciousness change, but coined this emerging paradigm the 'reflective/living-systems paradigm'. Characteristics of changing values are congruent with the 'transmodernity' paradigm however and can therefore be considered as such.

(Brown, 2009; Jensen, 2004; Kottler, 1997; Lean, 2009; Martin & Harrell, 2004; Pocock & McIntosh, 2010; Robertson, 2002; Ross, 2010; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007; Zerubavel, 1999). "A journey makes sense as a coming to consciousness" (Clifford, 1988, in: Galani-Moutafi, 2000: 205). Stepping outside your daily environment and immerse yourself in a different world, makes you to put everything into perspective. Travel has the potential to enhance value change, as new views "do not fit within the boundaries of the traveller's assumptions, expectations, worldviews, or cultural paradigms" (Robertson, 2002: 38).

Therefore, in this thesis I argue that travelling can catalyse a change in values/worldview *within* the framework of transmodernity. This also reflects the argument of Dann (2002) why tourism can and should be perceived as metaphor for the social world: the development of society goes parallel with development of tourism industry. Therefore, through the lens of transmodernity, travelling is perceived as an activity filled with great potential to positively change the values of travellers.

1.3   The great potential of travelling

The need of humanity to explore has always been present, yet since Thomas Cook introduced standardized forms of tourism and technology advanced; travelling has become an inevitable necessity in *western* life (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2002). Tourists have various intentions to go travelling and enjoy themselves, as they represent important periods in our lives (Ryan, 1997). Increasingly, people are seeking more meaningful experiences (Zahra & McIntosh, 2007), which can be revealed in the (recently appeared) new forms of tourism, such as sustainable tourism (Lean, 2009), long-stay tourism (Brown, 2009; Noy, 2004), educational tourism, volunteering (Wearing, 2001; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007), spa- and wellness tourism (Lean, 2009). Yet most of the current tourism literature discusses and views these forms as a particular niche, displaying postmodern needs. In doing so, it often critiques and disregards tourists engaging in these forms of tourism as 'New Age' tourists (Ateljevic, 2009: 286). Although it is widely recognised that tourism serves as a window of/to the world (Dann, 2002), it still depends how we look at this window. The transmodern view of tourism sees the great potentialities, recognises the socio-cultural shift (Ateljevic, 2009) and value change in both the demand and supply side of these so-called 'special interest' forms of tourism. As Ateljevic (2009: 293) sums this up: "*if the contemporary tourism phenomenon indicates the new step in development of human global consciousness, one can easily see the enormous political power of such shift in the public discourse of tourism*". Research centred on travellers that have spent a considerable amount of time abroad (global nomads), show that travellers adopt new behaviours and experience personal change (Brown, 2009; Cohen, 2011; Noy, 2004; Pocock & McIntosh, 2010;

Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). Zahra and McIntosh (2007) found that due to the altruistic nature of volunteer tourism, travellers report cathartic experiences. Noy (2004) who centres his research on backpackers, found deep change of their 'concept of the self'. Brown (2009) revealed that international students' self-concept profoundly changed and points to an increase in their cross-cultural awareness. Furthermore, Brown (2009) argues that the intercultural competence developed during a sojourn has a transformative power; 'it therefore has the capability to produce mediating personalities, with positive implications for world peace and understanding' (Bochner, 1981; Gudykunst, 1998; Kim, 2001, all in: Brown, 2009: 503). It can therefore be argued that the nature of a long-stay abroad can intensively affect the life course of travellers (Pocock & McIntosh, 2010).

Repatriation home

Yet, as tourism is a conceived as an out of the everyday environment experience, the voluntary re-entry home is inevitable. Newly gained experienced and fresh perspectives are thus subject to integration upon return. As Pocock & McIntosh (2010) point out, returning home from travelling can be traumatic. Repatriation distress is also noted by Brown (2009) who reports periods of frustration, and a lack of understanding and emotional support. One step further, Christofi & Thompson (2007) found that people decided to go back to their country of sojourn due to feelings of unease in their country of origin, as changes were not tolerated by the home culture / environment (Brown, 2009). By exploring the process of dealing with changes through transformative travelling upon return home, this can be understood better. Yet little research has been done on the post-travel phase of travellers – even though more and more (young) people depart on long-term journeys (MINTEL, 2008). Therefore, knowledge is used from repatriation and intercultural communication studies that are more advanced in researching the impact of re-entry upon sojourners. Paradoxically, long-stay travellers are excluded to be considered as sojourners – whilst parallels can be drawn (Brown, 2009). This results in a neglected and relatively understudied area, both from tourism and repatriation studies.

Therefore, focal point of this thesis is travellers whom have changed as a result of their travel experiences *during* and *after* their sojourn. By means of memory-work, travellers' emotions, feelings and thoughts can be captured in a narrative style. As such, it contributes to provide more recognition for the current underestimated importance of the *post*-travel phase, both by travellers, the academic world and the travel industry alike. Travel has the great potential to transform people and as such, travel (to a certain extent) could be seen as catalyst for a transmodern worldview, which is my main objective in this thesis.

1.4   The indiscipline of tourism

Strong allies between the academic fields of tourism and transmodernity and tourism and repatriation studies are yet to be found. This reveals the claimed *emergence* of transmodernity and the indiscipline of tourism studies (Tribe, 2007) to relate with e.g. repatriation studies (and vice versa).

Tourism meets Repatriation studies

With the prediction of reaching 1.6 billion international tourists arrivals by the end of 2020 worldwide (WTO, 2001: 46), the academic field of tourism seems to reflect this forecasted growth as tourism research is increasing in popularity (Coles et al., 2009). Yet this growing body of literature is largely focused on tourists' behaviour and motivations, different forms of niche tourism and its impact on a destination and its residents (Brown, 2009; Robinson; 2000), making the impact on a *tourist* a neglected dimension. But what *does* tourism with a traveller? What is the impact of long-term travelling after returning home? Research on the *after* travel phase is overlooked while empirical evidence within repatriation and intercultural communication studies shows that incorporation of personal experiences of sojourners and dealing with change upon homecoming can be highly emotional (Pocock & McIntosh, 2010) and an unexpected transition (Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Kim, 2001; Sussman, 2000, 2002; Szkudlarek, 2008; Thompson & Christofi, 2006).

Tourism meets Transmodernity

Furthermore, as tourism is acknowledged for being a metaphor of the social world (Dann, 2002), it is logical to understand that the contemporary activities some tourists display, might reveal a shift towards global consciousness (Ateljevic, 2009). Yet this also implies that, given the claimed *emergence* of transmodernity, these new forms of tourism (i.e. eco-tourism, backpackers) are still viewed with (post)modern lenses – both by industry, (most) scholars and travellers alike. Given the huge potential of tourism and the claimed emergence of transmodernity, a further exploration of transformative travelling would be an appropriate next step.

Therefore, further collaboration between tourism and repatriation would be fruitful. In this thesis I aim to raise awareness and attempt to bridge this gap. As such, I want to encourage (future) researchers to further address this important dimension.

1.5   Research aim and objectives

Focal point

The transformative power of travelling as pointed out by Brown (2009), Kottler (1997) and Lean (2009), is considered to be the main focal point in this thesis. The purpose is to come to a better understanding of how long-term travelling can constitute change and transform travellers. I will do so by listening to stories of repatriated travellers that have experienced change.

The literature review mostly spans the area of tourism, intercultural communication, repatriation and social psychology. In order to understand the effects of returning home after a long-term stay abroad and related change repatriated travellers have gone through, I will use the theories centred on reverse 'culture shock'. The concept of transmodernity as I have pointed out in this section, serves as a so-called 'umbrella term' (Ateljevic, 2009) as it captures the changing mindset of people which can be traced back in a more open-minded world view of repatriated travellers.

Purpose

The overall purpose of this research is to come to a better understanding how travelling can constitute change, how it can transform travellers and how this transformative power of a long-term sojourn can be sustained.

By looking at the impact of long-term travels after returning home, I will not only try to narrow the existing gap, but also to show the interdisciplinary aspects of the field of tourism by drawing parallels with repatriation and intercultural communication literature. Moreover, I will adopt a transmodern perspective in both allowing myself to be critical and reflexive and to give voice to the personal stories of long-term travellers. I will operate from the belief that "positive benefits of tourism" (Ateljevic, 2009) should be celebrated instead of being that easily diminished after return and the fact tourism can improve international understanding (Mings, 1988).

Research objectives

The following **research objectives** direct the analysis:

- 🌍 To analyse the transmodern potentialities and the power of *temporarily* and *voluntarily* leaving your everyday environment and what kind of changes it can bring about. As such, the intertwinement of transmodernity in this thesis is threefold:

  (**1**) positive focus on travelling by seeing its potential rather than critiquing (this however does not imply naivety!);

(2) perceiving new forms of tourism as first tendencies towards transmodernity rather than postmodern forms as a result of distinctive lifestyle achievement;

(3) and lastly how the very basis of travelling can bring about change rather than merely an escape abroad (and ending up in the same tourist enclaves as [post]modernists argue);

🌐 To find out how long-term travellers have transformed and how they have experienced change by examining their deep personal stories;

🌐 To narrow the gap between tourism and repatriation studies by highlighting the importance of the post-travel phase in tourism studies and including long-term tourists as sojourners;

🌐 To demonstrate the positive aspects of tourism and its great transformative potential.

1.6   Relevance of the study

Given the huge potential of tourism and the claimed emergence of transmodernity, exploring the topic of transformative travelling within the broader framework of transmodernity is of both *social* and *scientific* relevance.

1.6.1   Scientific Relevance

Discrepancies of the tourism field

So far, attention to sojourner's transformation upon return home is noticeable within literature related to repatriation or intercultural communication, yet it continues to remain highly unacknowledged within tourism literature (as will become apparent in chapter 2). The struggle of tourism research to be seen as a mature self-standing field instead of being a segment of business studies, explains why research areas of business, management and sports are still dominating (Tribe, 2004). Even though the body of literature on tourism is maturing, as (human) geographers, sociologists and economists have recently turned to tourism as well (Semmens, 2005, in: Coles et al., 2009; Tribe, 2004), the largest focus lies on tourists' motivations, behaviour and the impact on a destination and its residents (Brown, 2009; Lean, 2009; Robinson, 2000). As such, it largely fails to acknowledge the last part of travelling, the home-coming; the *post* travel phase.

Exploring new grounds: transformative travelling

How can tourism transform travellers and more importantly, how can this transformation be sustained upon return? Whilst research on the *post* travel phase to date remains quite scarce in tourism literature (Brown, 2009), empirical evidence within repatriation and intercultural communication studies shows that the personal experiences of sojourners upon homecoming can be

highly emotional and distressful (Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Sussman, 2000, 2002, Szkudlarek, 2008, 2010; Thompson & Christofi, 2006). In addition, as I will be investigating two phases of transformative travelling – that is key moments during the journey, and the extent of incorporation upon return home, plus a literature review that serves for understanding why and if travel has transformative potentialities, I will go beyond the often critiqued focus of researcher's on merely *one* aspect of the transition cycle (Sussman, 2002).

More recently and even more importantly, it is (slowly) acknowledged that an international sojourn has a certain transformative potential and that it can constitute change (Brown, 2009; Kottler, 1997; Lean, 2009; Lee & Woosnam, 2010; Noy, 2004; Pocock & McIntosh, 2010). Yet any connections drawn to the claimed emergence of transmodernity have, scantly appeared – with considerable exception of Irena Ateljevic, who notices that "*tourism is actually one of the key indicators that manifest the global shift in human consciousness*" (2009: 293) and Brown (2009) who highlights the transformative power of a sojourn.

Thus, in scientific terms, this thesis takes a fresh new perspective of travelling as it not only contributes to the literature by filling a gap that currently exists in literature, it also proofs that tourism is a highly interrelated field and adds to the importance and maturity of critical tourism studies (Tribe, 2006).

1.6.2   Social Relevance

Recognition, reflection and understanding

As the activity of travelling has turned into a lifestyle investment due to commodification of life itself (Hannam & Knox, 2010: 40), it nowadays occupies much of our (western) lives. This is reflected in the growing trend of people embarking on travels (MINTEL, 2008; WTO, 2001), not only for holidays but also for a more professional experience (Hannam & Knox, 2010; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Lean, 2009; Martin & Harrell, 2004; Mowforth & Munt, 2009; O'Reilly, 2006; Wearing, 2001; White & White, 2009). As such, research focussing on the transformative potential of travelling, not only raises awareness of the neglected impact of the *post* travel phase, it also allows travellers to share their stories, to reflect on their experiences and changes they have gone through. Especially the methods of memory-work (that I will discuss in the methodology chapter) have provided the participants with greater understanding of their travel experiences and changes they have gone through. This provided recognition makes this research very relevant in social terms.

Raising awareness of value changes and transmodernity

Moreover, as I have pointed out throughout this chapter, profound values and worldviews (that relate with the claimed emergence of transmodernity) of society is changing, but the irony is that this new 'subgroup' is not aware of their large position in society. The silence of a paradigm shift towards transmodernity contributes to a certain unawareness of people that have embraced this change. As such, this research contributes by making people more conscious of the claimed emergence of transmodernity and the shift in intergenerational values so they might recognize themselves.

Lastly, I highly believe that any research including transmodernity has a certain social relevance, as it all focuses on the positive change of humanity towards genuine sustainability and equality.

1.7   Thesis Outline

This thesis contains in total six chapters, with the aim to familiarize you as chronological as possible to the topic of transformative travelling.

This first chapter has served as an overall introductory chapter to make you briefly familiar with the concepts and my line of reasoning. I will elaborate on the claimed emergence of transmodernity and what it can mean for humanity in chapter 2, which constitutes the *philosophical* framework of this thesis. Besides serving as an umbrella term for the *theoretical* framework (chapter two), it has also influenced the chosen methodology and my own perspective. As such, it can be argued that the transmodern paradigm functions as an overall framework (which becomes apparent in figure 1.1).

The first part of the *second* chapter focuses on transformation through travelling and lived change *upon* re-entry. After a short historical overview of tourism, I will highlight the increasing importance of travelling and eventually how travelling can catalyse a change in perspectives. The literature review is further expanded to repatriation and intercultural communication studies discussing (the lack of research on) the return phase of travelling. Throughout this chapter, the interrelatedness of transmodernity will become visible.

The third chapter, the methodology chapter, provides the chosen exploratory research methods for this research as well as my own positionality, as no knowledge is complete biasfree. The methodology chapter further explains into depth the chosen research methods of memory-work and autoethnography and reflects on overall limitations, ethics and epistemology associated with qualitative research.

The results derived from this qualitative data analysis will be presented in chapter four, dedicating one section to each of the participants' narratives, whereas the fifth chapter further discusses these

results and relate them to the presented theories of the philosophical and theoretical framework. Followed by a final discussion, the closing chapter suggests recommendations and treats overall limitations of the research.

Figure 1.1: Thesis Overview
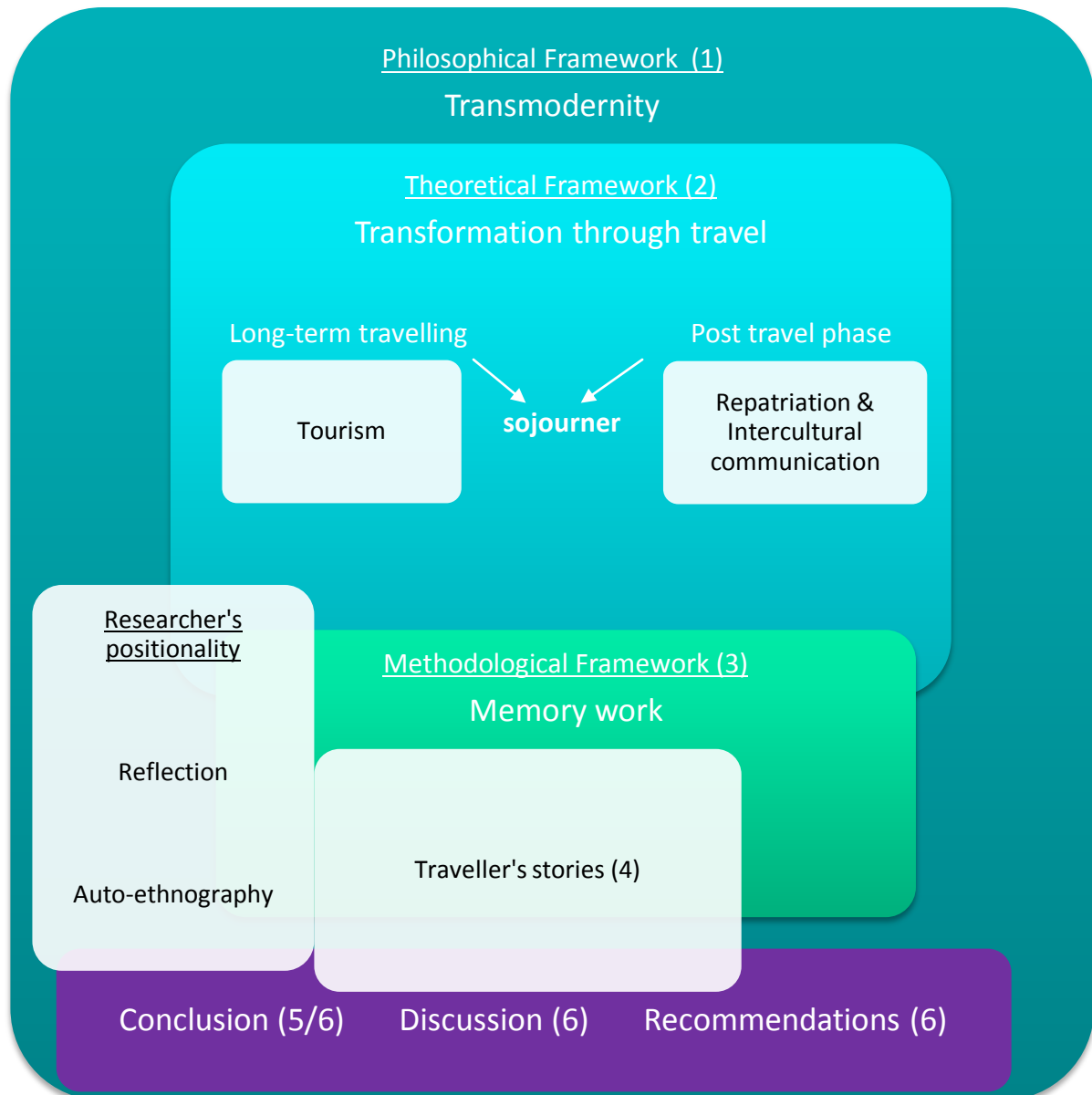
2 A Transmodern Lens on Travelling

This chapter, the theoretic body of the thesis, consists of two interrelated sections: a philosophical and theoretical framework. The theoretical framework (from §2.4 onwards) considers the potentialities of travelling, that is the *change* in perspectives it can bring about and how this can be sustained upon return home. As this transformation through travelling is viewed through transmodern lenses, the philosophical framework aids in explaining the claimed emergence of the transmodern paradigm and related worldviews.

Introduction to the philosophical framework: the claimed emergence of transmodernity

In order to understand why this change is needed, it is necessary to delve deeper into the claimed emergence of transmodernity. It is the main philosophical tenet of this thesis and views travelling through transmodern glasses. In addition, for proper understanding of the claimed emergence of transmodernity (within the context of tourism), it is inevitable to first take a leap back into history. Therefore, in section 2.1, the philosophy of modernity and postmodernity will be explained before I will further discuss the values of transmodernity. To break the gap between theory and practise, section 2.3 treats transmodern thinking in practise by reviewing research that supports value change amongst society.

2.1 Transmodernity: How did we get this far?

In order to improve understanding of the characterizing features of transmodernity, it is necessary to take a closer look at what modernity and postmodernity have brought us to where we are today. In the next section I will provide a short historical overview of these dominating paradigms and reveal how perception of reality and the Truth has changed, where after I will further elaborate on the potentialities of transmodernity (§2.2).

Throughout human history, civilization paradigm shifts have occasionally occurred, sometimes characterized by revolutionary developments (Kuhn, 1962), something which will become clear in discussing modernity and postmodernity in the subsequent sections.

2.1.1 Modernity

Explaining modernity is quite a challenging task. The very first difficulty we ran into is to argue when it began. Most commonly, it is argued that it started roughly at the beginning of the sixteenth

century and can be characterised by three phases of early, classical and late modernity in which three important developments have shaped modernity as most know it today (Spaargaren & Mol, 1992). However, this is a rather unilateral point of view, as it only illuminates modernity from a European perspective. This does not mean these descriptions are false, but it lacks attention to developments in the rest of the world. Therefore, I will first briefly outline this *common Eurocentric* view of modernity, where after I will use Dussel's (2002) arguments to explain its ambiguity.

Modernity from a Eurocentric point of view

The agricultural revolution can be seen as the big motor behind modernity (Kuhn, 1970), lifting humanity from agrarianism towards a steady increase of agricultural production, that eventually drove the Industrial Revolution. Whereas agrarian societies were 'enchanted' and depended on higher religious and sacred authorities such as the Truth (from clergy towards God), the more society became industrialized, the more 'disenchanted' they became. Enlightenment nurtured the belief that there was another Truth, the truth of science based on rationality, giving scientific reasoning a sovereign status (Ghisi, 2008; Grosfoguel, 2008; Knox & Marston, 2004). Opposed to the pre-modern era, modern society now separated science and ethics from religion and advanced knowledge and mankind over nature (Magda, 2004).

At the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, human work was replaced for machinery and eventually spread out over the whole world. This mechanisation (and later the creation of railway, steamship and airplanes) impacted everyone's life in one way or another. Average incomes steadily increased, living standards and lifestyles drastically changed (Kuhn, 1962). Universal human progress became the tenet of the modern nation state, fuelling imperialism and (neo) colonialism (Magda, 2004). Eventually, it created a 'hegemonic Eurocentric paradigm' a powerful force of globalisation (Grosfoguel, 2008: 3).

Modernity from an-'Other' point of view

The necessity to re-interpret modernity arises as Enrique Dussel (2002) provides a '*non-Eurocentric interpretation* of the history of the world system'. He critically reminds us that the modernity as discussed previously, merely provides us with a western perspective of development, filled with Eurocentrism (Grosfoguel, 2008). The French Revolution led to the European hegemony, distorted the interpretation of history, 'attempting to show that everything that happened before had led to Europe's becoming' (Dussel, 2002: 222) and put modernity at the core of Europe, initiated by industrial development. To illustrate, China, as Dussel takes as example, was a significant and rich developed nation, with more natural resources than Europe ever possessed. The question then is why a Chinese equivalent of the European hegemony has not developed instead. As Dussel (2002:

224) points out, it was not China's inferiority but its geographical position of west, more in-land orientated 'inter-regional system' that retained the Chinese from exploring easterly overseas.

Though there is acknowledgment of *other* grand societies' existence as dominant centres of global civilization *prior* to European modernity (China, northern India and Ottoman Empire [Knox & Marston, 2004]), Wallerstein's world-system theory is still grounded in the belief that modernity as a European phenomenon spread to the semi periphery and periphery of the world (Dussel, 2002).[3] With this said, we are able to understand the arrival and terminology of postmodernity whilst keeping Eurocentrism in mind, as will be explained subsequently.

2.1.2 Postmodernity: 'Après moi le deluge'

Due to the process of globalisation nearly everything became generalized, ranging from industrial production (fordism) to mass consumption to mass communication making material consumption and lifestyles throughout the world very similar (Knox & Marston, 2004). Materialism and hedonism are key features of postmodernity, as materialistic possession gives symbolic meaning to one's identity (Knox & Marston, 2004). With (parts of) society increasingly longing for an own identity, global then became local, with more emphasis on cultural sensibility whilst embracing multiculturalism.

Whereas objective truth characterized modernity, postmodernity perceived reality as a social construct, subject to change. Postmodernity opposed everything modernity believed was the right and only way (Magda, 2004); it thus started to criticize modernity. Yet these critiques were never translated into solutions and postmodernity remained filled with pessimism.

Though postmodernity implies 'beyond' modernity, Dussel (2002: 221) reminds us that it 'is just the latest moment of *Western* modernity'. Providing a '*non-Eurocentric interpretation* of the history of the world system', Dussel (ibid) argues that *post*modernity as such could never exist if not looking beyond European hegemony – given the fact the terminology "*post*" 'indicates that there is a process that emerges "from *within"* modernity' (2002: 223 italics in original).

Although postmodernity critiqued the global discourse of modernity, it only questioned the imperialistic behaviour, not providing answers. As such, this "period" (notice the quotation marks as there is no clear begin nor end) can be portrayed as disenchantment (Ghisi, 2008).

2.1.3 A short recap

The dominant way of thinking in our contemporary society is still formed by the modern and postmodern paradigm. Modernity has never ended and postmodernity neither. The absolute *truth* of

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[3] Dussel (2002) does not contradict the world-system perspective, but implies 'a completely different intellectual commitment'.

modernity did end (due to the postmodernists critiques), however, but modernity as *phenomenon* has not ended. Paradigms can exist next to each other, as is the case with opinions or religions (not arguing this goes completely without disruption). Yet, it is the reproducing Eurocentrism that still dominates the modern and postmodern paradigmatic thinking, merely replacing 'original' colonialism for colonialism of knowledge (Dussel, 2002: 233; Grosfoguel, 2008: 2).

2.2   Transmodernity

2.2.1   Beyond Postmodernity

Due to globalizing forces, the unlimited hedonistic growth reaches outrageous forms. Society is increasingly becoming aware of this, but still uses postmodern ways of thinking to solve growing (environmental) problems. It is as Ghisi (2008: 5) analyses, "because the industrial economic system is based on the concepts of *quantitative growth and tangible assets*, *it is not capable* of leading us toward a genuine sustainable future" (italics/underscores in original). In order to survive, changing the way we are living today is a necessity, something which is the *key* feature of the transmodern paradigm.

The concept of transmodernity is however, not putting modernity or postmodernity aside. Instead, it acknowledges all the good (post)modernity has brought to us and concedes that a transmodern paradigm would not have been possible without all previous developments (see figure 2.1 for a simple visualization of how the three paradigms are positioned). In contrast to *post*modernity, "*trans*" modernity affirms "from *without*" (Dussel, 2002: 224). Transmodernity is characterised by transparency, and whilst moving beyond dominating paradigms it also acknowledges that it parallel advances with modernism and postmodernism. "*Subsuming the best of globalised European and North American modernity, "trans" -modernity affirms "from without" the essential components of modernity's own excluded cultures in order to develop a new civilization for the twenty-first century*" (ibid). To say, transmodernity adopts the best that (post)modernity has offered, giving it a hybrid, multicultural and creative function while moving beyond Eurocentrism and fundamentalism (Dussel, 2002; Grosfoguel, 2008).

2.2.2   A dialectic triad

"*It* [transmodernity] *features a creative mix of rational and intuitive brainwork; an enthusiastic embrace of new information technologies; a tolerance, even celebration, of diversity; a conviction that protection of the physical environment has to be a central concern for every human being; a dawning realization that scientific discovery and technological innovation have made human beings the dominant actors in their own future evolution; a new openness to spiritual guidance as a basis for*

'private' behavior and 'public' policy; and a move away from vertical authority toward 'flatter,' more 'horizontal,' organizations, away from 'recommendations-up-orders-down' management and toward more consensual decision-making" (Ghisi, 1999: 3).

Figure 2.1: The three paradigms
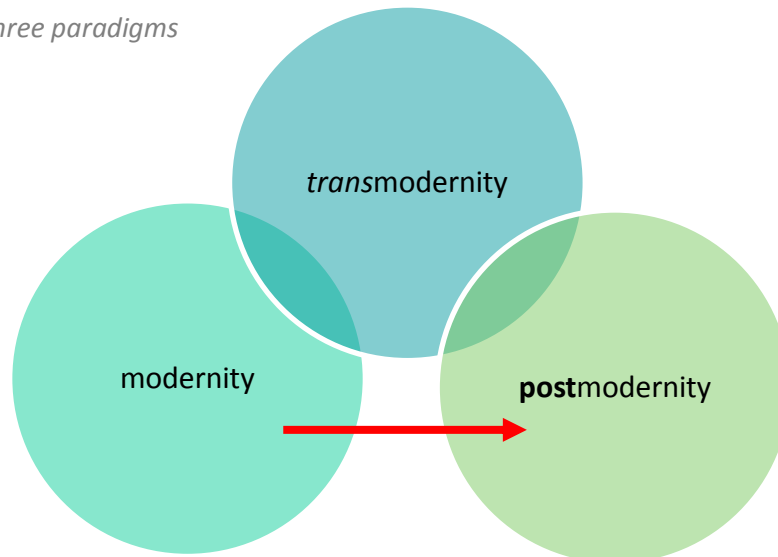
Modernity leads to postmodernity, but whereas postmodernity merely opposed everything modernity has brought so far, transmodernity adopts the best both paradigms have offered.

Transmodernity, or *transmodernidad* as the philosopher Rosa Maria Rodriguez Magda first coined the term in her Spanish paper 'La Sonrisa de Saturno. Hacia una teoría transmoderna' in 1989, characterizes the epistemological shift towards the knowledge society (Ateljevic, 2009; Dussel, 2002; Ghisi, 2001; Grosfoguel, 2008; Magda, 2004) in an era of transformation and interconnectedness (Magda, 2004). Ateljevic further describes transmodernity as 'an umbrella term that connotes the emerging sociocultural, economic, political and philosophical shift' (2009: 280).

Magda alleges that transmodernity represents *synthesis*, as it can be seen as the consequence of modernity as *thesis* and postmodernity as *anti-thesis*. The three together form a dialectic triad (Magda, 2004). On the one hand transmodernity criticizes these previous paradigms whilst it acknowledges the necessary subversive progress (post)modernity has brought to us. As such, transmodernity is characterized by reflexivity and self-consciousness (Ateljevic, 2009). It adopts then "*a*[n] *interconnected model of self-multiplying overgrowth*...[and] *combine*[s] *the positive momentum of the modern with the emptiness of the Postmodern, the longing for unity of the former and the fragmentation of the latter*" (Magda, 2004: 7). Furthermore, transmodernity has, as Ghisi (2010: 41) notes, no so called 'pyramid'-structure but is based on the epistemology of equality between gender, cultures and religions. Without this hierarchical structure in society, it is not only 'actively tolerant'

but also 'genuinely democratic'.[4] Genuine democracy in a sense that we not only have we become conscious of the Earth of its existence *per se*, but also of the global interconnectedness, the interdependency of the ecosystems and humanity (Ateljevic, 2009); the privilege of mankind to be part of. It is looking *beyond* the horizon of borders that are currently used to point out to differences rather than similarities of the world. It guides our beliefs and political and economical actions. It is at the core of transmodernity that we jointly cooperate towards a genuine sustainable future for current and future generations. As such, it promotes Earth citizenship (Ateljevic, 2009: 284).

2.2.3 Re-enchantment

A shift from the current hedonistic materialistic mindset towards a new way of thinking about the world, where peace, sustainability and reciprocal love can dominate our reality is, as said before, what drives transmodernity.

One of the advocates for a changing global consciousness is Marc Luyckz Ghisi, who postulates in his book 'the Knowledge Society', that change towards a new society is happening, whereby we will focus on humanism rather than materialism and consumerism. Ghisi speaks of re-enchantment, a concept first introduced by Prigogine and Stengers (1997, in: Ghisi, 2008), that opposes the disenchantment of the twentieth century that sought objectivity and universalism of knowledge – independent of culture (Ghisi, 2008: 3). Re-enchantment assumes an interrelatedness of mankind with nature and invites us to be reflexive. Ghisi, who has worked on European integration for the European Commission for almost ten years, is now director of Vision 2020 and devotes his time to analyse the problems of today's world to propose solutions for a genuine sustainable future, believing in the creativity and potential of human kind.

Ghisi uses an iceberg metaphor (figure 2.2) to explain the five levels of change society is going through at this moment; the dying 'existing industrial-modern, patriarchal system' (ibid) – a rather painful transition from the post-industrial phase towards humanity's sustainability.[5]

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[4] One can question democracy in itself: is it democratic if 51% 'wins' due to the majority of the votes or if we ALL come to a mutual agreement, a solution that somehow fits the purposes of everyone? After all, 51% means 49% of society disagrees.

[5] In his essay, Ghisi uses the iceberg metaphor two times, first to explain the current dying system and secondly to point out to what is 'alive in a new way' (2008: 25). In this example, I only refer to the former.

Figure 2.2: The Iceberg Metaphor

5 — Death of all pyramidal structures

What we 'see'

4 — Death of the industrial society

3 — Death of modernity

2 — Death of patriarchy

1 — Danger of civilization collapse

Where we are today
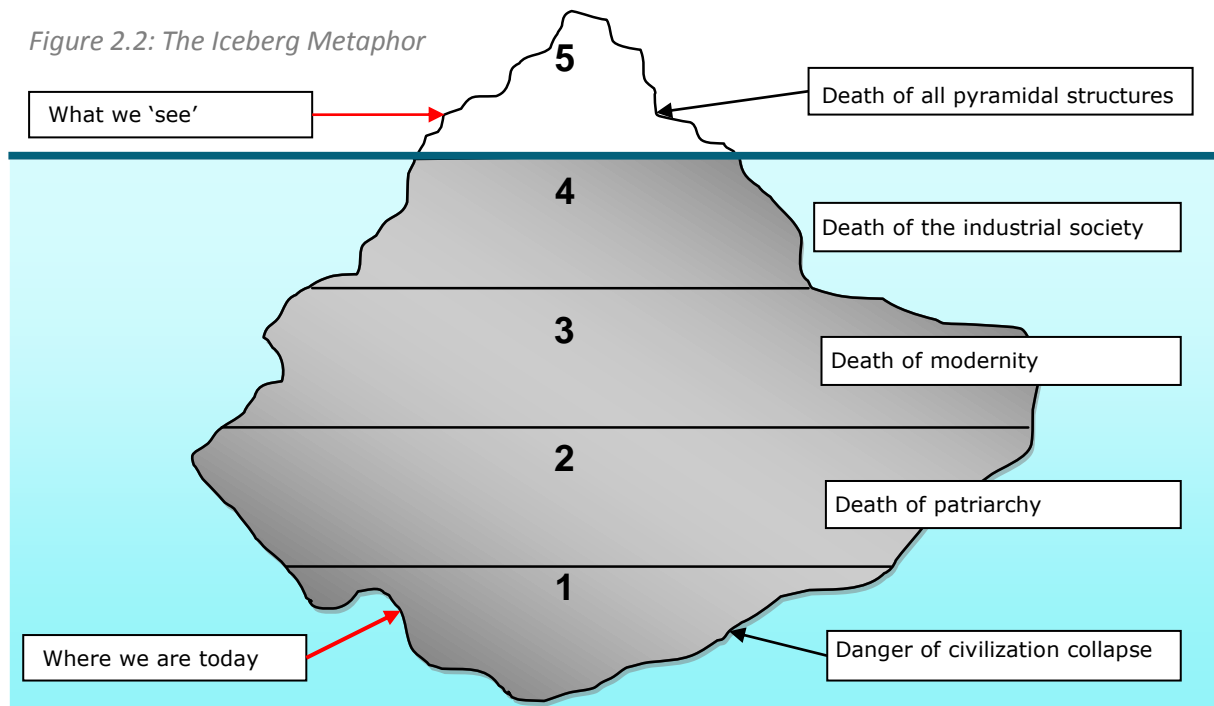
Source: adopted from Ghisi, 2008

Only the top layer (level 5) is above surface and visible; and thus what we are conscious of.

This visible layer constitutes the crisis we are experiencing today that fails to 'address the question of collective survival' (ibid). But like the tip of an iceberg that we are only able to see, there is a much larger part under the surface. The four remaining layers of Ghisi's iceberg constitute the deeper underlying reasons of our unconscious behaviour. The very bottom of the iceberg, that represents 'the danger of civilization collapse' is, as Ghisi warns, what will happen if we do not change anything. In fact, it is where we are today, but something what we neglect; hide in our subconscious (ibid). Dolan and Raich refer to the postmodern attitude of '*après moi le deluge*' (after me, the flood) as the 'nail in the coffin for our civilization' (2009: 126).

If part of society does not see the layers of the 'iceberg', the path to transformation might be hard to find. What if we do not put on the ('right') glasses? It is comparable with optical illusions; the way you look at things determines what you see. But there is more to see, something what can be achieved by looking differently at things. This means that if we increasingly become aware of the hidden layers of the iceberg, we can understand the change the world is going through.

*Optical illusion: what do **you** see?*

It also means that we might see the new political and economic structures that are already there (Ghisi, 2008). To some extent, the European Union can serve as an example with regard to these new political structures, as Rifkin (2004) notes in one of his articles. Jeremy Rifkin (amongst others president of the Foundation on Economic Trends), depicts the European *Union* and its new constitutional type as characterizing features to 'nurture global consciousness', leading in unity and less hierarchy compared to America (2004). He concludes that the European Union can be seen as a new governing body that speaks of universalism; it reveals a European dream shared amongst its citizens – one that 'may be better than [the American dream]'. Yet if we look at the Europe of today, one might question how wonderful the 'European Dream' is where Rifkin referred to seven years ago (e.g. there is no European Constitution, the Lisbon Agenda quietly fails, immigration issues become increasingly problematic, and the every-growing Europe becomes more instable [Elsevier, 2011]). Yet Rifkin (2004) acknowledges that Europe is no fully harmonious integrated Union, but does see all the potentialities of Europe *on top of* its deficiencies. If we look at the history of Europe, the wars that have taken place and how Europe has overcome them, one might see a whole different Europe. Instead of looking what is *not* there, it might be fruitful to look at what already *is* and *what has been.* In accordance with Ghisi (2008), Rifkin (2004) argues that constituting change is a painful process, yet – again congruent to Ghisi (2008) – Rifkin (2004) points to potentialities amongst the younger generation, as they are increasingly open-minded towards the cultural potpourri of Europe. Yet Rifkin obviously coined it a *dream*, but despite all the public discourses, enough evidence that can be found on the path Europe has walked so far is what has constituted Rifkin's belief in a European Dream.

Apart from Europe, the longing for change and togetherness is noticeable around the world and goes beyond institutions. As Ghisi (2010: 42) remarks, the journey that "*weaves together all the separate boxes of our lives: intelligence, rationality, feelings, intuitions, bodies, souls, love, sexuality, hope, money, work, politics, etc*." is a silent one, but involves many people from different parts of the world and religions.

The silent change

Apart from the huge diversity, one can ask why it is a silent one, if some many people are involved. *If* part of humanity is aware of some change (it is even coined transmodernity for instance), why does this part not speaks about change, why does the claimed emergence of transmodernity not travels beyond the academic spheres?

According to Ghisi, there are four explanations for the silence of this change: (1) the soft silence of intellectuals; (2) many intellectuals are not convinced and argue chaos will occur if society becomes aware of the 'frightening' layers of the Iceberg metaphor; (3) institutions cope with difficulties to adapt to this change; (4) (political) institutions are build and shaped according to a (modernist)

paradigm, and silence is used as a means to maintain stability rather than it will be questioned and has to cope with difficult reform (2008: 49).

As such, it looks like there is awareness of a changing process amongst a very small segment of society, that is either too afraid or too (self) protective to share it. However, though this transformation is kept silent (and even if more intellectuals will agree and share a transmodern line of thought, how can we overcome the bias between the academic research bubble and the real world?), several changes amongst society are occurring (e.g. the current Arabic Spring illustrates a huge – pending – change amongst countries in the Middle East).

Ghisi's given arguments partly explain a kept silence of the emergence of transmodernity, yet the fact that an occurrence of change amongst society is noticed (Elgin & LeDrew, 1997; Ghisi, 2008; Inglehart, 2008; Ray, 1996; Ray & Anderson, 2000), leads to a somewhat contradictory reasoning around the 'silence'. The work of Inglehart (2008) might provide an answer to this, as he demonstrates that *inter*generational value change is occurring. Firstly, as he argues, this changing process goes *very* slowly and might not be noticeable in short them, 'but its long-term impact can be profound' (2008: 131). Both the gradual shift and the worldwide scope of changing values elucidate why the claimed emergence of transmodernity across humanity is a silent one. In addition, the changes are profound – they firstly take place inside one's mind and will eventually be translated in behaviour or actions – which makes it hard to notice as well. As Ghisi remarks, it is our collective subconscious level 'where we discover the extremely powerful motor of transformation' (2010: 40). Lastly, though it is claimed that people all over the world experience change, the belief of being alone in this aids to explain why it is not visible and therefore silent. These deep changing values and worldviews amongst society alike will be discussed subsequently.

2.3   Transmodern thinking in practice

A number of studies suggest that a growing amount of people is changing their lifestyles to meet their new values (Dolan & Raich, 2009; Elgin & LeDrew, 1997; Ghisi, 2008; Inglehart, 2008; MarketResponse, 2006; Ray, 1996; Ray & Anderson, 2000). The gradual motion towards a cultural shift characterized by values of self-expression, quality of life and autonomy is greatly supported by Ronald Inglehart, whose work is most noteworthy when it comes to discussing changing values amongst society.

2.3.1 Intergenerational value changes

Since 1971, Inglehart has gathered and analysed data for 35 years, which extensively support his hypothesis that intergenerational value changes are taking place. He proffers that opposed to the previous generation, the **new generation** is shifting from materialistic to post-materialistic values. Furthermore, the increasing emphasis on quality of life will continue to be supported by West European[6] publics and eventually replace the old materialistic values (2008: 145). Rifkin also argues that "*a different vision of life that's now emerging from Europe could be the world's best hope for negotiating its shared global future*" (2004: 1). Before elaborating on Rifkin, I want to highlight that it is not my aim to merely point out changes across 'western' society, but to show the importance of *institutional* change besides *personal* change. In his comparison between America and Europe, Rifkin reflects: "*the new European Dream is based on different assumptions about what constitutes freedom and security* [...] *The American Dream emphasizes economic growth, personal wealth, and independence. The new European Dream focuses more on sustainable development, quality of life, and interdependence. The American Dreams pays homage to the work ethic. The European Dream is more attuned to leisure and 'deep play'* (2004: 2).

Though Rifkin sets out the differences between Europe and America, we should keep in mind that the European Dream is largely connected with the European Union. Regardless what type of institution, it is as Grosfoguel (2008: 20) notes, "*the common language* [that] *should be anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal, anti-imperialist and against the coloniality of power towards a world where power is socialized, but open to a diversality of institutional forms of socialization of power*". Though the European Union as a new type of constitution has enabled and nurtured diversity and unity, it does not imply that Americans cannot achieve the European Dream or share these values. In contrary, as Ray & Anderson (2000) have shown, a quarter of all Americans can be considered as a new emerging subculture, leading in changing values (I will elaborate on their study and the so-called 'cultural creatives' in §2.4.2).

Apart from this, Elgin and LeDrew (1997) summarize that the positive shift in social values is reflected in international research covering issues of Gender and Society (The Gallup Organization, 1996 cited in Elgin & LeDrew, 1997). Yet Elgin and LeDrew also remind us that there are countervailing trends, as economic disparities continue to intensify and question if uprising modernist economies will chose the same path as the cultural creatives do (Elgin & LeDrew, 1997). In fact, we might ask ourselves to what extent a shift towards transmodernity is truly a shift as much of these core values (e.g. inner-

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[6] Inglehart's findings are based on data from Western Europe, but he implies that "[intergenerational value change] occur[s] whenever the formative experience of younger birth cohorts are substantially different from those that shaped the older generations" (2008: 145).

sustainability) already embody the Buddhist[7] skeleton (Xiaoyi & Huanxin, 2006). Moreover, shifting from materialism towards quality of life might mirror a *western* change, as – for almost forty years – Bhutan measures citizens' wealth using the Gross National Happiness index instead of the economic (western invented) Gross Domestic Product (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2000; United Nations, 2011). Considering the difference in profound values of this ancient cultural heritage, it can be argued that emerging economies might not follow the same path as the western world (Dolan & Raich, 2009). In addition, as the west serves as example of dominance and success where 'emerging' countries crave for (ibid), the task to genuinely change values in the west would be twice as important.

Nevertheless, the fact that an increasing amount of people prefers quality of life over material wealth and speaks the same language of (inner) sustainability is something to celebrate.

2.3.2 'Cultural Creatives'

Supporting evidence of a change in human core values comes from sociologist Paul Ray (and his wife psychologist Sherry Ruth Anderson), who concluded that a new culture is emerging amongst 25% of the American public. This is the outcome of years of social and social-psychological (empirical) research amongst the developing American society, whereby Ray and Anderson especially focussed on the lifestyles, norms and values, and beliefs of the population. In their book '*The Cultural Creatives, How 50 million people are changing the world*' they conclude that the beliefs and values of their research population[8] are so distinctive from mainstream American society, an entire (American) subculture is emerging. Ray (1996) coined this rising group 'cultural creatives' as they "*are coming up with most new ideas in American culture, operating on the leading edge of cultural change* [...] *express*[ing] *serious ecological and planetary perspectives*" (Ray & Anderson, 2000).

With regard to shared characteristics of this group of people, Ray and Anderson mention the following: "*They are simply ordinary people who share a culture of values and worldview and, to some extent, a lifestyle*" (2000: 20). According to Ray and Anderson, these shared values are captured with the following terms: 'ecological sustainability, beyond environmentalism; globalism; feminism, women's issues, relationships, family; altruism, self-actualization, alternative health care, spirituality and spiritual psychology; well-developed social conscience and social optimism'. In their book, Ray and Anderson provide a checklist where you can see if you 'score' high enough to be a cultural creative. However, I argue that this should be seen as loose guidelines rather than strict rules to be part of this 'subculture'. As it is that these values correlate with the emerging transmodern

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[7] The philosophy of Buddhism is centred on harmony and peace. For instance, one of the core values of Buddhism is achieving internal happiness.

[8] Their research population included 'thirteen years of survey research on more than 100,000 Americans, hundreds of focus groups, and about sixty in-depth interviews' (Ray & Anderson, 2000: 4).

view of the world in a *broader* sense, cultural creatives should not merely be seen as a distinct group. It is about the longing for inner-sustainability that guides your values and a worldview that are congruent with transmodernity.

A boundless mindset

Invited by Ghisi, Ray and Anderson prolonged their study to Europe, where they found an even larger segment of European society that identified themselves with several of the cultural creatives' values (Elgin & LeDrew, 1997; Ghisi, 2010; Ray & Anderson, 2000) – something which might not be that surprising at all, regarding the earlier discussed work of Dussel, Grosfoguel, Inglehart and Rifkin. With regard to the Netherlands, approximately 15% of the Dutch society (1.8 million of 18 years and above) can also be addressed accordingly (MarketResponse, 2005; Triodos, 2011). In a recent article, Ghisi (2010: 40) writes he is "*convinced that there are one billion 'cultural creatives' in the world, who are changing values in silence, thinking they are alone*", of whom 66% are woman. This means that not only a quarter amongst the American and European public embraced a new mindset that closely correlates to the transmodern vision, but also that the same quantity is present in each of the other continents across the world (Muslim world, Latin America, China and India).

Invisible?

Besides these shared values, one other commonality is the fact that 'cultural creatives' think they are alone (Fogel, 2010). It is in line with the silence of the claimed emergence of transmodernity that a lack of self-awareness (whilst ironically self-reflection is one of their characteristics – according to Ray and Anderson) makes them unconscious '*of themselves as a collective body, they do not recognize how powerful their voices could be. And if the rest of us are blind to the paradoxical gifts that their awakening brings, then we may well be left wondering where all the changes are coming from*' (Ray & Anderson, 2000: 5).

As it is the deeper values that characterize the cultural creatives, it is so hard to notice, as profound values within someone are hard to 'see'. In addition, an often heard comment is that mainstream media does not pay attention to these value changes, as it is mostly concerned with its modernist nature (Fogel, 2010; Van Gelder, 1999; Ray & Anderson, 2000). However, regarding the recent emerging power and reach of social media like Twitter and Facebook, this argument might need some adjustment for the future. In addition, several books and even a documentary addressing this

topic have appeared (Fogel, 2010; Hawken, 2007; Ray & Anderson, 2000), which makes clear that these issues find attention beyond the academic spheres. [9]

The problem however, is the difficulty to capture them. As it concerns a <u>claimed</u> emergence of a new phenomenon, different descriptions and terminology exist, while people might be addressing the same value change or the longing for (inner) sustainability without being aware of each other.[10]

For example, Paul Hawken (2007) does also mention an emergence of changing values, but does not coins it transmodernity per se. Hawken, an environmentalist, entrepreneur, journalist and author as he describes himself, provides a detailed analysis of organizations devoted to restoring the environment in his book 'Blessed Unrest'. He describes that due to the growing unrest in the world; human spirit has awakened, and provides numerous examples of movements in their longing for sustainability. As Dolan and Raich argue "social innovation and entrepreneurship are the first signs of the fundamental shift towards the new world" (2009: 126). Entrepreneurs can be considered as resisting that act according to *their* values.

Likewise, all sorts of initiatives can be noticed around the world, from a UNESCO supported Auroville[11] to eco-entrepreneur Ben Keene of the ecovillage TribeWanted that built an entire new sustainable community on a remote island to Al Gore who aimed to bring the issue of climate change and need to respond to a larger audience.

The great variety of movements across the world does illustrate the scope of these initiatives, but the fact that *something* is happening *everywhere*, makes it such a decentralised phenomenon (Ghisi, 2008).

2.3.3 Towards new structures?

However, though it is not centralized, an emergence of a new 'subculture' has not stayed unnoticed by businesses. In contrary, after Ray came to the Netherlands in 2005 to promote his view and share his findings, it (partly) resulted in a quick adaptation of businesses of the (Dutch) markets that already focused on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (MarketResponse, 2006), whom now perceive cultural creatives as an important target group. MarketResponse, a well-known Dutch research consultancy agency, even concluded that after one year of running commercials and marketing methods of companies that aimed to reach this target group, the success led to another 100,000 individuals whom considered themselves to be cultural creatives (MarketResponse, 2005,

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[9] In 2010, the first documentary about the Cultural Creatives appeared, an idea initiated by Frigyes Fogel, project founder of the film Cultural Creatives: 1.0 – The (R)evolution.

[10] Transmodernity is only one terminology, but the same notion of and call for value change can be identified in different ways. This has been a 'problem' when identifying literature congruent with the topic.

[11] The purpose of Auroville is to realize human unity in being 'a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities' (Auroville, 2011).

2006). An example can be found in Triodos, a bank that is specialised in sustainable banking and focuses on cultural creatives as well. As such, they only 'lend to and invest in organisations that benefit people and environment' (Triodos, 2011). Though this quick adaptation of businesses inevitably leads to a certain commodification of cultural creatives as a product, it is also an indicator of a paradigm shift. If companies and institutions alike discover a new group amongst society, embrace their changing values and change the products to meet the customer's wishes, it signifies that a company can only (and is willing to) survive by quick adaptation. In contrary, companies that maintain their own straight forwarded ([post]modernist) vision will survive less likely – especially if we think of the different layers of Ghisi's iceberg. This is also noted by Dolan and Raich (2009) who call for businesses' alignment with the changing paradigm. If this great transformation in businesses will not be managed, they are doomed to fail.

2.3.4   Transmodernity revisited: parallel developments

The key lies upon acceptation and understanding of the process of deep personal change over a transition period. It is a long-term process, everyone goes through it painfully and no-one changes their values and beliefs in one day (MarketResponse, 2006). Core values and your worldview is not something that 'just' changes, it is "*literally changing what you think is real. Some closely related changes contribute to and follow from changes in worldview: changes in values, your fundamental life priorities; changes in lifestyle, the way you spend your time and money; and changes in livelihood, how you make that money in the first place*" (Ray & Anderson, 2000: 4). That is what makes it so silent, so hard to notice, so invisible. The fact that the industry and businesses already respond to 'green sustainable' values will only aid a more genuine change towards new values and worldviews – even if this leads to the commodification of a new subculture. As such, the cultural creatives and the adapted businesses provide a new structure in the world. It is the intergenerational change Inglehart (2008) noticed before; it looks like the new generation is slowly awakening, discovering their core values, changing the structure in society – even though 'they' still have the idea they are alone. Obviously, it goes beyond consumerism of sustainable and green products, as this is where Ray (who is also part of the board of lifestyle company GAIAM) initially focuses on. Profound change happens from within and is invisible until the moment you start analysing people's behaviour. Besides consumerism, the integrity, ethicality and humanity also form part of our core values, something which should be kept in mind, without solely focussing on cultural creatives. All in all, these examples are hopeful emerging structures that indicate a paradigm shift, from the broader philosophical debate about a claimed emergence of transmodernity, first coined by Magda (2004) to Ghisi (2008) who describes the painful transition society is going through in order to come to this point. From Inglehart (2008) who concluded that there is a new generation with new profound changing values

(compared to the previous generation) to Ray and Anderson (2000) who found that a whole new subculture is emerging that focuses on green sustainable values – something that also came under the attention of the industry itself (especially the companies that already prioritised CSR-practises). As shown, the provided examples of changes and notions fit within the claimed emergence of a paradigm shift towards transmodernity and all seem to develop in parallel – though unconsciously.

So far, I have aimed to explain the broader framework of the claimed emergence of transmodernity in a theoretical sense and provided more practical examples of changing values and worldviews amongst society. The big question however remains, how do people come to this stage, how do they change their values and worldview? How do we awaken our subconscious level, 'where we discover the extremely powerful motor of transformation'? (Ghisi, 2010: 40). It is as Ray and Anderson proffer, if you change your values, "*a change in worldview is never far behind. Your worldview is the content of everything you belief is real – God, the economy, technology, the planet, how things work, how you should work and play, your relationship with your beloved – and everything you value*" (2000: 17). Yet it is the human discomfort to accept anything that is new. It is therefore crucial to leave this comfort zone, to open our eyes, become aware of the changes need and *think* about our own values (Dolan & Raich, 2009).

A very powerful way of opening your mind is travelling, which is the focus of this thesis. Perception of environment changes; sojourner's mobility can even change or create a new cultural identity (Martin & Harrell, 2004). Encountering different persons, travelling in a novel environment creates a 'position from which it becomes possible to see the inadequacies of [ones] own society more sharply' (Turner & Ash, 1976, in: Ross, 2010: 56). Furthermore, all authors addressing transformation through travelling (Brown, 2009; Jensen, 2004; Lean, 2009; Robertson, 2002; Ross, 2010; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007) note a certain change is needed in contemporary society, searching for harmony and sustainability, which also relates to the transmodernity paradigm. Though the term transmodernity is not used by the authors, the language in which they all speak reveals their notion of value changes as new views "do not fit within the boundaries of the traveller's assumptions, expectations, worldviews, or cultural paradigms" (Robertson, 2002: 38). As Ateljevic points out, "*tourism is actually one of the key indicators that manifest the global shift in human consciousness*" (2009: 293). Aiming at the changing mindset of people being reflected in new forms of postmodern travel (special interest tourism), "*one can easily see the enormous political power of such shift in the public discourse of tourism*" (ibid). Tourists are increasingly seeking more meaningful experiences, which can be revealed in the recently appeared new forms of tourism, such as eco-tourism, educational tourism, spiritual tourism, spa- and wellness tourism (Lean, 2009; Mowforth & Munt, 2009). New forms of

tourism tap into the changed needs of travellers, providing a more accustomed experience (Bogder, 1998; Robertson, 2002). Yet most of the current tourism literature discusses and views these forms as a particular niche, displaying postmodern needs, which can be read in box 2.1. As tourism is acknowledged for being a metaphor of the social world (Dann, 2002), it is logical to understand that the contemporary activities some tourists display, can reveal a shift towards global consciousness (Ateljevic, 2009). The transmodern view of tourism sees the great potentialities, recognises the socio-cultural shift (ibid) and value change in the both the demand and supply side of these so-called 'special interest' forms of tourism.

Therefore, in this thesis I argue that travelling can catalyse a change in values/worldview *within* the framework of transmodernity, as I will thoroughly explain in subsequent sections of the *theoretical* framework.

Box 2.1 New forms of tourism in (post)modern society: a way of interpretation?

The critical perspective of Mowforth and Munt (2009) shows that 'new' forms of tourism are the latest type of fashionable contemporary tourism, as long as it contradicts the old fordist types of tourism that characterized modernism. The tourists that engage in these new forms of tourism are expressed as new tourists that want to distinguish themselves from the mass by sustaining different lifestyles. These tourists are often disregarded in being described as 'New Age' tourists (Ateljevic, 2008: 286) or consumer capitalists (Crompton, 1993), characterising their lifestyles by taking other, new types of holidays (Mowforth & Munt, 2009).

Contradictory as Mowforth and Munt (ibid) note, that by capturing the fragmented nature of cultural change, these critiqued new post-fordist forms in postmodern society do 'help[s] [to] challenge the emergence of global homogeneity (2009: 27). Due to new tourists' extensive focus on sustainability and sustainable lifestyles, they can also be seen as 'cultural intermediaries', aligning with new socio-environmental organisations – even if research around them is still limited and lacking in-depth analysis (ibid). Although it is widely recognised that tourism serves as a metaphor for the world (Dann, 2002), it still depends how we look at this window. In a similar vein, the quick responses of the private businesses to cater and market the 'cultural creatives' as I have shown before, can be interpreted in different ways. Postmodernism critiques 'cultural creatives' as another form of 'new agers' or yuppies that displays trendy behaviour rather than a genuine shift in values (Ateljevic, 2008; Ray & Anderson, 2000). On the other hand, transmodernism recognises their behaviour as another indicator of the claimed emergence of transmodernity and celebrates the fact that people are changing their lifestyles and aim to live more sustainable. And even if it is to respond to a certain trend, a change in behaviour can be seen as a step towards changing values.

Transformation through travelling

Introduction to the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework elaborates on the transformative potential of travelling, as was briefly introduced in the first chapter. In order to view tourism from a transmodern perspective, we need to take off the (post)modern glasses that mostly dominate current tourism research. This will be done by drawing from tourism literature, as section 2.4 provides a short historical overview of tourism up to the point of where we are today. It further discusses the increased importance of how travelling forms part of western life course today – especially for the younger generation. Travelling is about being away from home and exactly these out of the daily environment experiences can open one's eyes and bring about potential change (§2.5). By drawing apt lines with literature from social psychology and transformative travelling, section 2.6 reveals how travelling can catalyse a change in perspectives as it are the senses and the out of the everyday environment experiences that nurture different perspectives.

Yet as tourism is a temporarily activity that involves (voluntary) returning home, focusing on how this change can be fostered upon return home is an utmost necessity (§2.7). In order to find out the essence of coming back to a familiar environment whilst a person has changed, the field of repatriation studies provides useful insights – especially regarding the infancy of post-travel research within tourism studies. Repatriation studies, which mostly focuses on expatriates, does recognise the impact of returning home from an international sojourn and explains this by using reverse culture shock models from international communication studies. This will be dealt with in section 2.8. The closing paragraph provides a short summary of what is discussed so far.

2.4   The world of tourism: On the move

2.4.1   The increasing importance of travelling

The need to travel beyond our boundaries, to see more of the world, to sail beyond the horizon goes back a long time in history. From the early nomadic hunters and gatherers that travelled in search for food, to pilgrimages to sacred places, to the first sea-explorers that sailed beyond the horizon in search for new land. Humans are always on the move, especially since tremendous improvements in mobility made distance very relative. With a shift in purpose towards travelling for hedonistic needs, travelling became commercialized (Boorstin, 1964). Tourism, as we know it today, knows quite a fast history congruent with the rapid development/globalizing forces that constituted today's world. The further society developed, the more tourism industry responded to westerner's needs. Tourism even knows several histories, which is however a less common notion. In box 2.2, you can read the history of the development of tourism.

Box 2.2: A short history of tourism

Commercialization of travelling

Tourism departed from the Grand Tour during the mid-seventeenth century where the upper class Europeans travelled to the Mediterranean for mostly sightseeing and educational purposes, to Thomas Cook who made travel more accessible for the middle class for leisurely pursuits at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Holden, 2008).

It should be noted that this provided history of tourism is a prevailing Eurocentric view whilst the philosophy of tourism has been apparent in other countries as well (see e.g. Sharma [2004] who provides a different perspective with the history of leisure in India; and Wallingre [2007] who describes the history of tourism in Argentina). Thus, though the 'Promenade des Anglais' might be a well-known remnant of the class-based English whom travelled to Nice, its preservation does not give exclusive rights to be the *single* history of tourism.

Where Thomas Cook introduced the famous package holidays, further technological advances in mobility rapidly improved the overall tourism industry. According to Lash and Urry (1994), Thomas Cook exemplified the Henry Ford of modernity. It can be noted that their argument reveals the parallel development of tourism and society – that is tourism as reflection of the world (Urry, 1990), as metaphor of the social world (Dann, 2002), and viewed through their (post)modern lenses.

Industrialization also led to an increase of level of income and an increase in free time, which further nurtured the demand for and growth of tourism, making it today's largest (legal) and most pervasive industry of the world (Hannam, 2007). Tourism takes place within a large framework at a global scale, as globalisation made the world more connected than ever before (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007). As Sheller and Urry note (2006: 207), 'all the world seems to be on the move'. It is not only the movement of people (e.g. travellers, migrants, commuters) but also objects, capital and information that move on a global scale. This interconnected flow of movements through public space is deeply integrated in our daily lives. Besides a tremendous change in our daily time-space courses over the past decades, temporary mobility on a global scale has captured a prominent place, entwined with our daily lives (ibid).

Tourism and mobility remain ambivalent concepts. Regardless the perspective, tourism undoubtedly began as a class-based elitist form of mobility. Though industrialization did make it more accessible for the mass, tourism is still largely and primarily an activity for the developed world of the west – with a recent increase of BRIC[12] countries' upper-class (Ars & Visser, 2010). It is the mobile elites of society who can afford to move rapidly across space and time whereas other groups of society remain constrained. It is then mostly in the western world where travelling is highly interwoven in one's life and has become more than just a necessity (Sheller & Urry, 2006).

Travelling as accustomed necessity

The amount of trips taken per person per year has increased substantially, especially since the last decade (UNWTO, 2008). Whereas a small holiday within your own or neighbouring country was enough for western travellers in the early nineties, going away several times a year to distinct places has become quite normal (Nawijn et al., 2010; Opperman, 1995). We can ask ourselves whether the increasingly felt (work) pressure of society has further driven us towards a *genuinely personal* need or an *assumed* need for embarking on holidays. To say, though the need of humanity to explore has always been present, it is interesting to note how standardization and globalisation of travel have shifted the perception of travelling towards an essentiality in western life. [13]

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[12] Brazil, Russia, India, China.

[13] It has even become such an assumed necessity and standard in contemporary society that a volunteer organization in the Netherlands organises holidays for Dutch people that cannot afford a holiday (Vakantiebank, 2011).

This increasing importance of travelling in westerners' lives can be understood better if we look at Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of human needs (see box 2.3 for a simple explanation). The sociologist Maslow provides an insight into the incentives of people and their cultures, divided into four hierarchical layers with an ultimate goal of self-actualization. Although the model has been developed in 1968, it is still considered as one of the basic models used for behavioural/motivational theories. It was Pearce (1982) who brought tourists into play, by arguing that tourism and travelling partly constitutes one's self-actualization.

Pearce conceptualised this in the Tourism Career Ladder (TLC) by mentioning in total five hierarchical categories in relation with the level of travel experience to explain tourist's behaviour. The Travel Career Pattern (TCP) is an adjusted version of the TLC, as Pearce argues that the life stage of tourists influences/determines their motivations for travelling (Pearce & Lee, 2005).

It is quite apparent that these models derived from a western point of view, largely based on the needs and behaviour of western tourists. As Hofstede (1980: 299) notes, achieving self-actualization can only happen in

Basic primary human needs that are necessary in order to survive (such as food and humane living conditions) are assigned to the lowest layer of the pyramid whereas the higher one gradually gets, the more personal the goals will be – in terms of self-development. Once the basic needs and living environment are stable enough, 'secondary' personal social issues come into play, eventually bringing a person to one's self-actualization. Using the term self-actualization, Maslow refers to reaching one's destination; i.e. the desired outcome of one's education or whatever one perceives as the purpose in life.

Maslow, 1968

individualistic societies rather than collectivist societies. In addition, it is how we interpret self-actualisation as e.g. materialism especially plays a large role in (post)modern societies. In this sense, where travelling once was a highly extraordinary activity undertaken by few people, the more tourism industry has become standardized the more accessible it has become. Needs of western society have rapidly shifted resulting in the value of travelling to be of increasing importance (Mowforth & Munt, 2009).

2.4.2 The popularity of long-term travels

Holidays represent important periods in our lives (Ryan, 1997), a time-out (Gross, 1961), to be considered as major life events in contemporary society (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2002). This is especially

the case for young adults, roughly ranging from 18 to 30 years, who increasingly perceive long-term travelling as a valuable opportunity to go and explore prior to, in between, or directly after studies (Haverig & Roberts, 2011; MINTEL, 2008). To them, travelling has become a certain 'rite de passage', 'a life stage that is not inevitable, but extremely common and popular with young middle class adults' as Bell (2002: 143) describes the overseas journey of young New Zealanders. A GAP year, overseas experience (OE), study, volunteer or conducting an internship abroad; all are (not exhaustive) forms of long-term travel that have become increasingly popular.

It is mostly to postpone a big decision (such as choosing the right study or starting a professional career) that adds up to their motivation to embark on a long-term journey of 'self-discovery' (Bell, 2002; Duncan, 2004; Volkskrant, 2011; Wilson et al., 2009). The heavily critiqued theory of emerging adulthood as proposed by Arnett's (2000) suggests that there is a transition to independence, a new phase in between adolescence and adulthood fostered by globalizing forces (Bynner, 2005). In their analysis about the OE of young New Zealanders, Haverig and Roberts (2011) extend critique on Arnett's argument by providing evidence that the experienced gained during the OE is actually a(n) (key) element of emerging adulthood, rather than the suggested dichotomous relationship between freedom (away from home) and constraints (at home). Yet, it should not be forgotten that constraining factors of housing, work, relationships or children that often limit the 'older' generations, have not yet appeared in the life course of this younger generation (Wilson et al., 2009). Moreover, as most young travellers work during their travels in order to bear their living/travel costs, the requirements to acquire working holiday visa or to participate in working holiday programs restrict the age limit up to 30 years (Haverig & Roberts, 2011). In this sense, governing institutions and commercial organizations alike additionally impound the necessity of embarking on a long-term journey as *young* adults.

Curriculum Vitae-building or journey of self-discovery?

McCaig already highlighted the importance derived from a long-term stay abroad with regard to the future in her essay on 'global nomads'[14] in 1996. "*In an era when global vision is an imperative, when skills in intercultural communication, linguistic ability, mediation, diplomacy, and the management of diversity are critical, global nomads are better equipped*" (1996: 100).

Now, fifteen years after McCaig, going abroad for longer period of time seems to be part of the western life course of the new generation and is well-known to bring beneficiaries for the career in the long-term (Bell, 2002; Duncan, 2004; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Martin & Harrell, 2004; O'Reilly,

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[14] The term 'global nomads' goes beyond the concept of TCKs (third culture kids) as it captures people that have lived, work, studied etc. considerable period of their life outside their passport country whereas TCK's are significantly children raised as 'global nomads'.

2006). This directly links with Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, as consumption choices are used to identify 'the self' (Bourdieu, 1991). Furthermore, the experiences derived from travelling are used to distinguish 'the self' within their peer groups, as the accumulated cultural capital creates a better position regarding future employment (Hannam & Knox, 2010; Mowforth & Munt, 2009). Newly acquired 'soft' skills (i.e. intercultural sensitivity, broad worldview, open-mindedness) are increasingly being recognized as important future career values by companies (Inkson & Myers, 2003; Martin & Harrell, 2004; Mowforth & Munt, 2009; O'Reilly, 2006). As a result of this commodification, travelling has become an important part of lifestyle investment (Hannam & Knox, 2010: 40). If we think of Maslow's pyramid, it might be clear that travelling can serve (or: is used) as a means towards self-actualisation. By converting travelling into economic capital, one can later materially benefit oneself as it greatly aids in building a curriculum vitae (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 126). This belief is both maintained by the travellers, the travel industry, educational institutions and (future) employers. Above is rather a negative and generalized view of travelling, as a strategy to serve prospective lifestyles. Whilst I am not neglecting the fact this is happening, it is by far the dominant intention to go travelling. Parenthetically, no research (as to researcher's knowledge) has yet investigated whether the claimed career-building of young travellers is a young sojourner's answer to justify the long period away from home reserved for travelling instead.

Global Nomads

Up to this point, I aimed to give an overview of how travelling has changed overtime and how it has become an inevitable necessity of most of the lives of westerners. With regard to the young cohort of society, embarking on long-term travels is increasingly stimulated and kept alive by travellers, employers who inevitably put increasing emphasis on the gained experiences from travelling in their selection process, and commercial organisations aimed at meeting traveller's needs. Yet, the intention to gain experiences and to go on a journey of self-discovery goes beyond the claimed curriculum-vitae arguments. In a more positive vein, the need to discover oneself is the most commonly heard intention for embarking on sojourns (Bell, 2002; Brown, 2009; Haverig & Roberts, 2011; Jones, 2004; Pocock & McIntosh, 2010; Noy, 2004; Shulman et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 2009). Both by parents and young adults, this international sojourn is regarded as a valuable experience, an opportunity to learn and to gain different insights about the world, a spiritual journey of oneself (Bell, 2002; Brown, 2009; Martin, 1984; Pocock & McIntosh, 2010; USTOA, 2009; Volkskrant, 2011). In addition, Wilson, Fisher and Moore (2009) found that the working holiday experience brings about more cultural understanding than was suggested in previous tourism research. Furthermore, motivations for volunteering often range from helping people, meeting different cultures (Wearing, 2001; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). As such, they reveal a more altruistic motive (Zahra & McIntosh,

2007). The spirituality, the understanding of the world and experiencing freedom all relate to these long-term travels as well. Understanding the depth of these experience and self-exploring intentions makes it necessary to move beyond the scope of the widely used definition of the World Tourist Organisation: "*tourists are people who travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited*" (WTO, 1995: 14). More recognition can be found in the definition of an international sojourn as "*temporary between-society contact for a duration of 6 months to 5 years*" (Hottola, 2004, in: Brown, 2009: 504; Jandt, 2001).

Besides the fact that the latter definition provides a better distinction regarding the duration of travelling, the intentions of long-term travellers also differ – to say, the *a priori* purpose. The notion of an international sojourner's contact as '*temporary between-society*' reveals much more emphasis on the personal experiences, going beyond the superficial level of WTO's more economic definition.

To capture the various international lifestyles of sojourners, the term 'global nomads' comes into play – as it includes travellers that have stayed long-term abroad for various reasons (e.g. studying, backpacking, volunteering etc.).Though he does not explicitly mention the term, Uriely (2001) addresses global nomads by exploring the relatedness of the fields between work and tourism. He sets up a first classification of travellers in four categories (travelling professional workers; migrant tourism workers; non-institutionalised working tourists; and working-holiday tourists) to come to a first distinct typology. More interesting however, is the great deal of commonalities they all have, in being abroad for a long time for travel or work related purposes.

2.5   In search for the powerful motor of transformation

In this and following sections, I will elaborate on its potential and the power of *temporarily* and *voluntarily* leaving your everyday environment and what kind of (evidenced) changes it can bring about. As such, the intertwinement of transmodernity in this thesis is threefold: (1) positive focus on travelling by seeing its potential rather than critiquing (this however does not imply naivety!); (2) perceiving new forms of tourism as first tendencies towards transmodernity rather than postmodern forms as a result of distinctive lifestyle achievement; (3) and lastly how the very basis of travelling can bring about change rather than an escape abroad (and ending up in the same tourist enclaves as

[post]modernists argue). I will elaborate on the transformative potential of travelling within the framework of transmodernity below.

The magic of travelling

"*There is no substitute for the power of what can happen when you are travelling in a novel environment*" – Kottler, 2003: 137

This quote of the American psychologist Kottler perfectly illustrates the fact that we have to go beyond our everyday environment, in order to experience something completely different. In our everyday world, it is our social environment that affects our perception of the world and our moral horizons (Zerubavel, 1999). When we are young, we experience the world without any assumptions, without any prior knowledge we discover and learn. When we grow older, we learn how to behave in the world and conform to these socio-cultural norms. In order to make sense of the world around us and give meaning to it, we give ourselves (and others) an identity. Hall uses the following valuable definition of identities:

"*Identities are sets of social expectations related to ourselves and others that (a) are grounded in the interplay between similarities and differences and (b) pertain to the personal, relational, and communal aspects of lives*" (2005a: 102). Hall argues that identities are a 'set of expectations related to ourselves and others'. As a result, we constantly play a role when communicating (both verbal and nonverbal) with each other. As Zerubavel puts it, "*our thinking is inherently limited [...] social situations are typically surrounded by mental fences which mark off only part of what is actually included in our perceptual field as relevant, thereby separating that which we are expected to attend in a focused manner from that which we are supposed to leave 'in the background' and essentially ignore*" (1999: 35, 37). Yet this social control of community is deeply embedded in our lives, which makes it even harder to realize.

Leaving our comfort zone

If society controls the gate to our mind, as Zerubavel proposes, we should step out of our everyday environment by means of escaping the known and expected paths of our lives (Cohen & Taylor, 1976; Kottler, 1997). As Urry (1990) argues, tourism is a departure from everyday experiences as it directly contrasts with the daily life which is made up of routines.[15] Hence, travelling can be seen as the antidote of boredom (Kottler, 1997: 23).

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[15] This argument is reflected in several studies that aim to understand tourism experiences by attempting to classify tourists in certain typologies derived from the psychological process (see for instance Cohen, 1979; Lengkeek, 2001; Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999)

If we step out of our comfort zone, we will be exposed to new, challenging things (Dolan & Raich, 2009). Precisely this challenging environment turns out to be a core aspect for 'cultural creatives', as "*innovation happens when individuals* [...] *are faced with challenges and opportunities*" (Van Gelder, 1999: 826). As Ross (2010: 55) notes, "*during travel the sojourner separates from usual influences, pressures, and structures, inducing an inner readiness and creating conditions conducive for transformation*". We learn and we grow. Placing ourselves in an unfamiliar environment, we, literally and figuratively, discover new things. We feel like a child again. Our senses are reactivated; we taste different food, see and smell new things. A beautiful example is Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's (2006) story 'Le Petit Prince', a story about a little prince who travels to the earth where he meets interesting persons/animals and obtains a different perspective of his own planet which he only realises in the end of his journey. "*On ne voit bien qu'avec le cœur. L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux*" (It is only with the heart that one can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye).

The subconscious can become the conscious (Cohen & Taylor, 1976; White & White, 2004; Zerubavel, 1999). For instance, rationale of the behavioural geography is that it is not the environment itself that affects human behaviour but the way how people *perceive* the environment (de Pater & van der Wusten, 1996). *New environments provide us with new stimuli*, which makes us actively aware of things. As such, travel has the potential to make people attentive of things they had not noticed before, to transform people. Encountering different persons, travelling in a nouveau environment creates a 'position from which it becomes possible to see the inadequacies of [ones] own society more sharply' (Turner & Ash, 1976, in: Ross, 2010: 56). Interaction with significant others also plays an influential role in shaping one's internal identity and belief system. It is the interrelatedness and interdependency of culture, communication and identity that enables the dynamic process that makes up someone's identity (Smith, 1999). It is the magic of travel, as Kottler perfectly grasps in the quotation below, that enables us to reflect on our daily lives and that can alter our perceptions.

"*Only by getting away from our daily lives, and immersing ourselves in another world, we can fully grasps the senseless complaining that we do about our own annoyances [...] Your senses are intensified. Your hearing and vision are hypersensitive. Every sound, smell, and sensation takes over your whole being. This is all part of the magic of travel. <u>There is no other human activity that has greater potential to alter you perceptions or the ways you choose to run your life</u>*" (1997: 23,27 underscores added).

Yet, how does then this magic of travel works? Travel provides a transitional zone, it "*detaches one from the everyday responsibilities and familiar interactions of life back home*" (White & White, 2004). In this sense, the liminality (being in between) enables the traveller to take a distance from daily life

back home and at the same time creates a basis for self-discovery and transformation (Kottler, 1997, 2003; Neumann, 1992; Noy, 2004; Tucker, 2005; Turner, 1976; White & White, 2004; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). The British cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1976) whom is specialised in rites de passage found that if the personal is placed in brackets and one's usual structures are put in the background, it opens up an array of whole new experiences to a person. It is then the anti-structures, the lack of constraints where a person normally deals with in his daily life that provides freedom and enables transformation. It is the liminal, the being in-between where no common structures exist (e.g. the airport is a great example of such a liminal space with respect to travel). Leaving the comfort zone is the only way towards transformation (Dolan & Raich, 2009). This said the next section will further discuss transformation through travelling by reviewing literature that recounted an intense array of transformative experiences.

2.6   Transformation through travelling

The concept of transformative travelling has been first introduced by the psychologist Kottler (1997) who argues that travelling can bring about change in a person. Drawing from personal experiences and his work as counsellor, Kottler has written several books about the potentialities of travelling. Further within the academic sphere, the concept is recently taken up by Lean (2009) who connects the concept to sustainability by arguing that tourists should become sustainability ambassadors, highly stressing the importance of the post-travel phase; Ross (2010) who links it with the field of psychology and counselling as she examined transformative travel with the *a priori* intention of persons to change; Brown (2009) who analysed the transformative power of the international sojourn points out to similarities between long-stay tourists and sojourners; Noy (2004) who analysed Israeli backpackers reported positive deep change of their selves; Hottola (2004) who researched change undergone by tourists; and Zahra and McIntosh (2007) who found enduring cathartic experiences of volunteer tourists. Before I will further elaborate on the research done in the areas of transformation through travelling, it is necessary to understand the concept of transformation first.

2.6.1   Foster the potential of transformative experiences

According to Mezirow, transformative experience is "*the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and finally making choices or otherwise acting upon these*

new understandings" (Mezirow, 1991: 167). In this sense, transformation is becoming aware of suppositions on which are build our ordinary expectations. As travelling provides us with new stimuli and enables us to experience liminality, our ordinary behaviour and thoughts might be put aside for a while. Only as a child we are able to experience everything for a first time where after socialisation eventually creates assumptions. By becoming critically aware of this as Mezirow pointed out, we can come to new understandings. In addition, Ross (2010: 54) who explored transformation through travelling with particular focus on the traveller's conscious intention to change, sets out the following definition: transformation is "*a dynamic sociocultural and uniquely individual process that (a) begins with a disorienting dilemma and involve choice, healing, and experience(s) of expanding consciousness towards the divine; (b) initiates a permanent change in identity structures through cognitive, psychological physiological, affective, or spiritual experiences; and (c) renders a sustained shift in the form of one's thinking, doing, believing, or sensing due to the novelty of the intersection between the experiences, the experience, and the experiencer's location in time*". Ross thus argues that someone needs to have a reason to change, before embarking on a transformative journey. This sets out a noticeable difference between conscious and unconsciousness change, regarding the fact that Ross argues that conscious transformative travelling happens when the person intentionally seeks change through travel experiences (Ross, 2010). Yet, this is also the part where transformative *tourism* comes into play, as this commercialization of travelling caters the need of the person to change. For example, Kottler himself journeyed with *Outward Bound* (organization devoted to planning and staging transformative trips that are designed to transform people) where he 're-found' himself (2003: 144). Lean also provides several examples (see Lean, 2009: 197) to which he critically notes that in this sense, it is more the focus on transformation *during* the journey rather than a transformed experience upon behaviour upon return home (ibid). This not only exemplifies commodification of tourism / culture but also the actual happening of the claimed emergence of transmodernity, as people are seeking change and the tourism industry responds to that.

Unconscious transformative travelling can happen anytime, without the traveller's *a priori* intention to change. It can happen during volunteer work abroad, a hiking in Nepal or a pilgrimage for instance. A prerequisite that Kottler (1997) poses is that a person must be open for change. As Moir-Bussy concludes from her essay on 'travels that lead to wisdom': "<u>travel is indeed transformative when inward journeying goes hand in hand with outwards journeys</u>" (2003: 5, underscores added). Yet, the fact that people go travelling already implies certain openness, as it is the free choice of people to travel to a novel environment. Especially the *a priori* intentions of long-term travellers and global nomads provide more altruistic motives and imply more openness, going beyond the hedonist nature of tourism (Ryan, 1997; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). This is, somewhat contradictory, also acknowledged by Ross – whilst focussing on the travellers' conscious choice to evolve – who states

that 'transformative experiences are individually unique and can happen anywhere at any time' (2010: 56).

Kottler argues that there are certain situations that lie at the basis of transformative travel experiences (Kottler, 2003: 209):

1   *When you are required to solve problems in a new way*

2   *When you find yourself in a novel environment and confronted new stimuli*

3   *When you are lost or face adversity, but manage to survive in a way that makes you more resilient*

4   *When you develop a new relationship or magnify levels of intimacy in a current one*

5   *When you gain a perspective on your life and work through the eyes of someone from a different culture*

6   *When your core beliefs are shaken to the point that make major changes upon return*

Regarding above, it can be concluded that new environments provide new stimuli that in any sort of way can challenge you, which provides the ability to gain new perspectives. Opposed to regular travels that provide a temporary escape from daily life, transformative travel offers the insight to the traveller that constitutes change.

Cathartic experiences

Ryan (1997) highlighted the importance of holidays on people's lives as periods to 'possess the potential for cathartic experiences'. Based upon definitions that describe catharsis as emotional or psychological relief following events (Aristotle, 1963; Soanes & Stevenson, 2005, all in: Zahra & McIntosh, 2007), Zahra and McIntosh apply and describe cathartic experiences through tourism as "*encounters or activities that facilitate positive change and make a positive difference to an individual's relationship and purpose in life*" (2007: 115).

Lean (2009) has reviewed various literature from different disciplines – hereby confirming the 'indiscipline' of tourism (Tribe, 2007) – on the topic of transformation through travelling, and concluded that tourism has the great potential to transform people but that the understanding of issues of sustainability encountered during travels should be taken back home. Furthermore, the outcomes of various forms of tourism such as sacred tourism, nature-based and ecotourism, developmental and volunteer tourism, studying abroad, and backpacking all reported (to some extent) a certain change, an identity transformation *upon* return. Interestingly, these forms of tourism either carry the label 'new tourism' or involve a long-term stay abroad. It is then the increasing meaningful experiences that are constituted in the *a priori* intentions and the long duration of a trip that facilitated change. Though most studies were out-dated (as Lean points out) and have not intentionally focused on transformation through travelling, the commonality between

all these forms of tourism does illustrate that a stay abroad in a novel environment, encountering different persons, can bring about change. Moreover, in their analysis of cathartic experiences of volunteer tourists, Zahra and McIntosh argue that change lies at the very basis of volunteer tourism experiences – due to underline profound interaction and its underline altruistic nature. More significantly, they argue that "*whilst certain holiday experiences have the potential to impact an individual, cathartic experiences may be more enduring*" (Zahra & McIntosh, 2007: 116).

Change of identity

Meaningful interaction with the host society is also considered as essentiality in intercultural communication literature, discussing intercultural identity (Blok, 2001; Wood, 2002). As Adler describes, intercultural identity is based on a "*style of self-consciousness that situates oneself neither totally a part of nor totally apart from a given culture*" (1976, in: Kim, 2001). It is not only the meaningful interaction that provides room for transformation, but also the difficulties and dilemmas the traveller has to negotiate with. "*The myriad of disorienting dilemmas in travel provide fodder for change, from flying across the ocean, to changing money, to culture shock, to seeing how other people live, and to making friends around the world*" (Robertson, 2002: 36). It involves a constant negotiation (Galani-Moutafi, 1999). Smith sums this up as significant experiences in another culture that impinges on the 'deeply personal, identity-altering nature of the change[s]' (1999: 247). As such, intercultural communication can play a highly influential role on our identity, self-perspective and our view of the world alike. In addition, Noy (2004) discovered a collective notion of changed identities amongst Israeli backpackers through narrative analysis. Robertson (2002) who analysed transformative experiences of older (retired) travellers found that they acknowledge the potentialities of travel 'to change one's meaning perspective, to impact the knowledge one has about the world, and to change the individual in subtle but important ways'. Furthermore, Duncan (2004) suggests that working experiences also affect the perception of the self, especially with regard to career building and prospective employers. In his narrative analysis of Israeli backpackers, Noy (2004) concludes that deep profound personal change was recounted by the backpackers after the trip. Though the reported inner change reveals confirmation towards a normative expectation of long-term journeys to generate 'real change', the narrative accounts also indicate an overall pattern of exclusively 'positive and beneficial changes' (Noy, 2004: 90). In addition to Noy (2004), Brown (2009) found the sojourn to have a transformative nature and recounted 'altered selves' of international students one year after return home. Brown underlines specifically the positive self-concept and the cross-cultural awareness that sojourners gained through their international stay abroad. It is therefore likely to say that, after embarking on a journey, a sojourner's identity is subject to change.

2.6.2 The story so far

All authors addressing transformation through travelling as reviewed above (Lean, 2009; Robertson, 2002; Ross, 2010; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007) note transformative travelling happens in a novel environment. Though different circumstances allow change to happen, so far the only prerequisite is that a person must be open for change. Yet this intention is reflected in the different forms of travelling (i.e. new forms of tourism with a special focus that mirror a more altruistic nature) and long-during quests of the younger generation. In this sense, unconscious transformative travelling happens *if* a person is <u>open to change</u> – <u>intentions</u> of journeying thus go <u>beyond hedonism</u>. Travel can change someone as it 'does not fit within the boundaries of the traveller's assumptions, expectations, worldviews, or cultural paradigms' (Robertson, 2002: 38). As such, intercultural communication can play a highly influential role on our identity, self-perspective and our view of the world alike. It is then understandable that sojourners often experience tension with their own identity and the short-term adjustments they make in order to improve communication with the host-society (Kim, 2001; Smith, 1999). Experiences gained through travelling can be related to 'dramatic experiences as a medium of self-discovery and the discovery of the person's role in the universe and society' (Howatson & Chivers, 1996, in: Zahra & McIntosh, 2007: 115). It is therefore likely to say that, after embarking on a journey, a sojourner's identity is subject to change. Partly how we live is based on expectations of others, though we not always have such a proper vision on our own behaviour that we are aware of this inauthentic behaviour. This then coheres with the reported findings of Brown (2009) that travelling in a new environment creates a 'position from which it becomes possible to see the inadequacies of [ones] own society more sharply' (Turner & Ash, 1976, in: Ross, 2010: 56). By becoming critically aware of this as Mezirow (1991) pointed out, we can come to new understandings. Travelling brings you to foreign environments and disconnects you not only from your safe home environment, but also from the set of expectations of yourself and others (Kottler, 1997). But what if we return back to home, to the things we left aside? We still need other people to be aware of our own positionality (Smith, 1999: 251) which makes the depth of our personal changes become most apparent upon return home. The importance of sustaining these experiences upon return home is thus crucial, to say the least. Brown (2009), who analysed the transformative potential of the international students sojourn, concluded that during their stay abroad, students reconsidered their lives back home as they were free from culture and family constraints during that period of time. Long-term travellers experience an identical displacement that affects the traveller as they leave the everyday routine behind. "*It is therefore logical to suggest that such change* [as experienced by international students] *will also be experienced by long-stay tourists*" (Brown, 2009: 517). She therefore suggests a first relationship between international students and long-term travellers aiming at the similarity of their experiences upon return.

As Lean (2009: 192) pleas for tourists to become 'sustainability ambassadors': "*for tourism to make a greater contribution to sustainable development, it must use its unique position as an interpreter within meaningful settings to aid the transformation of one's thinking and behaviour upon returning home*". Lean found that tourists might learn and behave sustainable during their trip, if they return home not much is left from this. He proffers that more attention should be paid to make sustainability lasting. Pocock and McIntosh (2010) argue for a broader framework to examine the experiences of travellers upon return, as the overseas experience provides an excellent context for further examination. Finally, they call for "*an agenda for discussing the return from other forms of travel such as road tripping, backpacking, volunteer tourism and global nomadism*" (2010: 5).

As the *temporarily* nature of travelling is widely recognised and defines a traveller in itself (WTO, 2001), a return trip back home is always scheduled in the itinerary of a traveller, regardless duration or purpose. [16]

2.7   Sustaining experiences?

2.7.1   Not the norm in tourism?

Returning home is the actual aim of the long-term traveller instead of reaching the holiday destination as Jack and Phipps (2005) argue. Yet the impact a long-term journey has on one's personal life has not received due attention from academic researchers, in spite of the fact that there is still a growing amount of travellers that take off for a longer period (MINTEL, 2008; WTO, 2001).

Ryan (1997) highlighted the importance of holidays on people's lives as periods to 'possess the potential for cathartic experiences'. Ryan uses the fictive 'Shirley Valentine' syndrome to exemplify that many tourists experience similar life changes. Yet, as he continues, cathartic experiences through tourism are not the *norm*. Zahra and McIntosh (2007) explain that it is largely the hedonistic nature of traditional holidays, rather than a search for meaning. As traditional holidays are perceived as forms of escapism through (post)modern lenses, it explains why relatively little research has been done about life-changes as a result of tourism – especially with regard to the claimed emergence of transmodernity.

Placing travelling within the new mobilities paradigm

It is this part of travelling, the return phase, that can be placed within the new mobilities paradigm and can offer a new dimension as returning from travelling involves movement but in a different (bodily) context than is yet argued. "*Placing tourism within the framework of temporary mobility*

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[16] Partly due to constraining factors that influence a travel itinerary such as restrictions of visa, passports, return flights and family ties (Jarvis & Peel, 2010).

allows us to see tourism within a wider social context over the life span of individuals" (Coles et al., 2005; Hall, 2005b). Sheller and Urry (2006) remind us that mobilities need 'to be examined in their fluid interdependence'. As a transient and fluid activity, it is not only getting to and staying at a destination that constitutes travelling, but also the preparation, the excitement towards it as well as the home-coming. "The journey may be seen as a type of *passage* in time" (Galani-Moutafi, 1999: 2, italics in original). Though a traveller might return physically, the mental journey does continue (Pocock & McIntosh 2010: 2). As such, we can understand that returning home from long-term travels can have a significant impact on our life course (Brown, 2009; Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Cohen, 2011; Gaw, 2000; Hottola, 2004; Kottler, 1997; Noy, 2004; Pocock & McIntosh, 2010). This is not only scantly addressed in academic tourism literature, but is also found lacking in travel guides discussing long-term journeys that merely focus on preparation for travellers to embark on a journey and the provision of useful insights during the journey – up to the point of return. Griffith (2009) briefly dedicates a chapter in a guide for adults to take a career break, mentioning 'you should be prepared for a certain level of disorientation on a personal level'. Jack and Phipps (2005) who examine intercultural exchange though tourism, pay (amongst others) attention to the ritual aspects involved in tourists' return to routine, mentioning that "arrival home is typically of lesser, general narrative value than arrival in a new place. The journeys are the features" (2005: 152). Regrettably they do not elaborate on this; it indicates that once again, the importance of a re-entry in one's own normal life is considered to be a normal process that one can undertake without any difficulties. Graburn (1978) mentions the troubles of the return, saying 'the re-entry is also ambivalent'.

2.7.2   Long-term travellers vs. sojourners

Notion of the impact returning home from a sojourn has on one's life course is a more common phenomenon within the field of repatriation studies (Kim, 2001; Smith, 1999; Sussman, 1986, 2000, 2002; Szkudlarek, 2010). Repatriation draws apt lines with models of intercultural communication (i.e. curves addressing [reverse] culture shock) to focus for instance on adjustment of expatriates in their host/home country. Yet, even within this field, the main emphasis lies on acculturation abroad and the research done on adjusting in one's home country is often initiated by the companies. The underlying priorities of different stakeholders should therefore be taken into account. As Szkudlarek argues, "*despite numerous publications on expatriation, the theme of cross-cultural re-entry (its course, impact and features) still remains largely neglected and underestimated in the sojourner's transition trajectory* [...] *There is a great need for more diversified repatriation research*" (2010: 1, 12). Paradoxically, though repatriation studies acknowledges the impact of returning home from a long-term stay abroad on one's life-course, it excludes thus long-term travellers identification to be a noteworthy segment of sojourners' definition.

Young Yun Kim (2001) has devoted much of her research to intercultural communication and adaptation processes of individuals who spend a considerable amount of time abroad, or to put in Kim words: "*contemporary pioneers venturing into an unfamiliar cultural terrain where the 'business as usual' ways of doing things quickly lose their relevance...concerned with building a healthy functional relationship to the host environment in a way similar to the native population. They confront their cross-cultural predictions and engage in new learning for an improved 'goodness-of-fit' to handle their daily transactions with a greater ease and heightened sense of efficacy*" (2001: 237). Interestingly, of all the types of sojourners Kim sums up, any category of travellers is left out of consideration yet they do seem to meet above criterion. This is also the case in Smith (1999) who centres her discussion of the cycle on cross-cultural adaptation and re-entry, explicitly mentioning that tourists are considered to have had different experiences than 'sojourners that have spent a significant time (more than six months) abroad, had meaningful interaction in their host culture and returned home' (1999: 247). In this case, travellers are left out of consideration along with refugees and immigrants, all assuming to be separated from the host society. Although Smith (1999) *does* consider tourists as sojourners that might stay more than six months abroad, hereby indirectly distinguishing different types of tourists (i.e. two-week holiday tourists versus long-term travellers), she puts them back in the same box as she rejects the notion of travellers to have any meaningful interaction with their host society. Leaving unaddressed with this generalisation of tourists' behaviour is their potential of profound emergence of cross-cultural identity and related transformative power amongst travellers. According to Szkudlarek (2010) who recently analysed a broad range of repatriation literature specifically focussing on the cross-cultural aspect, literature on repatriate groups other than corporate repatriates, spouse/partner re-entry, students, missionaries, peace corps volunteers, Third Culture Kids and returning migrants, is very fragmented, emphasizing that "*there is a great need for more diversified repatriation research*" (2010: 12). Although long-term travellers are left out of Szkudlarek's suggestions for further research, they certainly belong to a new arising group within the re-entry literature that deserves more attention as Pocock and McIntosh (2010) proffer.

2.8   Transformative travelling: repatriating home

"A good traveller has no fixed plans and is not intent upon arriving"

Lǎozǐ, 4 B.C. [17]

This quote perfectly illustrates the design of this section. The path, the journey during a travel is much more important than focussing on the actual destination itself. Paradoxically, if one is about to return home, the home has become the new destination. Yet travellers undermine the importance of (mental) preparation before going home (Brown, 2009; Gaw, 2000; Martin, 1984) whilst academia *do* recognize the difficulties repatriates often have to go through upon return home (Hall, 2005a; Kim, 2001; Smith, 1999). Since it is the aim of this thesis to explore stories of repatriated travellers that have lived their travel experiences, it is useful to look at the various phases of transition a repatriated sojourner goes through. In doing so, this closing section incorporates literature from the field of intercultural communication and repatriation studies to briefly touch upon several models that are used to understand acculturation and adjustment with special focus on reverse culture shock (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Kim, 2001; Smith, 1999).

2.8.1   Adjustment and acculturation

The notion of Hofstede (1991) how culture affects individuals is often related to attempts to explain cultural differences in the world by using several models of acculturation (i.e. Kim's [200] 'stress-adaptation-growth model', and Oberg's [1960] 'U-curve model'). If we look at what is understood by acculturation, namely: 'developing the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively within a cultural community in which you were not raised' (Hall, 2005a: 271), we easily run into confusion of the concept of 'another culture'. Yet, the essentiality these models point out is that travels and a cultural adjustment period go hand in hand. One of these models, the U-curve was identified by Kalervo Oberg (1960) and consists of several stages of adjustment *during* a sojourn. Paradoxically, after excitement, it is precisely the novel environment with different habits that creates a culture shock that represents the very crisis as these models point out. It should be noted that the U-curve is very simplistic, highly generalises and merely serves as an example to understand what *could* happen to sojourners. To say, not everyone experiences 'culture shock' in the same manner. Smith (1999) pleas for a more positive association with the term 'culture shock', arguing it should be seen as the embodiment of a cycle of growth, triggering a deep-cross cultural learning experience rather than

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[17] Lǎozǐ was a Chinese philosopher who is considered to be the founding father of Tao-ism (Tao-ism focuses on the relationship with humankind and the cosmos).

being perceived as a negative image of sojourners coping with discomfort and stress (1999: 249). This is also supported by Hottola (2004) who argues that confusion better captures the experience of tourists rather than a genuine shock. As Adler argues, a culture shock brings about an acquirement of "*new perspectives and outlooks of the nature of culture*" (1975, cited in Smith, 1999: 249). It is then assumed a sojourner goes through difficulties before getting back to his/hers initial level of comfort – which is done by making adjustments. If we think of the earlier discussed hierarchy of human needs' (Maslow, 1968), it can become clear that the lower down on the pyramid, the greater the level of frustration. The very basic needs such as food might differ from what we are used to eat back home, and if someone is not able to adjust to this, difficulties remain to exist. It is then the prerequisite of being <u>open for change</u> that nurtures adjustment. Kim's (2001) stress-adaption-growth model departs from the same assumption that challenges are inevitable in the phases of adjustment. Kim states that adaptation can be considered as successful only if the "*personal communication system sufficiently overlap with those of the native*" (Kim, 2001: 239 underscores added). If a sojourner has acquired a certain capability in communicating and developing a healthy relationship with the host society, one's *functional fitness increases*, which automatically positively relates with one's *psychological health,* which in turn brings about one's *intercultural identity*. As adjustment takes place *during* the sojourn, short-term changes were made with a *temporarily* intention. In that sense, abovementioned models exist upon the assumption a sojourner only deals with difficulties when *entering* a different culture. Repatriation, or the process involved in going back to and feeling as comfortable as possible again in one's passport country, tells a somewhat different story.

2.8.2   Reverse culture shock

"*Intercultural re-entry has been defined as the process of reintegration into primary home contexts after an intercultural sojourn (an intensive and extended visit into cultural contexts different from those in which one was socialized)*" (Martin, 1984, cited in Martin & Harrell, 2004: 310). [18]
Regarding the process of repatriation, the scholars have various opinions about what brings about the best experience. Whereas some scholars (i.e. Sussman, 1986) argue that the more often people have spent time in their country of sojourn, the easier it will be to re-adjust back home, others (i.e. Adler, 1981) share the idea that the better the adaptation abroad, the smoother it will be to re-adjust upon return. Often these arguments carry a positivist stance (i.e. Sussman, 2002) in that cultural transitions are quantitatively measured by scales etc. which often does not take into account

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[18] Please note that a 'cultural context different from those in which one was socialized' (Martin, 1984), not necessarily means one has to travel extremely far to a complete different culture. Differences other than one's home environment might be experienced closer to home, as role expectations related to cultural context differ and as families all adopt different norms/values – even within the same society.

the complex relationship and transition of a sojourn. Moreover, several studies (i.e. Cox, 2004; Martin, 1984) suggest that the age of a repatriate might influence the distress experienced upon return. Martin (1984) believes that the age at which most individuals go abroad to study is the peak developmental period regarding their worldview. Congruent with Martin (1984), Cox (2004) argues that especially the younger segment of the population might experience more problems than the rest of the population as their high cultural learning and adjustment skills affect profound identity changes which in turn, make it harder to adjust upon re-entry. In contrary, findings of a recent ethnographic study by Brown (2009) demonstrate that the fundamental personal change as an outcome of an international sojourn is experienced by all long-term repatriates, regardless age. However, since the focus of Brown's paper involved international students, one might question her argument.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) were among the first who extended the idea of Oberg's U-curve by adding another 'U' behind it that illustrates the same pattern (of cultural adjustment in the host society) a sojourner goes through when re-adapting back home (see fig. 2.3 – the red line illustrates the re-entry point). Yet, the U-curve inadequately serves as an example as it highly generalises and does not take into account the diverse nature of human responses, making it 'a relic of modernism' as Hottola (2004) critiques, hard to fit within a postmodern of even transmodern paradigm.

Figure 2.3: The W-Curve Model
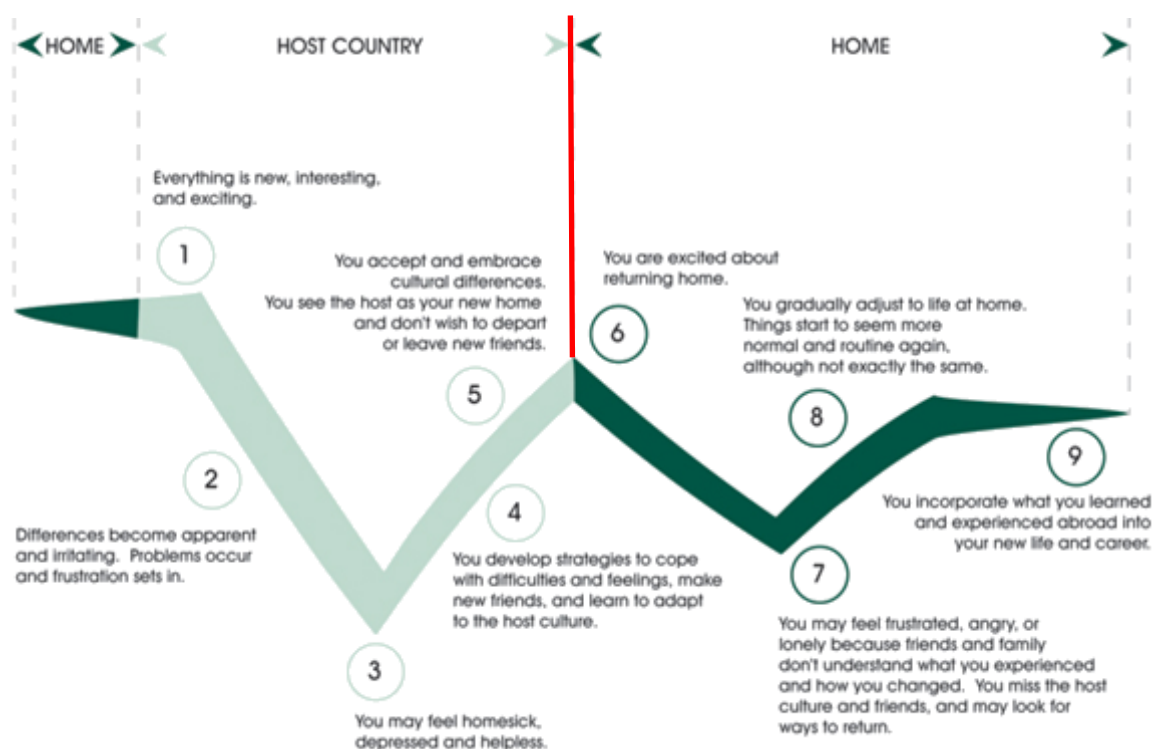
Adapted from Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963

In a more positive vein, this model *does* take into account the adjustment after returning back home and might provide understanding for the process a repatriate goes through. This W-curve model designates that a sojourner experiences the phases of repatriation and re-adjustment in emotional states of ups and downs through socialisation over time. Parenthetically, regarding the negative connotation of re-**adjust**ment, does it mean when a sojourner fits in his/her 'old' role again in home society? And if a sojourner decides to go back to his/her country of sojourn, does it signifies a failure in re-adjusting back home or a well-informed personal choice? It is a very personal process and the extent of adjustments made differ from person to person but all aim to reach a level where they feel comfortable again *with* incorporated changes. Yet even if a sojourner has finally found a way to cope with the initial problems *implies* that re-entry is thought of as an end point. Regarding the fluidity and dynamicity of both a sojourner's cultural identity and mobility, we should rather see re-'adjustment' as a continuous process, so that the best can be captured. In order to overcome the existing void in these models, Hottola (2004) proposes a new framework, the dynamic model of culture confusion, in which he provides a starting point as an alternative to the earlier models discussing culture shock, by better capturing the complexity of the return phase.

Hall (2005a) gives three reasons why return home is difficult. Firstly, the realisation that life back home has continued as well is something that often goes beyond the initial thoughts of a sojourner. Unrealistic expectations that are created during the sojourn are seldom met upon return.[19] Yet the most important reason lies in the actual change of oneself, constituted during the sojourn. This adds to the recognition of the potentialities of travelling that brings about personal change, going beyond superficialities. It is not until the moment when the sojourner returns home, that some of these short-term changes might be altered into long-term changes. In this sense, the sojourner has incorporated some of his/hers previous experiences into his/her 'old' life, where a shift occurs of short-term adjustments changing into long-term adaptations (Smith, 1999: 246).

The last reason Hall (2005a) points out is the lack of appreciation in a home country. Though the personal underwent change is a profound one and involves many emotions, recognition and the possibility to genuinely share experiences with significant others are seldom found. If we think of Kim (2001) who considers communication as a key factor for successful cross-cultural adaptation, it is interesting to understand its meaning in terms of re-entry. If little recognition can be found in the home culture when expressing profound changes, a very essential (communication) point is missing. Martin (1986) also recognises the importance of communication upon return. In the handbook 'Gap Year for Grown-ups' Susan Griffith (2009) provides (amongst others) some personal accounts from

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[19] As these models and arguments were developed some time ago, it might be interesting to research the influences of social media on these unrealistic expectations.

adults that returned from their gap years. Regarding the return, one respondent who volunteered in India for a while perfectly captures Hall's (2005a) last identified struggle:

"*Reverse culture shock is always much worse than the acclimatisation process you go through when you first arrive in a foreign country because you're just not prepared to feel different about your old life. I think being aware that it might be difficult to return home is the key.* [...] *It can also be difficult to sum up your experiences in a couple of sentences, which is generally all people have got time for when they ask 'How was it?'"* (In: Griffith, 2009: 320). Challenges encountered back home are interrelated, on the one hand the sojourner copes with "*a lack of opportunity to use competencies acquired abroad, a sense of alienation from their peers, and an inability to communicate their experience to others*" (Martin, 1986b; Uehare, 1986; Workman, 1980, all in: Smith, 1999: 252) while the home environment is incapable of understanding this process. As Smith puts it: "returnees are actively engaged in a process that requires *creative integration* of their 'old' (pre-departure) and 'new' (host country) perceptual frameworks" (1999: 253, italics in original).

Nancy Adler (1981) asserts that sojourners respond to these difficulties upon return home in various ways. Concerning the level of maintenance of personal change experienced during the sojourn, the variety of 'adaptive attitudes' (alienation, resocialization and proactivity – see fig 2.4), result in various different outcomes. For instance, alienation happens when aspects of the home culture are rejected. In contrary, resocialization is an adaptive attitude when the sojourner rejects every lived experience from the host culture, to fit into old life as soon as possible. The third approach represents 'a positive attitude towards both the culture one visited and one's own culture' (Hall, 2005a: 293), as it involves active effort to come to a certain 'mutual agreement'.

Figure 2.4: Different adaptive attitudes of sojourners in the re-entry phase
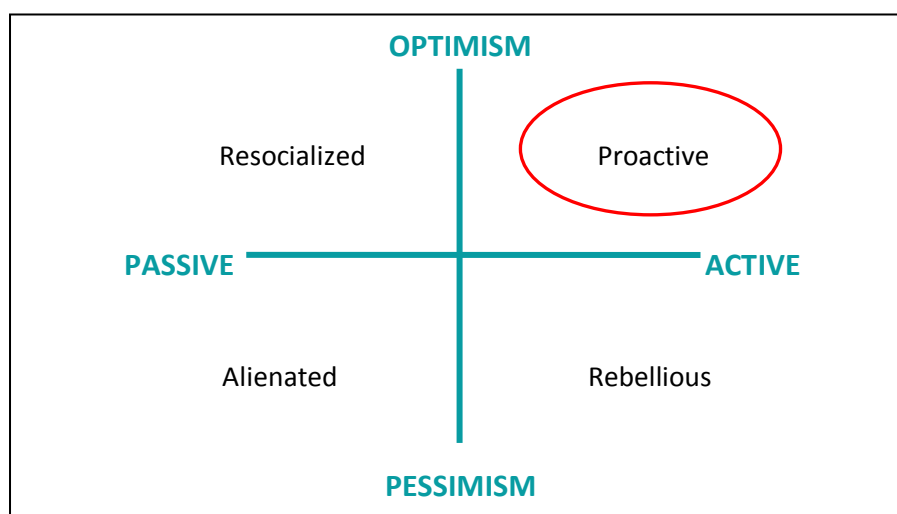
Source: Adler, 1981

Adler (1981) specifically underlines the importance of communication during and after the sojourn with significant others of both host and home culture. In addition, she proffers that support of the lived experience is necessary, which is heavily influenced by significant others (close friends and family) of the home culture. It can improve the sojourners understanding of the difficulties they encounter when repatriating. If this is the case, personal growth is the outcome (Adler, 1981). Even though Adler (1981) asserts only four approaches to adaptation might limit the process of readjusting back home, it does provide a certain insight in how sojourners might respond. The lack of recognition and more enduring support often downsizes a sound readjustment period – especially if these arguments and models maintain to be confined within academic circles and are not brought to the sojourner's (and their significant others) understanding.

The need for training

The need for training or at least a certain preparation seems thus crucial. As Martin and Harrell (2004: 311) note, "re-entry adaptation is most successful if facilitated by participation in re-entry training before or after the sojourner return to the home culture. The difficulties of returning to one's home environment are well documented and present challenges for sojourners and also for their families, friends, and colleagues (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Gaw, 2000; Storti, 2001). "*Re-entering with no re-entry training often means that the intercultural sojourn becomes encapsulated (Bennet, 1993), tucked away in the mind of the sojourner, and the opportunity is lost to integrate the personal growth and professional knowledge into the sojourners current life*".

If we think of the earlier pointed beauty of travelling, the opening of one's eyes and the reported change of travellers, it would be an utmost necessity – to say the least – to pay increasing attention to the return phase of a traveller, to make sure the changes are incorporated and maintained, especially with regard to the claimed emergence of transmodernity and its relationship with tourism (Ateljevic, 2009) and the transformative power of a sojourn, as Brown (2009) revealed.

2.9   Repatriation from travelling: towards a transmodern future?

So far, it might be clear that only until recently the area of travelling and repatriation have started to get some academic attention. Regarding repatriation, scholars seem to disagree with what influences sound repatriation back to a sojourner's 'home' country. If readjustment is not a smooth process, 'home' reveals a different meaning as it might be found elsewhere. The models I exemplified are quite outdated and whilst mutual agreement does not yet exist, new models are yet to be found. Parenthetically, regarding the fact that repatriation and sojourning is a highly personal and complex

process, one might question if models are needed anyway. The positivist stance that is mirrored in the quantitative measurement with scales fails to take into account the complex relationship and transition of a sojourn. The overall generalization is hard to fit within a postmodern or transmodern paradigm.

Especially in the context of transmodern social change, relations with repatriation are yet to be drawn. Travel can change someone as it 'does not fit within the boundaries of the traveller's assumptions, expectations, worldviews, or cultural paradigms" (Robertson, 2002: 38). As such, intercultural communication can play a highly influential role on our identity, self-perspective and our view of the world alike. Therefore, it is understandable that sojourners often experience tension with their own identity and the short-term adjustments they make in order to improve communication with the host-society (Kim, 2001; Smith, 1999). Only when sojourners allow themselves to be open and embrace and incorporate these changes, they can move forward and one's self-perspective is positively affected (Smith, 1999: 250), which can be related to how a person looks at the world. All individuals wear different glasses, and although we can never put them off and be completely objective, a better cross-cultural understanding can influence the visibility of these glasses. This is in accordance with transmodernism, as a new view of oneself has the potential to bring about a change in world values. "*Transformative changes don't necessarily alter what you do on the outside, but they produce dramatic alterations in the ways you look at things [...] When your core beliefs are shaken to the point that make major changes upon return*" (Kottler, 1997: 14). With regard to this, Kottler explains that "*international travel challenges us like nothing else, often requiring us to examine our most cherished assumptions about ourselves, about counselling, and about the world*". All authors addressing transformation through travelling as reviewed (Lean, 2009; Robertson, 2002; Ross, 2010; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007) note a certain change is needed in contemporary society, searching for harmony and sustainability, which also relates to the transmodernity paradigm. Though the term transmodernity is not used by the authors, the language in which they all speak reveals their notion of value changes as new views "*do not fit within the boundaries of the traveller's assumptions, expectations, worldviews, or cultural paradigms*" (Robertson, 2002: 38). Interesting is the study of Jensen (2004) who found that the change occurred through travelling 'involved a profound shift in the traveller's anthropocentric worldview of separateness from nature' (cited in Ross, 2010: 59). Ross coins this then 'an epochal transformation' which, though under a different name, has the same transmodern vision of unity with nature as shown previously. This also comes to the fore when Ross relates transformative travel as response to the urgency that the Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo (2003) describes as: 'the need of a radical transformation of human nature in order to make humanity survive' (cited in Ross, 2010: 60). The ethic related to 'choices that attempt to contribute to

the flourishing of all life [...] involves being a consumer of sustainable enterprises and products that explicitly strive to honour and give to the earth, local culture, and individuals' (Ross, 2010: 55). The emphasis put on sustainability and love coheres with the transmodern vision of life, as it centres on the same ethic of embracing diversity and interrelatedness of mankind and earth.

Experiences gained through travelling can be related to 'dramatic experiences as a medium of self-discovery and the discovery of the person's role in the universe and society' (Howatson & Chivers, 1996, in: Zahra & McIntosh, 2007: 115). It is therefore likely to say that, after embarking on a journey, a sojourner's identity is subject to change. In addition, part of how we live is based on expectations of others, though we not always have such a proper vision on our own behaviour that we are aware of this inauthentic behaviour. This coheres then with the reported findings of Brown (2009) that travelling in a new environment creates 'a position from which it becomes possible to see the inadequacies of [ones] own society more sharply' (Turner & Ash, 1976, in: Ross, 2010: 56). By becoming critically aware of this as Mezirow (1991) pointed out, we can come to new understandings. Yet the fact that sojourners report difficulties in readjusting to one's society plus the fact that re-entry training is lacking, might result in a loss of gained experiences through time.

3 Methodology

"A good scientist has freed himself of concepts and keeps his mind open to what is"

Lǎozǐ, 4. B. C.

This chapter serves as a justification for the methodological approaches (§3.1–3.5) that guided this research. Furthermore, it is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of all steps involved in the research design (from literature orientation, data gathering, data-analysis to final reporting), with special attention paid to the employed methods of memory-work and autoethnography. Coherent to these ethnographic methods, I will discuss reflexivity (§3.6). As knowledge is never value free (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), I will explain my position as a researcher as the way I perceive reality (in) directly affects the way this research is framed. Lastly, I will reflect upon potential deficiencies (e.g. bias) of the employed methods (§3.7).

3.1   Research Strategy

3.1.1   Exploratory Research

This research is centred on narratives of repatriated travellers and the transformation travel has brought to them, within the claimed emergence of transmodernity. As brought forth in the previous chapters, to date, very little has been written about transmodernity and tourism. In addition, the concept of transformative travelling is still scarcely explored (Brown, 2009; Kottler, 1997; Lean, 2009), something which makes a combination of transformative travelling and transmodernism an unexplored field. As Jennings (2001: 17) puts forth, "[e]*xploratory research is conducted when very little or no data exist on the tourism phenomenon being investigated*".

Due to the exploratory nature of this thesis and the assertion of multiple realities, I have chosen to adopt an interpretive social science research approach. Furthermore, as the narratives of repatriated travellers are considered to be the beating heart of this thesis, data is collected from an insider's perspective, making the nature of this research process subjective and qualitative. The epistemological position of this interpretive paradigm will be further explained in the next section.

3.1.2   Epistemology

Epistemology, or the 'theory of knowledge' (Hannam & Knox, 2010: 177), treats the relationships between the researcher and the subjects of research. With regard to the adopted interpretive approach, the interest lies in gaining understanding (or in Max Weber's words: 've*rstehen*') of the

world around us rather than seeking explanations. Interpretivism "*seeks understanding and meaning arguing that human actions and social constructs cannot be treated by researchers in the same way as natural objects*" (Tribe, 2008: 246). In contrast to rationality and generalization that dominate positivism, interpretivism is grounded in subjectivity and multiple realities. Please note that it is not my intention here to neither critique other paradigms (i.e. positivism) nor advocate for the adopted interpretive paradigm, but merely to illustrate that in this exploratory research, the interpretive paradigm is found most suitable. Certain paradigms fit certain solutions; it is the purpose of the research that guides a paradigm. As "*paradigms set the rules and define the boundaries of the acceptable in knowledge creation and represent an important power dimension acting on research*" (Tribe, 2006: 366), they shape the contours of research.

The nature of interpretive research is to give voice to the research subjects, as "*the complex social world can understood only from the point of view of those who operate within it*" (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004, in: Tribe, 2006: 369). Gaining deep understanding of the research subjects' experiences lies at the core of this thesis, which makes an *emic* approach to data collection being paramount. Therefore, a qualitative methodology was employed.

Furthermore, due to the fact the researcher is subjective and becomes part and parcel of the research, not only gaining understanding of the research subjects is essential, but also the situation of the researcher herself (Jennings, 2001). The acknowledgement of the researcher's involvement in interpretive research calls for reflexivity. In section 3.6, I will further elaborate on the 'subjectivist experiential reflexive approach' (Jennings, 2001) as it is considered to be a type of reflexivity that coheres best with the qualitative research methods of memory-work and autoethnography alike.

3.2   Research Design

Whereas epistemology served to discuss the what and how of knowledge, methodology involves everything it takes to acquire this knowledge (Grix, 2002). It is then the overall adopted epistemological approach that has determined the methods employed for gathering data (Gray, 2003; Jennings, 2001). In other words, methods are the indispensable tools of the researcher.

Along the lines of interpretivism and exploratory research, qualitative research methods were employed. Before going into detail about the used ethnographic methods, I will first delineate the goals and procedures of qualitative research and its relation with tourism studies.

3.2.1   Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a particular form of empirical research, characterised by an open and flexible way of gathering data (Jennings, 2001). Its nature is to acquire in-depth information from a small

group of people. This is opposed to quantitative research, which is characterised by large representative samples and focuses on the behaviour or thoughts of people (Ambert et al., 1995). Instead, the aim of qualitative research is to interpret, to seek depth (Jennings, 2001), "*to learn about how and why people behave, think and making meaning as they do*" (Ambert et al., 1995: 880). In order to explore perceptions of individuals, qualitative research focuses on their narratives, provides them with the opportunity to tell their stories without intervention or structured questions that characterise quantitative research (Van Lieshout & Aarts, 2005). It is discovery rather than verification that typifies qualitative research.[20] Yet this does not imply that it is not concerned with previous research (Ambert et al., 1995), instead, it is the concepts derived from e.g. literature review that gave meaning and direction to the research, making qualitative research a 'cyclic-interactive process' (Van Lieshout & Aarts, 2005).

Qualitative research and tourism

It is noteworthy to say that since its existence (for a detailed historical overview on qualitative tourism research see Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001); qualitative research has been exclusive to the fields of anthropology and qualitative sociology (Wolcott, 2002). Though qualitative methods are increasingly being adopted by other fields of study (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001; Wolcott, 2002), it is still subject to various debates questioning its definition, application, acceptability and evaluations (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001: 65). Due to the fact that tourism is rooted in business- and marketing studies and its attempts to be recognised as a mature field and self-standing academic field of study are laborious (Coles et al., 2009; Tribe, 1997, 2004), it seems almost unavoidable that the largest part of tourism research remains to be dominated by economic-oriented and quantitative-led studies (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001; Tribe, 1997). To paraphrase Jamal and Hollinshead (2001: 66): "*qualitative research* [located in tourism studies] *still struggles to gain legitimacy in several of the academic disciplines that are oriented towards human-social phenomena*". In addition, Hannam and Knox (2010: 175) put forth that "*tourism research should proceed using qualitative methodologies because they enable theory to guide the early stages of projects and to emerge at the end as a results of the research findings, and because they allow greater opportunity to spend time with our sources, our subjects and our 'data'*". With the dynamics of tourism encompassing the agency of seeing, being, experience, cultural invention and knowing (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001), it is evident that people are of vital importance to the industry and the academic field alike. Regardless to say, it is the tourists where the tourism industry and the academic field are so much concerned with. Adequately

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[20] Much of the ideas of 'grounded theory' are based on discovery, emphasizing that theory emerges from data instead of the other way around, as mainstream research is concerned with (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

addressing the deeper meanings and behaviour of tourists by means of qualitative research methods are therefore essential.

3.2.2 Ethnography

Investigating the deeper emotions, beyond quantitative superficialities is what has guided the exploratory qualitative tourism research in this thesis – especially as I consider the narratives of repatriated travellers as 'the beating heart' of this thesis. Although transmodernity is the essential overall philosophical framework for this thesis and theories centred on transformative travelling and repatriation fit within this structure, it is the personal accounts of (repatriated) travellers that make this thesis come 'alive'. Without their 'embodiment', this thesis would lose its significance as writing about the researched without involving them seems inappropriate.

Ethnographic qualitative methods are a suitable tool to capture the interpersonal encounter (Galani-Moutafi, 1999), to address the lived experiences of travellers with great sensitivity. In order to attain a deep insight into the accounts of repatriated travellers, to discover underlying values in their stories, to allow them to put forth their concepts and their perceptions, I choose to combine two ethnographic methods: memory-work and autoethnography. In both methods, the emphasis on narratives is grand. Glover (2003: 146) who emphasizes the relevance of narrative analysis to leisure studies in his paper refers to the great potential of narratives, as it "*offers a meaningful way for us to produce knowledge that deepens and enlarges our understanding of people's lives, including their leisure experiences*".

He identifies two different types of narrative data: stories of personal experiences and stories of personal histories. Whereas the latter is centred around reconstruction of one's life stories and seems to draw apt lines with the methods of the Memory Box[21] (Denis, 2005), it is the 'significant episode, event or personal experience' that is at the core of attention of the former (Glover, 2003: 154). The focus on deep personal experience of significant events – in this thesis thus participant's travels – corresponds to the philosophy of memory-work: to capture and examine memories of life experiences (Small, 2007b).

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[21] The Memory Box is a beautiful facilitative tool that uses memory-work – containing memories of families – to provide resilience, support and encouragement for affected post-apartheid children in KwaZulu-Natal, South-Africa. The Memory Box contains stories of the children's deceased families (mostly provided by the grandparents) to capture the history and families' stories for the current and next generations. For more information, I recommend the work of Philippe Denis "Never too small to remember". Memory work and resilience in times of AIDS.

Autoethnography

Regarding the acting of the researcher as a co-researcher in the assignment of memory-work (§3.2.3), an interesting way to capture the researcher's experiences and own subjective truth in a scientific way is by applying autoethnography.

Chaim Noy (2003: 3), who has applied this method in his work on analysing narratives of Israeli backpackers, elucidates the following: "*autoethnography is a genre that suggest innovatively that in some cases, writing about oneself, is scholarly illuminating. The writer addresses herself or himself ("auto"), as a subject of a larger social or cultural inquiry ("ethno"), vis-à-vis evocative and revealing writing ("graphy")*" (from Ellis, 1993, 1999).

Autoethnography is not so much a specific research method or technique, but 'colours' the overall methodology (Hayano, 1979). From the perspective of the researcher (or ethnographer), it is concerned with acquiring 'an intimate familiarity with certain subcultural, recreational, or occupational groups' (Hayano, 1979: 100). Self-identification with the participants needs to be recognized by both parties, to ensure good autoethnography. At first sight, autoethnography seems to be limited application for anthropological fieldwork, regarding the founder of the methodology is the anthropologist David Hayano. However, the importance of ethnographic writing should not be undermined. Describing experiences by means of capturing emotions is at the fore of autoethnography. As Ellis (2004: XX) states: "*combining literacy and ethnographic techniques allows me to create a story to engage readers in methodological concerns in the same a novel engages readers in plots*". Personal lived experiences are communicated through describing these emotions, making the personal subjective truth a displayed instrument to contribute to the theoretical part of the thesis. This is achieved by paying attention to the researcher's personal life, feelings, thoughts and emotions whilst *introspectively* examining them (Ellis & Bochner, 2003). It provides then a reflexive account of the researcher instead of 'merely' an autobiography. As Jackson (2000: 54) emphasizes, "*although others may be able to comment as external observers of these varied experiences, again, the ones who live these daily experiences, are the most well qualified and well suited to convey the intricacies of personally lived events*".

Flemos and Green (2002) who discussed the implications of autoethnographic writing on the researcher's sense of self came to the conclusion that the process of writing can lead to transformation. As time passes by, we learn and we grow (academically) and so our stated goals and expectations can take a different path, a new unintended journey. Even bounded to academic rules, writing – if we immerse and commit ourselves to the topic with enthusiasm – is a creative process – that can be made more explicit to both reader and researcher by using autoethnographic writing styles. I therefore adopted autoethnography not only for introspection and emotional recall of my

transformative travel experiences, but also for understanding the happenings of the participants, to further engage with their narratives provided by memory-work.

3.2.3 Memory-work

The origins of memory-work[22] lie in the feminist and social constructionist paradigm (Haug et al., 1987; Small, 1999, 2007a, b) as it investigates the process of social construction of individuals 'into existing social relations' (Haug, 1987: 33). Creator of the method is Friga Haug, a German feminist who, with respect to the three elements[23] of the feminist social constructionist paradigm, sought to gain understanding of female socialisation through examination of their memories (Haug et al, 1987; Small, 1999, 2007a). It was the 'SPUJ collective'[24] who further expanded the method and set the 'guidelines' as will be discussed below (Small, 2007a).

Memory-work can be considered as an innovative qualitative research approach that breaks down the traditionally submissive relationship between researcher and research subjects (Small, 2007a). "*The emphasis* [of the use of narratives] *is on the telling rather than the asking; participants can choose what and how much to tell*" (Graham, 1984, cited in Small, 2007a). With an elimination of hierarchical structures between researcher and the researched, it is the participants that influence the answer to a much greater extent than can ever be achieved by e.g. quantitative research / structured interviews.

It is the everyday experiences that are the basis of knowledge (Onyx & Small, 2001: 775; Small, 2007a), that are achieved by reflecting on them – thus by salvaging memories, the very premise of memory-work. As Small, Harris, Wilson and Ateljevic remind us: "*an aim of memory-work is liberation, whereby social knowledge becomes social action*" (2011: 33).

'Meaning does not lie *in* the experience. Rather experiences *become* meaningful as a result of being grasped reflectively' (Arnold, in: Small, 2007a: 2 – italics in original). As such, it is not the accuracy to which memories are recalled – making irrelevant to what extent a time frame influences the positive recollection of past experiences (Larsen, 2007; Nawijn et al., 2010) – as it is the *current* status of salvaged memories that influence how people perceive them today. "*As the present changes, so do our memories*" (Small, 2007a). To say, it is the tourists' long-term memories derived from both expectancies and events that eventually influence new expectations (Larsen, 2007). The reflection upon these memories takes place in three distinct phases that I will now describe briefly.

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[22] Memory-work is also known as collective biography, with a more explicit notice on the collective.

[23] Implying that no distinction was made between ontology, epistemology and methodology (Small et al., 2011).

[24] The SPUJ collective is a group of Australian academic constituted of **S**usan Kippax, **P**am Benton, **U**na Gault and **J**enny Onyx.

The *first phase* is used for a written memory of a particular experience of a participant. During the *second phase*, the written memories of the participants are collectively discussed and analysed. After this shared reflection, participants are allowed to revise their memory, which illustrates the reflexive nature of the method (Crawford et al., 1992). Lastly, *phase 3* characterizes the theorisation of the obtained material from phase 1 and 2. It is important to understand that the actual researcher becomes a co-researcher (member) in the first two phases, also sharing his/her story and actively discussing and reflecting with other participants. During the last phase, the co-researcher 'crawls' back into the position of a researcher and aims to draw connections with earlier discussed/reviewed theories.

Most importantly, and what makes memory-work such an interesting and worth-to-investigate method (in this thesis), are the rules for writing the memory (from Haug, 1987, cited in Small, 2007a):

1. Write 1 -2 pages about a particular episode, action or event (referred to by researchers as a "trigger" or "cue").
2. Write in the third person using a pseudonym
3. Write in as much detail as possible, including even what might be considered to be trivial or inconsequential.
4. Describe the experience, don't import interpretation, explanation or biography.

Whilst the overall writing enables the participant to stand still and reflect upon past experiences, it is the writing style, the third person, which allows participants to distance themselves from their lives, to take an imaginary step out of their lives (Small, 2007a). As such, it not only becomes easier to talk about oneself, but also to describe a story without constantly interpreting or (over)analysing.

Though memory-work is aligned with feminist theory, it does not mean it remains confined to feminist studies. In contrary, the essentiality of the method is adopted and further tailored by a broad range of research areas (for an overview of the application of the method see: Small, 2007a). Within the spheres of tourism, it was Jenny Small (1999) who applied the method to investigate women's tourist experiences. Memory-work is "*not merely a technique for data collection but includes analysing and theorizing the data, interpreting and re-interpreting them in the light of the overall theory*" (Crawford et al., 1992, in: Small, 1999: 27).

As such, I consider memory-work to utterly suit the purpose of this thesis: reflecting on travel experiences and its impact on the life of repatriated travellers by retrieving memories and reflection of lived-experiences. In the next section, I will, amongst others, explain how I have applied the methods of memory-work to unravel the transformative experiences of (repatriated) travellers.

3.3 Data Collection

Within the spheres of the interpretive social science paradigm, data from the research subjects were qualitatively collected, yet this does not necessarily imply that I have not employed other techniques as well. The final constitution of this thesis was concerned with desk study and memory-work. The applied techniques will be extensively discussed below, as I consider paying attention to research strategy as an inevitable and crucial part of any thesis.

3.3.1 Desk study

The gathering of knowledge initially started before writing the thesis. The practicalities of the concept of transformative travelling were in my mind for a long time, but never with the intention to write my master thesis about it. When my curiosity and interests arose around the term 'sojourner' and associated recent academic articles, I started to engage myself with the literature. Though the makeup of this thesis is chronologically, it does not imply the process of writing was created by the same pattern. In contrary, it has been a constant flux whilst switching between finding the right (academic) literature and accompanying methodology to approach the research subjects as good as possible. To say, this process touches some of the same surfaces of grounded theory and autoethnography. Commonalities of the former approach are found with its main philosophy of theory emerging from data instead of data following theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and the latter approach in being "*a field where process and hermeneutics are part and parcel of our work ... * [as such] *it can hardly be imagined that such a work would (or should) develop precisely or even approximately along the proposed lines*" (Noy, 2003: 5).

Furthermore, though transmodernity served as an 'umbrella' term in this thesis, it was not until I familiarized myself with literature around repatriation, culture shock and sojourners (all treated in chapter 2, the theoretical framework), that I managed to link transformative travelling and transmodernity. Lastly, in order to gather data with little or no errors, knowledge about the used methods and epistemology alike was also acquired by reviewing methodological literature.

3.3.2 Sampling

In order to include the targeted research subjects of repatriated travellers and their life stories, I used the means of *purposive sampling*. More concrete, I used the system of *non-probability* sampling, also known as non-random sampling, which refers to a non-structured selection of participants; an unequal chance for participants to be opportunistic to participate; a non-representative relationship to the population; and a study-group specific applicability of findings (Jennings, 2001: 146).

The personal network of the researcher was used for identifying potential participants – known as the main trait of snowball sampling (Jennings, 2001). As such, all participants were connected to the researcher in one way or another, having a certain *personal* proximity. After all, the idea of snowball sampling is that via the personal network of the researcher participants are identified, who in turn, are asked to forward the message to people that – according to them – share some of the required characteristics. This eliminates then selection bias (Hartman et al., 2002), as it is the overall intention to select participants on life-changing stories.

Approaching the participants

Via the means of email, (65) invitations to participate in this research were send out to personal contacts, with a brief illustration of the research's context (see appendix A for invitation). After positive responds were received, duration of the trip was asked for in a follow-up mail. Hereafter, detailed information was given about memory work and the rules of writing, with a form on which the respondents could write their narratives. Furthermore, in any case of doubt, participants were allowed to contact the researcher at any time – which was fairly easy and informal due to the already established personal contact between researcher and the participants.

The respondents were advised to print the form, take it with them and write whenever something would pop up in their minds, or to take some time behind the computer to fill it in. The respondents that filled in the form were asked to digitally send it to the researcher and the participants that choose to fill it in manually were kindly advised to scan their work. It was anticipated that difficulties with understanding handwritten memory-works could arise. Yet it was deliberately chosen to not eliminate this option, as the joy and freedom of participating in the memory-work assignments for participants should be prioritised over possible problems of the researcher with understanding handwritings. It should be clear that handwritten assignments instead of digital filled-in forms was not stimulated either, but the participants were given the freedom to choose. In the end, all participants digitally finished the assignment. During any moments of doubts from the researcher regarding the content of the memory-work, the participant would be contacted. Regarding the working language of this thesis is English, the respondents were kindly asked to respond in English. The nationality of each of the participants (see table 3.2, p.68) reveals that English is not their mother tongue, which might affect the overall capitation of emotions or certain structures of sentences.

Given the time frame of the research, a deadline was given, though it was emphasized that the time slot should not influence the narratives as such. As I devoted a single paragraph to each of the participants, it was anticipated that it was not necessary to obtain all the data at once before the result section could be written, as often is a necessity in other types of research (Jennings, 2001). By

means of personal contact between researcher and each participant individually, a way was sought (and found) to manoeuvre around the given time constraint.

Though the sample size was rather small, it can still be considered adequate enough as it is not the quantity that matters, but the quality of the data – *if* studied intensively (Wolcott, 2001: 885).

Research parameters

As this *exploratory* research is centred around (repatriated) travellers and their 'transformation' accordingly, very few (limiting) parameters were chosen.

🌐 Open to change

The most important prerequisite required to participate in this research was that the participant had to have the idea to 'be changed' as a result of previous travels. This was asked for in the first invitation send out. Literature reviews showed that all travellers reported transformation were open to change. Therefore it was assumed that participants, who recognized themselves in the question if they experienced change during/after travelling, would respond and would provide sufficient and rewarding narratives of their personal journeys of discovery.

🌐 Duration of 2,5 months up to 5 years away from home

For the purpose of this thesis, long-term travelling was defined as roughly 2,5 months to five years away from home. To avoid neglecting any travellers that went away for a shorter period of time but had the idea they seriously changed, a footnote was added that they should respond as well. This was done for the following reason explained below:

Literature review was centred on any reports of travellers that returned home and reported change. The majority involved long-term travellers, which leads to the first suggestion that long-term travelling has a certain impact. For instance, Brown (2009) suggested a first relationship between international students and long-term travellers and called for research into the extent of change of long-term travellers. Congruent, Pocock and McIntosh (2010) argued for a broader framework to examine the experiences of long-term travellers upon return. Yet there was hardly any literature available reviewing repatriated short-term travellers given the fact any academic attention to the *post*-travel phase is quite scant. As long-term travelling seems to draw apt lines with repatriation studies, which makes it therefore the most logical *first* choice to put at the core of attention. Yet it is important to note that these claims are made without analysing or evaluating possible change effects of travellers that went away for a short(er) period of time. In addition, what is an appropriate parameter for a long time? The definition of the sojourner suggests 6 months up to 5 years, but can this be applied that easily to tourists? Is it up to academics to set a time frame? Are we not all

different, experiencing same issues in a different way and a different time frame? Change impacts us in various ways, a period of being away from home for a long time as well. In a later stage, suggestions to explore effects of change from travelling (regardless the time-frame) can be – hopefully – addressed.

Regarding age of the participants, no restrictions were given either. This was done for the following two reasons. Firstly it was assumed the participants would be young adults, given the fact that snowball methods were used and the researcher herself belongs to the age cohort of 18-30 years. Secondly, due to the fact that data showed that an increasingly young cohort of the population extensively travels, it could imply the first parameter regarding duration would indirectly result in response of long-term travellers in between 18 and 30 years.

Motivation or scope of the travels nor gender, class or ethnicity of the participants was considered to be any specific criteria for participation. This open approach was specifically chosen, not only due to the exploratory nature of this thesis, but also due to the limiting research done on the post-travel phase and transformation.

3.3.3 Applying the methods of memory-work

I have used the *methods* of memory-work – not its structure, for gathering and analysing the narratives of repatriated travellers about their transformative experiences at different stages of their journey. In doing so, I partially adopted the methods of three different phases of memory-work in my own thesis, by focussing on feelings and experiences of the repatriated traveller (1) *prior* to departure; (2) special moments *during* the journey and; (3) the transformative lived change upon return home. These steps are outlined below (table 3.1; see appendix B for official assignment). Whereas the three phases of memory-work applied to tourism as described by Small (1999) contain three *distinct* phases and a *collective* analysis, the memory-work applied in this thesis contains no interventions or joint discussion, considering constraining factors of time and a low sample size (see §3.7 for further reflections and §6.3 for overall final limitations).

Table 3.1: Memory-work exercise

Assignment	Questions	Rationale
Assignment 1: **Personal Context**	*Please tell something about yourself (e.g. your background, your hopes, aspirations, dreams, fears, frustrations about everyday (work) life)* *What <u>moves</u> you? Where do you come from? What is your life story? How do you present yourself?*	Providing a personal background of the character helps to see how the participant sees him/herself and what the daily issues are he/she has to cope with (Small, 1999). *Status: Relatively easy task*
Assignment 2: **Travel Memoires**	*Could you please go back to your key moments of travelling. When did you feel something moved inside you? Try to describe your feelings, when you 'opened' your eyes, something – it could be anything – that triggered you, which made you start thinking. If you look back on your travels, what were the precious moments? Try to describe them as intense as you felt them. Close your eyes, indulge yourself back into those moments.*	By asking for emotions, senses etc. it is intended that the narrator can easily indulge in those travel moments and provide stories of former travels that changed the narrator (Small, 1999). *Status: fun task*
Assignment 3: **Living the Change**	*Could you please describe the moments when you returned home after travelling, what did you feel? What happened with you? How have you incorporated the change? What were the dark moments, the breakthrough moments? Have you been able to capture the great feelings during your travelling?*	This provides insight in how the traveller has incorporated the change back home and how he/she has transformed (Kottler, 1997). *Status: Fairly hard task*

In addition, the participants were required to take into account the following rules for writing:

Rules for writing:
- Give name to a character, a pseudonym.
- Try to immerse yourself in this person, try to describe as clear as possible what emotions, feelings, senses he/she experienced.
- Don't think too much, just write. Don't redraft it; it should be your initial input!
- Above all, it should be an enjoyable exercise, so ENJOY! ☺

Before treating the interpretation of the narratives obtained from above assignment, the following section will first provide a brief account of the participating travellers.

3.4   The Transformed Travellers: A first account

In total, four travellers have cooperated in this research and provided personal narratives of their life stories, by the means memory work. An introduction to the demography of these transformed travellers is outlined in table 3.2. Chapter 4 devotes a single section per traveller, in which their narratives will be showcased. Along the lines of memory work and research ethics in general, the real names are kept confidential, but the participants are identifiable by their chosen pseudonym.

Table 3.2: Traveller's characteristics

Pseudonym	Calamba	Oliver	Jack	Isa
Gender	♀	♂	♂	♀
Age	25	37	31	27
Nationality	Dutch	Belgian	Dutch	German
Travel duration	7 months	9 months	4 years	4 months

As can be viewed in table 3.2, the travellers are in between the age of 25 and 37 and all carry a western nationality. It was anticipated that this relative young age range could cohere with earlier findings of the literature review for three reasons: (1) it comes together with Inglehart's (2008) findings of profound value changes amongst the newer generation of society; (2) given the researcher's autoethnography in the research and related access to and identification with this group; (3) and lastly, the commodification of travelling into a lifestyle event is most noteworthy at the younger cohort of society (18-30) as there is a growing trend of this generation travelling for a long time (MINTEL, 2008). Regarding the fact that all travellers have repatriated from their travels, this sticks quit well with above findings.

The time they spent abroad ranges from 4 months up to 4 years, and all participants travelled by themselves.

3.5   Data Interpretation

Before discussing into depth the data interpretation, I would like to put emphasis on this section's title 'data *interpretation'* instead of data analysis. I am convinced that the provided narratives derived from memory-work cannot and should not be thoroughly analysed. Each of the traveller's account contains rich textual information, all shaping their own subjective realities. Regarding a Foucauldian discourse analysis, analysing the content of data for 'hidden' power frames would undoubtedly be most appropriate, but it is within the light of exploratory research, autoethnography and memory-work that I choose to interpret rather than analyse.

Following the line of Glover (2003) and Riessman (2000), Westwood asserts that: "*'analysing' texts that are rich in individuality and narrative through conventional methods of coding, categorising and grouping thematic material inevitably results in losing the context and the social connectivity inherent in the stories people tell*" (2005: 9). This is also supported by Elsrud, as she proffers in her narrative analysis on backpackers: 'no matter how much academic knowledge is extracted from the[ir] testimonies, their experiences are as valid and real to them as the construction is to the researcher' (2001: 599). As such, and along the lines of the adopted interpretive paradigm, put to the fore the personal accounts of (repatriated) travellers seemed more appropriate than my own analysis. The final strategies of interpreting the data are listed below. The plain[25] stories of participants form part of the next chapter (4), whereas thick description and thematic analysis are used for analysis and discussion in chapter 5 and 6.

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[25] A few sentences have accidently been written in the first person ('I' or 'we'). The researcher has revised them in the third person.

3.5.1 Thick description

As I already touched upon in the introduction of this section, rather than using 'the richness of the quotes [...] to high-light the most salient features of the data' as Ambert et al. (1995: 885) suggested, I tend not to deconstruct stories, to provide only 'useful' quotes that cohere with the direction of this research. In doing so, I present the stories as a whole, to avoid any misinterpretation of the data. Who determines what is useful and what not? After all, is it not the participant who gives his/her view and opinion rather than the researcher who selects on its relevance? With this thesis being centred on exploration rather than confirmation and by providing full stories of traveller's, I aimed to make sure vigour and intensity are captured rather than deconstructed. To do so, I used 'a more creative device [than triangulation] for piecing things together and understanding how things are interconnected' (Holliday, 2004: 733).

This approach is also known as 'thick description' (Jennings, 2001). As Denzin (1989, in: Patton, 1990) explains: "*it goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion* [...] *evokes emotionally and self-feelings*". However, a difficulty often heard in using this 'thick description', is that it creates so-called 'messy texts' moving 'back and forth between description, interpretation and analysis' (ibid). Then on the other hand, though it creates a certain complexity in understanding for the reader, it does allow the reader to become a 'co-analyst', to judge the researcher's interpretation him / herself (Patton, 1990).

3.5.2 Thematic Analysis

Lastly, and though this heading seem to contradict with my previous argument regarding interpreting rather than analysing, I obviously do not want to exclude the possibility of any repetitive themes either. In order to find out if there are 'hidden' recurring themes behind the surface of the narratives and if there are certain commonalities or differences between the different transformed travellers, the provided stories will be examined *inductively* (derived from data). The strategy is that emerging patterns are analysed without 'presupposing in advance what the importance dimensions will be' (Patton, 1990: 44). In doing in so, 'found' recurring themes might possibly provide new insights. Then again, given the rather small size of the dataset, it is not my intention to make any generalisations, but rather to intensively explore the narratives of the transformed travellers and gain insights. In practise, this means that the narratives of participant's stories – the data – are assigned to an inductively emerging theme (Baarda & De Goede, 2006). Hereafter, the possible "*themes that emerge[d] from the informants' stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience*" (Aronson, 1994). Before providing the travellers narratives, I will first delineate reflexivity.

3.6 Reflexivity

Before providing a detailed account of my positionality, I will first explain what is meant by reflexivity and why I devote a paragraph to it.

3.6.1 Reflexivity

"*Reflexivity involves turning one's reflexive gaze on discourse – turning language back on itself to see the work it does in constituting the world*"(Davies et al., 2004: 360). In addressing the issue of reflexivity, researchers can further minimize bias by acknowledging what 'brought' them to the research, what personal background influenced the shaped contours of research in the first way. As Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson and Collins (2005: 17) reflect on the unavoidable connection between researcher and the researched:

"*Our life-worlds and academic-worlds cannot be separated as our embodied conditions (race, gender, ethnicity) influence our positionality in social interactions with the researched. At the same time, however, we recognize that we cannot be structured into the essentialized, fixed identities, as our intersubjective relationships are fluid, temporal and contingent*". Overcoming these ties is not possible, nor the goal of reflexivity. The essentiality lies in the acknowledgement of the researcher's position and how power relations impact upon the research(ed) (Sultana, 2007: 376). Being reflexive further entails the '*looking and reflecting inwards upon ourselves as researchers, and outwards upon those that we 'research'*' (Ateljevic et al., 2005: 2; Tribe, 2005: 6).

The (qualitative) researcher then becomes a bricoleur as Jamal and Hollinshead (2001: 65) point out, where he/she '*selects from the rich array of methods, tools and practices available, in order to address the research question(s) and assumptions*'. Only by acknowledging this bricolage, this complex creation in which research and researcher seem inseparably absorbed; researcher, the researched and the audience alike become aware of this. Or in the words of Paulo Coelho (2006): "*People see the world, not as it is, but as they are*". Although we cannot 'free' ourselves from subjectivity, we should however pursue research with an open mind, free from concepts, something I intend to do by explaining my positionality via a 'subjectivist experiential reflexive approach'.

Subjectivist Experiential Reflexivity

Adopting a subjectivist experiential perspective on reflexivity aids me to identify the role I play(ed) in the research (Jennings, 2001: 117) and the socio-cultural understanding of the 'self' (Ngunjiri et al., 2010). Of all different perspectives and types on reflexivity (see e.g. Marcus, 1994), a subjectivist experiential approach shares similarities with autobiography without being solely a self-narrative style writing (Ngunjiri et al., 2010). It finds then (in this research) coherence with earlier discussed

methodologies of memory-work and autoethnography. However, regardless a specific type of reflexivity, I would like to make clear it still comes down to '*the act of making oneself the object of one's own observation, in an attempt to bring to the fore the assumptions embedded in our perspectives and descriptions of the world*' (Feigherly, 2006: 269).

3.6.2   Researcher's positionality: A personal exploration

Writing a thesis about transformation through travelling with a significant focus on the post-travel phase highly mirrors my own experiences. This research is also a personal journey of discovery, partly with the aim to ascertain why I transformed through travelling. As such, it is important to tell you more about my positionality in my personal story; it reveals both my interest in transmodernity and the post-travel phase.

My love for travel started a while ago. Ever since my childhood, I was in the fortunate position to go on vacation on a yearly base. Whereas other kids went to France with their parents, I went to the Alps. We always hiked through the mountains, admiring the beauty of Mother Nature and loved the possibility to fill our bottles with fresh water from a creek. I grew up in a house in the middle of the Dutch forests, surrounded by nature. Even though I moved to bigger cities and had to give in a garden for a balcony, I enjoy(ed) spending my pastimes outside in the nature. Being active in nature still brings a certain kind of calmness over me – ironically, the same does travelling.

In between the phase of 18-25 years, I went abroad numerous times, mostly by myself. I discovered the greatness of intercultural exchange when I participated in a work exchange program in France. In exchange for the work I did in the morning, I received French lessons and board. I loved this style, where you work on a base of exchange for means rather than for money. Normally, acquiring a new language costs a fortune, but this was a much better approach. In addition, the international setting showed me the greatness of cultural diversity of the differences of countries. It brought along a certain passion about life, a new kind of energy I had not experienced before in my own country, or with my friends. It was this particular experience that paved the path towards personal change. The international environment, the freedom, friendships from all over the world, the adventure, all this together made me grow as a person and gave me more self-esteem. A year later, I went again and stayed at a French host family. I learned the genuine French way of living and the greatness of people who treat you as their best friend – even though you had just met them. I was not used to this great share of generosity and laughter and had serious difficulties going back home, where I could not find this certain passion. Subsequently, I travelled with a friend through China and when I got back, my horizon further broadened. The different way of life, the language barrier, different customs and behaviours; I experienced things I had never seen before. To me, going to a different place is about

adapting and understanding, to experience to be the one that differs from the society you visit and not the other way around. It makes you aware of your own position.

Therefore, I opted to study China Development studies in Hong Kong and learned some basic Mandarin, but was mistakenly searching for the Chinese experience in Hong Kong; a city greatly characterized by wealth, status, finances and people in suits. Field trips to the rural side of China made me aware of the huge gap between rich and poor, but also of the attitude of the fortunate ones towards them. It was a particular field trip to a primary school in the inner rural part of China that made me realize about the existing inequalities and made me passionate to help them. Various talks with local people provided a deep level of understanding. When I went back to Hong Kong, the differences could not have been bigger.

This plus other experiences abroad provided me with a pallet of different colours. Each colour represents a different experience, and like a painter I slowly discover more and more colours I was unaware of before, but which significantly contribute to a much better 'painting'. Intercultural communication and interaction with all sorts of people, grasping the essence of life, feeling close again with nature, and above all gaining my own perspective of the world instead of what media presented to me immensely contributes to that. The diverse experiences abroad always supplied me with strength, confidence, not-taking-everything-for-granted-attitude, passion for life and open-mindedness.

Yet, the personal journey of coming back home identified more struggles than I had imagined before. Opposed to others, I never felt extreme joy to go back home. Not once sensed I enduring happiness when arriving at Schiphol airport. Put a smile on your face for your family I thought, as I walked through the gates towards them. Of course, I was happy to see them, happy to experience simple things back home. To enjoy the miraculous little things, fresh air, the ease of communication, 'Dutch' nature, tears and laughter with family but also the western level of comfort such as having a shower, a good bed, western toilets and spit-free streets.

But it also felt if something was missing. The ease and great level of freedom I could manoeuvre around was encapsulated in the planned and organized west, the life full of expectations where little room was provided for my great experiences and emotions. The numerous ideas and passionate thoughts I had written down in my notebook reminded me of a great time, but I had difficulties in incorporating them, as people never celebrated my ideas. The longer I stayed at home, the more and more frustrated I got. This ranged from simple things of refusal; but also to serious discussions about importance in life, politics and the different perspectives people have – especially towards immigrants in the Netherlands. Friends and family often found me dreamy and said, '*OK nice all this, but let's get back down to earth... Are you already looking for a job? You need to find a good job where you can earn a lot of money*!' I increasingly disliked the current consumer society where

everyone is in a hurry, earning money, making a career and living in luxury as the highest achievable good; it frustrated me a lot. Pursuing the ideal of working for your passion, rather than for money is often shared by people, but eventually heaps of my friends all find themselves working in profit companies and forget their initial aspirations. I found it hard to struggle for something whilst I could not find coherence with these issues amongst close friends and family. The lack of understanding I felt with them about certain issues in life that were of significant importance in my own, I did gain from other repatriated sojourners abroad, whom experienced the same level of discomfort. Using Skype or email to communicate with them made me happy, I found recognition in struggles and we shared our greatest dreams and visions about life. Yet as time passes by, people get tired of swimming against the current. So did I. I adjusted but grasped every possibility to go abroad again. Partly to answer my love for adventure and travelling to the unknown, partly because I did not found home challenging enough as I failed in truly embedding my experiences back home – so I relived them elsewhere. As Robert Johnson (1986: 37, in: Moir-Bussy, 2003) beautifully expresses himself: "*One side of my psyche agues for relatedness, rootedness, and stability. Another side wants to go on heroic crusades, have great adventures in exotic places, travel to the other side of the world and live like a gypsy* […] *Sometimes these conflicts seem, irreconcilable, and we feel torn apart in the conflict of desires, duties and obligations that we feel*". And so, every time when I returned, I experienced – to some extent – the same troubles. The more I related to my travel experiences, the more I bored friends and family. Of course, I am very aware to be in this fortunate position having the freedom to travel and to be honest; the post-travel phase is of course a highly western materialised problem. To say, if you don't have the ability to travel that far and that long, you will not experience repatriation distress.

When I started my masters about two years ago, I enjoyed the critical perspective I acquired, the different talks and experiences with my fellow international students but also the significance of transmodernity. It was during a course of my supervisor Irena Ateljevic who at first bamboozled me with terminology I never heard of before, but then later inspired me with a transmodern vision of life, the interrelatedness with nature and Earth citizenship.

To me, this research makes everything come together, from finding recognition in lack of understanding of travel experiences upon return home to the importance of nature and human contact, in-depth experiences with each other and how we should think of life being a circle. In addition, reading stories of participants of this study and other individuals who changed their lifestyles has been a great motivation and source of inspiration to me. To say, my variety of experiences abroad heightened the level of understanding with my participants and provided

empathy. Discussing the importance in incorporating experiences and new perspectives into one's 'normal' life is of utmost importance, as a loss of this great wealth of intercultural understanding would be very unfortunate.

3.7   Methodology: Reflections & Considerations

In this last section of the methodology chapter, I will discuss and reflect on further issues concerning data collection, interpretation and reflexology. This shall not be confounded with the overall limitations of the study, as they will be discussed in the closing chapter (6) of this research, and, where possible, translated into recommendations to improve future research by lessons learned from the past. In this section, the essence lies in evaluation of the research's validity and reliability. As Ambert et al. (1995: 886) point out: "*it is the researchers' responsibility to discuss and analyze their own role, behaviors, and impact on the research process and the results*". It is then an extensive reflexivity of the researcher that can minimise bias in collection and interpretation of the data. In doing so, we seek justification for the methodology applied (Baarda & De Goede, 2006; Jennings, 2001).

Relationships between the researcher and the researched

Given the interpretative social science paradigm, the exploratory nature, the detailed ethnographic methods of memory work and the absence of a 'readily available sampling frame' (Jennings, 2001: 140), the friends of the researcher were identified as acceptable dataset. As my own interest in this topic is greatly derived from former personal experiences and from friends whom I have met along the (travel)way and inspired me with their passion and enthusiasm for life, the purpose of finding people who have been experiencing transformation due to travels – with special regard to transmodernity – initially started with informing friends. As the personal accounts (or memory-work) of these participants are required to be in-depth, 'rich', moving beyond superficialities, the existing personal contact of the researcher with the researched can be considered as an advantage, further enhancing the interpretation of provided life-stories, rather than a shortcoming as often is supposed in certain qualitative research methods (Baarda & De Goede, 2006; Denzin, 1997; Hayano, 1979; Jennings, 2001, Patton, 1990). As Jennings (2001: 114) proffers: "*different paradigms provide different relationships between researcher and the participants*". Within the spheres of the interpretive paradigm and the memory-work carried out where the researcher becomes a co-researcher, the extent of 'being oneself' as a researcher is maintained. The subjectivist experiential reflexive approach (§3.6.1) further ensured this.

One might question whether these friendships and my own involvement alike lead to bias. As Ambert et al. (1995: 887) point out: "*the strength of quality research derives from how close researchers get to their data, rather than the extent to which they are able to maintain detachment*". A relationship between researcher and researched is beneficial in the sense that it enables empathy and (thus) more intimate communication (Ambert et al., 1995), something which was regarded critical in this research emphasis on participants' experiences, emotions and feelings.

Reciprocity

Moreover, having personal contacts as dataset benefits the reciprocal relationship between researcher and researched. "*Mutual trust, respect and cooperation are dependent on the emergence of an exchange relationship, or reciprocity*" (Jorgensen, 1989, in: Patton, 1990: 253).

Apart from the advantage that the methods of memory-work can provide deep stories, a certain intimacy between researcher and the participant benefits the overall research process, especially considering the subjectivity and the existence of multiple realities within the interpretive paradigm. As Jennings (2001: 116) states "*objectivity is the antithesis of the social construction of reality*". In addition, the researcher had experienced transformation derived from travelling herself, providing further comfort and understanding between researcher and the participants.

Representation bias

Mostly, a common heard critic is that snowball sampling gives a highly biased representation of the data set in terms of age or education for instance (Jennings, 2001). However, as the researcher fits well within the common characteristics of the identified target group (e.g. travellers in between 18-30 years), it was anticipated to not cause any problems.

Recall bias

As this research is concerned with recalling memories (especially question 2 of the memory-work assignment, see table 3.1), memory bias can be a problem. This means that positive events are better remembered than negative ones. Moreover, regarding the fact that I have used memory-work as a method rather than as a structure, collective discussion to overcome this was not included. Yet then again, is it not how we recall our memories *today* as how they influence and shape our current thoughts? Though certain facts of past events will not change (e.g. clothing, weather) and indeed can be less and less accurately remembered, we can, by learning from everything, change our point of view, not only about current events, but also about past events. In this sense, we reflect upon them with the knowledge and insights we have acquired today, something which was also the essence of memory-work. As Neuman (1992: 177-178) states: "*through their descriptions which structure and*

give meaning to their experiences in the process of narration, travelers can reflects upon their journeys in ways that produce images of self and identity" (in: Galani-Moutafi, 1999). Regarding the emphasis on subjective emotions and experiences rather than objective facts, I argue this research was not concerned with recall bias.

Tourism research: Ethical responsibilities

Whereas in qualitative tourism research the ethical issue at stake is how to conduct research on tourists in their 'natural setting' without negatively altering their attempts of suspending everyday experiences (Jennings, 2001), this research actually positively contributes to this suspension, as repatriated travellers in their home environment are asked to recall these relaxing, fun, inspiring travel moments – offering a unique possibility to 'daydream' about their travel experiences, for the sake of this research.

The ambivalence of reflexivity

"What we 'look for' is un/fortunately what we shall find ... It is perhaps difficult for an analytical or analytically trained mind to admit that recording, gathering, sorting, deciphering, analyzing and synthesizing, dissecting and articulating are already 'imposing our [a] structure,' a structural activity ... Rare are those who realize that what they come up with is not 'structure of their narratives' but reconstruction of the story" (Trinh, 1989, in: Denzin, 1997).

Although we acknowledge that research can never be completely objective (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Popper, 1959), we do aim to be as objectively as possible. Although we intend to minimize errors, the pervasiveness of bias lies upon confirmation of our beliefs. We start the research with an idea, we have no thoughts about the outcome, but it is humane to have some expectations, to see confirmation of what we are looking for. I believe that this is present in all sections of the research, from selecting literature on its relevancy; paraphrasing authors with similar points of view that reflect our own ideas; 'adopting' a paradigm that stands most close to our beliefs; the application of methods etcetera. Assuming this all happens unintentionally, reflecting on our values, assumptions and worldviews allow us to address our – sometimes hidden – subjectivity. Furthermore, in addressing these issues we provide the reader (and dependent on the research methods, the participants) with a personal background that hopefully reflects the role we, as researchers, play in the research.

Although being reflexive about my position benefits the overall research process by bringing to the fore a great deal of (in)directly influencing personal relationships (professional, situational, cultural

and interpersonal [Feighery, 2006]) as is so much debated about in tourism research (Ateljevic et al., 2005), it also brings about certain limitations.

A critique heard is that it, paradoxically, impedes the production of knowledge (Feighery, 2006). As worldviews differ from person to person, so does the way we present ourselves to others. It is the occasion that determines what we say about ourselves, carrying multiple identities (Hall, 2005a). As a result of different contexts, we constantly shift in taking identities (for instance, I can be a researcher, a student, a woman, a daughter, a Dutch, a traveller etc.). The 'self' or 'selves' we bring into our research, deciding what we put to the fore and leave in the background is up to the researcher.

In addition, as a result of this extensive attention to the role of the researcher and his/her positionality, the danger is that the researcher becomes *too* much at the core of attention, instead of the research subjects (Feighery, 2006). This ambivalence is also discussed by Davies et al. (2004: 360), who warn that this consciousness "*may be seen to slip inadvertently into constituting the very (real) self that seems to contradict a focus on the constitute power of discourse*". However, I am convinced that the emphasis should be on making explicit rather than implicit the ways research is conducted and the 'location' of the research(er) alike. Being reflexive provides a clear demonstration of the position of the researcher, something which remained unrecognised for a long time, especially when it comes to tourism research (Ateljevic et al., 2005; Feighery, 2006). Likewise, this critical stance makes us aware of its imperfections and sometimes ambivalent practises, yet we must not forget its achievements so far (Davies, et al., 2004; Denzin, 1997). In doing so, we can be reflexive about ourselves and overcome the continuous and simultaneous intersection of being the gaze and the ones we gaze at (Davies et al., 2004). In applying this *dual strategy*, we are able to master the present and anticipate our past.

4 Living the Change

This chapter treats the personal stories of four transformed travellers: Calamba, Jack, Oliver, and Isa. It shows the lived experiences of long-term travellers, the beautiful deep stories they provided about themselves. With these stories, I will take you on a trip around the world, without even leaving your chair. Every section is devoted to showcase the narrative of each of them, starting with Isa, a female traveller. All stories are divided in three sections, that it is a background of the traveller, great travel experiences and what the traveller experienced upon return home.

4.1 The story of Isa: Make a difference!

Meet Isa:

Isa is 27 years old and is working in a project firm aimed at innovation. She comes from a moderately small village in Germany. Prior to this, she has studied economics and business and has done an internship in London, travelled in Europe and Asia and volunteered abroad in Madagascar. She is left-winged, spontaneous and has good planning skills. Isa considers herself as a caring person and whilst her family and surroundings are quite traditional, she considers herself to be a bit more open-minded. She sees opportunities and grabs them. Worry is for later, she thinks. She has a direct attitude and will get married next year. She dreams of having her own organization, that is already in the making.

Great Travel experiences:

Isa will tell you something about her travel experiences. Though she has undertaken numerous activities abroad, one particular experience grabbed her by the throat. She volunteered in Africa, Madagascar for a while as she had no idea what to truly do with her life. Though she had hard times abroad missing her boyfriend and family, she thinks it was a wonderful experience, for both parties. She remembers when she got off the plane..scared as hell and wanted to go back asap and how she felt when she had to go back. Much more confident! Like: look at her! Isa did this. All by herself. Reminders?
Hmm the thousands of picture! The food! The people! But most precious moments were encounters with the locals. Re-learned the basics of life again that she had lost somewhere she guesses. People were so kind, tremendously kind. Made her almost feel embarrassed how egocentric she could be herself sometimes!
The Malagasy changed her look at things and now she is giving them something back. When she opted for the volunteer work, she read a lot about the horrible past of the people. She prepared for the worst and though she encountered a lot of difficult things, she never thought it would evoke such a reaction to her!! The children were so anxious to learn, but there were simply no materials. While there is so many materials back home that people don't even care about it, pencils are heavily out-dated and it is all about the latest fashion for children. Pfff...Youth back home is not even happy to learn, they are ignorant, they don't understand the luxury position they possess. And like children in

Madagascar were so eager to learn, anything. It truly grabbed her. Isa helped with teaching English to the children but also about nature and more things in general. During her stay at a Malagasy host-family, she was able to experience the true way of living. It is so strange, at first she was worried that she couldn't handle such a basic way of living, especially as she loves internet and Facebook and spends a lot of time behind the computer. After a couple of weeks, she completely adjusted to the life in Madagascar and she realized she wasn't missing the hassle in which she was living before. It was very time consuming, but you're much more occupied with doing the things you're doing instead of doing something but with your mind already to the next task. Isa thinks it is something like mindfulness, really nice experience. Though she prefers a washing machine of course!

Furthermore, she remembers all the great talks she had with the people over there. You talk with them about normal things in life and they provided her such a mirror in which Isa saw the deficiencies of her society. They asked her a lot, simple questions. If Isa gave answers they responded so naturally, the same kind of answer you get from a child who experiences everything for the first. And especially these people make you thinking. Isa is so grateful for that.

When Isa returned home:

Upon return home, Madagascar had not left Isa. Her boyfriend was waiting for Isa at the airport and Isa was happy, extremely happy to see him again after all these months. There was a moment of recognition and intimacy which made her realize he is the person to be with the rest of her life. But it was also strange to be back again. The ease of which things are dealt with back home and the stupid stupid worries of people bothered her a lot. Always hurrying, no one is happy. If you smile at people on the street, they think you're crazy 'cause: what's so funny? At these moments, she recounted the smiles and the continuous singing of the Malagasy, they were so happy, so friendly, so helpful.

The organization with whom Isa engaged to go to Madagascar the first time, asked her for some presentations etc. for future volunteers. She loved the opportunity to talk about her experiences and show photos to people as she had the idea her friends were bored with that. It almost felt like an addiction that people often get enough off. One friend compared Isa with another friend that continuously complained about her broken heart. As that friend was continuously talking about that, she said Isa was continuously talking about Madagascar. Isa felt misunderstood. She also remembers the talk with another friend, who asked her: so what has it brought to you? When Isa started talking about the different cultures, the optimistic lifestyle, the spirit, her friend was only interested in her career opportunities. No, Isa said, she did not get a job from it. That was not her intention either. After the conversation which made her so angry, so frustrated from the inside, she realized she had to do something with it. She wanted to show people that instead of what the western world wants to teach to the 'developing' world, maybe they should see it the other way around. Like learn from them instead of dictating them. Isa thinks she learned more from the Malagasy than they might have learned from Isa.

And she recalls the interesting conversations that were an eye-opener to her. She felt the urge to give something back to them, as they changed her a lot. Isa was determined to make other people aware of her new insights. So she organized meetings, first in cooperation with the company that send her to Madagascar in the first place. Later on, she found one other volunteer that also went to Madagascar in the same time, and they joined forces together. Doing something together, finding a partner with the same vision truly helped her. Especially if other people are constantly putting you down, considering you are too idealistic and ask you when you really start to find a job, it helped Isa that she could find the energy and passion with her colleague. Even her own boyfriend, whom she still

loves very much, lacked a certain understanding. The organization that Isa and her friend started provides workshops for young people at high schools to stimulate intercultural awareness. They aim to let the youth more think about things, to provide them with tools to make them more conscious of themselves and their position in the world. Growing up in today's western world has many potentials, Isa aims to make them aware. The project is still in its infant stage, but Isa aims to facilitate workshops with Malagasy youth as well and foster intercultural exchange. If you get to know different cultures, your perspective changes. Learning from doing and seeing, before judging.

4.2   The story of Jack: Live life to the fullest!

Meet Jack:

Jack is easy-going, loves adventure, 30 years old but still with the mind and energy of an 18 year old, he reckons. He is sportive, always went cycling, skiing or swimming during holiday with his folks. He is interested in all sorts of people, love to discuss things, loves beer, interested in new things but wouldn't go back to university for a penny! He studied economics and is now a tour guide for a cycle company in Europe. It's great, he can play around all day, show people the beautiful spots, having a great work-out! All in exchange for a bit of pocket money, a bike, the alps, a roof over his head, great mates and the ability to enthuse more people ☺.
Hmm what else.. Directly after high school, he travelled to Australia for a working holiday, then went back home to start studying and then went again for another year to Australia, Japan, Asia and Europe. This was the best decision ever! He doesn't do politics cause it is a lot of talking and little acting. He thinks it should be the other way around: act! The world would achieve much more in this sense. But Jack doesn't do politics as he said before. He prefers to talk about things that work. So talking about his travel experiences is always a nice activity.

Great Travel experiences:

Jack doesn't know where to start. Many things grabbed him you know. Already at the last grade of high school, Jack longed for travelling. He was bored in his little rural village you know. When he travelled and met all these great travel mates, he discovered a new world!! Absolutely stunning. The landscapes, the people, the talks and the numerous beers at the hostels, the crazy hitchhike rides in Thailand, the parties, cruising around in OZ, seeing beautiful places where you feel you're the last person on earth. Those were all things Jack experienced from his first trip. When he went on travelling after his college degree, he thinks he matured a bit ;-) Of course, there were still the numerous beers and parties at the hostels, but he mostly did the WWOOFing thing and kind of experienced a different part of OZ. He had more contact with local people and had great great talks with them. He worked on a range for a couple of months and just the active lifestyle, outside in the beautiful nature, really grabbed him you know? But also in Thailand, somewhere in Chang Mai in a hostel you know you're just talking with some other mates that stayed but Jack doesn't know it's soo easy. Well ofcourse there are those basic boring talks: like where do you come from, where you're heading blabla... but you never talk about so what's your job..what brought you here. You just accept each other as a person...everyone walks around in the same clothing..you don't judge each other on the way you look or what kind of great job you have or not you know. So yeah those are great moments! Jack means here back home, a job, clothing is seriously where everyone is interested in.. ☹ So yeah, no reason to go back. Jack felt the same. Understood. Doesn't know. Hard to explain. He was just much more

aware of all this you know. Of how people see and value each other. So hmm to him, it was a great travel experience! And btw, it wasn't just at this hostel, every time again and again he met some people that shared this idea.

When Jack returned home:

After returning home from travelling, Jack felt everything and nothing. He doesn't know how to describe it..at first he was happy to see everyone again, to see his dog again to enjoy the normal things like food he missed. But that's all temporarily. If you're craving so long for a particular kind of food, it is great to slowly eat it like if you're drinking an expensive wine. But after one meal, you satisfied yr craving. He was lucky he returned back in summer so he could enjoy outside. He went back to his parents which was...quite interesting. They are truly great people, seriously. But after you have lived abroad for that long time, you don't want to live according to fixed patterns. You need to adjust but you don't want to. The first day, his mum treated him like a king. Which was OK of course! After that, he had been busy with catching up with friends but well the only things they wanted to hear was if he hooked up with some nice chicks. It was frustrating. Travelling that much goes beyond that you know. He remembers the conversation with one of his mates about the Thai girls and the old English men. Instead of showing disguise or whatsoever, they asked about the Thai girls...treating them the same as these English guys did over there. But well, he was happy to see his friends so wasn't struggling. But the second time all life was back to normal. His friends had moved on, but to that awful middle-class citizen life you know. He missed the freedom, the adventure, he felt so different abroad but felt like he had to live according to how they knew him from before. It were superficial interests. His parents supported him he thinks, which helped, but they could not really understand. It felt the same when his girlfriend broke up with him and he was sitting in the living room, feeling personal emptiness that no-one else understood (something that Jack hardly tells anyone, loving the pseudonym thingie!). So the be honest, he felt terrible, had not imagined it would be like this. He felt bit like being food-poisoned for a week in Indonesia. But things got better back there. At home was a different story.

To break this negative circle, he started contacting agencies to go abroad again. The only problem was that he had little pocket money left, so he got himself a job at a small exchange centre, to help people going abroad and prepare them for the travels. It was quite commercial and he hated sitting inside the office the entire day (aaargh especially with great weather), but loved the travel aspiration and spirit.

His friends and family were satisfied with his job, but Jack wasn't. Well, he let them at the folly of believing!!! After a year, he earned enough and whoppa departed abroad again this time. Slight difference: no return date ☺. Sooo, he threw in a big party and took off. Best idea ever! Before he had some travel blogs but well he stopped with that.

He thinks that a man himself does not want to change. It is easier to leave things as they are. That's what everybody does. If you act differently, they react negatively. It is crazy how it works. When he was travelling, you find same people you know. But when he tried to go abroad seriously, the most optimistic response he got was: yeah well.. that's sounds interesting..kinda like a nice idea. ... learned people are afraid of change. But seriously, what is there to fear off? Can you lose anything? Yes the things you don't like. ... even though he is an optimist, justifying his choices every time was pushing him down. Worst are the people who say: oh that's a great idea! Travelling or living abroad you know. ..people wished they have done that.... Seriously, they still CAN do it. They're just too lousy, too

afraid. Society has expectations, that someone lives a wealthy life. The path is there when you are 18, and most people just walk that one. It is the easiest you know. And he doesn't blame other people for that, as he did the same. If you change directions or find a new path, that's promising. Try it! Live life to the fullest. You only live once!

4.3   The story of Calamba: Don't dream your life, but live your dream!

<u>Introducing Calamba:</u>

Calamba's characteristics mostly circulate around optimism, enthusiasm, adventure, passion, energy and independence. That's one side of Calamba. The other side is sensitivity, a careful listener, a dreamer and creativity. If she's at her best, with like-minded people that value each other, treasure people's dignity; above ingredients form a great mix together, one that she likes to coin as a delicate adventurist. Though Calamba was born 25 years ago, she hasn't always been like that. And she will not stay like this either. As it takes time to discover the secret ingredients that make a recipe more than just a good recipe, more edited versions will appear in the nearby future. A bit less dreamy and a bit more action perhaps. Experiences, good and bad, ripe a person; one of the beauties of ageing Calamba thinks.

Since the age of 5, she has been raised by her mother whom taught her to be independent, to not rely on anyone and provided Calamba with optimism, always gave her the feeling of being safe at home. She likes being as unprejudiced as a child, but when she was a youngster, she wanted to 'fit' in society, so she adapted. Now, when that period is over, she understands that uniqueness must be celebrated instead of belonging to the group feeling as she envisioned before. Officially, Calamba was (freely) raised with Christianity, as she went to a Christian school, had to pray before dinner and went to church on Sundays. During high school, she had no idea what to believe and did not pay attention to this matter. Since her time in Asia, practising yoga and tai chi, she feels mostly connected with aspects that are mirrored in eastern philosophies. They make sense to her.

As she is still a student, she has many dreams, but they all connect in overarching themes of cross-cultural awareness, writing and educational activities. She wants to bring people in a certain state of ecstasy with narratives, serving people in different ways as is done in contemporary society and to make life less complicated. Life is about enjoying little things. Often people forget that. Her fear would be that she cannot carry out these imagined plans.

Her ideas about the world have changed. For a long time, she did not think about any problems that existed, as images the media portrayed of wars were not amusing when she was watching TV and having dinner. Yet since a presentation of UNICEF at her school, she did think about how strange it was that she could unlimitedly shower, spoil so much water whilst people in Africa had to walk long distances for a very limited amount of water. That appealed to her. Further realizations came later on, she started to feel connected with the world in a deeper way, mostly due to perspectives that reframed her thoughts by what she read, with whom she spoke to and what she saw with her own eyes. This also influenced her political views. As her family was middle-right winged she thought of that long time as a given. As she is now quite the opposite, she continuously has to define her views amongst family members.

Calamba has always been adventurous, loved to go outside, to climb trees, built hatches and discover new grounds. The greatness of nature was taught by her family, as she spent numerous holidays and weekends hiking outside in nature. When she started travelling on her own, she further nurtured her

love for other cultures and foreign languages. It definitely changed her vision and nurtured the very seeds of the ingredients that create her character as presented before.

Great travel experiences:

There are numerous moments that were special to Calamba. She will share some interesting ones with you. When she travelled by herself in Asia, she discovered how much she could establish without someone else. That she was able to do it and that people were helpful. She would describe this as a steady increase in self-confidence.

When she went to China, she discovered such a different culture that both were strange and appealing to her in the same way. Calamba still has a certain love-hate relationship with it. She got to know inside stories that were horrible; she saw circumstances that she would describe as touching. She learned that there is no single answer, but that there are different ways to achieve things. Regarding environment, China has a multitude of different landscapes, but what she perceives as pretty (a pristine untouched environment), differs very much from the Chinese version. Their belief and culture is centred on what is man-made is beauty. It is centuries of Confucianist culture that is still highly embedded in the Chinese mind-set and so environment with human interference is highly valued. She only discovered this by being there. Her education, curiosity and conversations with others about this, made her come to this insight. A primary school visit in China, where you see the school's circumstances, the small classrooms, the rats in the toilets and that simply a lack of pencils avoids children from studying. Clichés that woke her up. What are we back home arguing about? Encounters with various people at various countries were so generous while they had so little money but insisted that they paid instead of Calamba. She quietly laughed, thinking about these numerous times her friends and she argued about 1 or 2 dollars.

When Calamba went to Cambodia, at first she admired the beauty of the remnants of an old empire and quickly discovered the Cambodian way of life. The optimist perspective of the young generations was appealing to her – so were the circumstances in which they lived. She applauded local initiatives that evoked her spirit. She enjoyed ideas and projects that helped local people that were aimed at building a life of people in terms of human sustainability instead of earning money. She enjoyed initiatives that stimulated interaction amongst people and where visitors could learn something about the area.

She loved to discover how rice, tea, coffee were grown, she loved being educated about nature. Something that she often forgets back home, as it is so easy to buy things at the supermarket, not thinking about its origins.

Besides meetings with local people, she enjoyed nature during all her travels. From climbing volcanoes in Indonesia and New Zealand to camping, kayaking etc. The simply being-one-with-nature-feeling. Camping at an empty spot, falling asleep by the rippling sound of the ocean, and wake up again by the first rays of sunlight and birdsongs. The greatest thing. Waking up like this, being active the whole day, being dictated by seasons. It is such a more natural way of living.

Nature has definitely left marks on her. The breath of Earth when sulphur fills her nose, the true smell of nature when the soil dries up after a bit of drizzle, the sweet smell of exotic flowers and encounters with beautiful animals have left indelible impressions. Life could be simple, natural, balanced, full of harmony.

Calamba likes to travel, and though she knows she returns to the people she loves, she also realises that she will left behind many intriguing friends. Calamba has been fortunate to visit some of them again as they are living in Europe, but others are often contacted via Internet – though Calamba prefers handwritten cards. Coming home felt the end of a rollercoaster. But she had enjoyed the rollercoaster so she wanted to go again. The only thing was that it did not depart from her own home country. People did not understand. They were supportive at first, but all the pictures and stories Calamba had, could not be shared. People didn't have time or reserved half an hour in between lunch break for Calamba. Calamba had moved on and so had her friends. But in different directions. That was strange, something Calamba did not realize before during travelling. Those were dark moments. Calamba had great ideas but she had to finish her studies first. Happy moments were when she visited fellow travellers and talked about similar experiences. Or when she was asked to talk about her previous travel experiences. When Calamba walks through her room, she can go on a little holiday when she stares and glances at the numerous souvenirs she brought along. When she looks at the pictures on her wall, when she hears a song that she also played on her IPod, she can directly find herself again in these moments. Those moments helped Calamba through the dark moments. Calamba has changed things in terms of being careful about what she eats, what she buys. Calamba became more conscious of the environment and all the material stuff people buy. She remembered being at Ikea very recently upon return and she felt such a disguise towards the greedy behaviour of people. The inadvertent behaviour of both children and parents. Why needs everything to be this new, why do we need to wear things according to the latest trend? She became more conscious about food as well. She never ate a lot of meat, but after all those months in Asia eating veggies, she never missed it. She became a vegetarian herself. She felt more satisfied, more like herself.

She started to think about life in general. Our meaning in society and that we are all the same. She also realized that many people did not want to hear about it. But they all love to read books. So Calamba decided to write a book (which is a big project). She has many ideas, no time to incorporate them yet. But she realised that it is not necessary to leave her own country to make things happen or possible. She disguised her country before, but now realises that the amount of freedom is something she should value as it is not everywhere like this. She gets energy from meeting likeminded creative people. Sometimes she goes to organizations, joins meetings, workshops or she writes emails with them, to refresh her mind. It is hard to be different in society as all people think it's strange if you are not acting upon their beliefs; that's stupid. She therefore wants to reach out to people by following her dream: writing. As one good friend told her: "the richness of travelling is to get to know foreign culture and to distinguish the valuable elements in there and take it home. It can always be applied in our Western life and it changes this for the better. Valuable elements are always there!"

4.4   The story of Oliver: Carpe diem!

Meet Oliver

Oliver comes from quite a large family (2 brothers and 3 sisters) and experienced a lovely childhood, whereby the only fear he remembers were ghosts to be hidden under her bed. When he was little, he dreamt of becoming a pilot. Later on, he wanted to be a dentist but ended up with studying business and marketing studies. He ran through all that pretty smoothly and found himself a job in a large company, specialised in insurances where he would work for the coming 10 years. He is liberal, has a love for arts and had the aspiration for travelling. He found himself in a fortunate position to travel very frequently both for his work and personal holidays. Later on Oliver swopped this steady life for something else, which – now it is starting to get successful – gains support and understanding from his friends. Ironically, his fear was that he would lose everything he had, but it turned out to be the best things every happened to him. Aspirations? Hmmm..That he gains increasing support and reaches out further!

Great Travel experiences:

Key memories in travelling are the exposures to cultures different from our own. How do other people think, how do they move and what makes them move? Nature might be somewhat the same in different areas but culture never is.

All the nights at hotels and campsites when he spoke with fellow travellers about life. Great perspectives of people. So many interesting talks. It is interesting you are able to meet a bunch of them when you're holidaying whilst back home...well, you got your own little circle. Same supermarket, same walk through the park. Oliver loved this vice versa, and the more he spoke about it, the more energetic he felt. Another great moment during his round the world trip was the freedom he experienced. Doing anything he wanted without being attached to something. No deadlines. He realized how stressed his life was back home. It took him some months, but he finally found some inner peace ?? he guesses. He even spent new year's eve alone on a mountain in India!! To think about things in life. And to make a new start. The next morning, he went to an ashram where he stayed 2 months. Both a painful, very hard, sometimes very lonely but eventually life-changing experience. Friends called him crazy. They still do.

So those are great travel moments, all the beautiful environments, the scenery, the hikes through nature, the expeditions, culture, history. Everything. Even the chaotic jungle in the cities has interesting things. It's so different than what you're used to. You'll have to be aware every minute!
But besides all these great things, Oliver also saw poverty, child workers, poor living circumstances and deterioration of the environment. This in particularly moved him. It is quite paradoxical, that he needed horrible things to open up his mind actually.
He never realised it before or paid attention to it. It didn't fell like it was part of his business. But at that particular place in Malaysia, people, both the visitors and the community were so ignorant in their behaviour. If they ate a candy bar for instance, they could just throw the package away...it was everywhere. So when Oliver asked why the people were acting like this, the answer of: everybody does it! didn't satisfy Oliver. The natural environment was beautiful, but when he had his eye on the

garbage and everything, he hmm..he realised it had been prettier and will not stay like this either...if nothing changes!

People tend to forget them. These negative things. They should not do that. Life might be good for some, but it should be good for all!

<u>When Oliver returned home:</u>

The stupid thing was that when Oliver travelled further to New Zealand, he felt he arrived at the other extreme: it was clean everywhere. The kiwi's pay a lot of attention to a clean environment; they are really careful and educating about that. Even if you're a visitor, the numerous signs and dustbins in the middle of nature make you almost feel obliged to take care of the environment.......because he stayed here for 3 months, he was so used to this that when he had a stopover for a couple of days in Asia on his way home, Oliver realized the difference again. Change in perspective and thinking is inevitable. Oliver remembers the discussion with an old Malay fisherman about the environment who said a very interesting thing that Oliver will always remember: 'if you care about the environment, you care about the future. So you should respect it. Cause in that way, you respect the future. Not only for yourself, but also for others'. Made him wonder.

He remembers that in the plane, he decided to seriously mean something. Seriously. So directly upon return home, he started to make a business plan and contacting people. No time for jetlag! He had a friend in Kuala Lumpur who had valuable insights, so that helped me a lot. Also, his own knowledge that he gained through education and his work in the finance industry, were great for his ideas. He remembers that he didn't want to quit his job, because – especially in these times – there is a lot of financial insecurity. Oliver realized he had less and less affinity with the commercial goals of his job. He actually never thought of it when he applied for his job at first sight, but during this trip he sort of got the true meaning of life. He had tremendous times to think about this..which was quite daunting.

It was tough to listen to the heart and not to the mind. Rationality is what he used all his life. But reading more things about environmental deterioration etc. and seeing the pictures stimulated the 'heart' feeling. Everything is so connected, Oliver just never realised or never thought about it. So Oliver went back again, to a local NGO that already taught the local children English, he introduced the possibility to further expand the education program. First, he started to learn them about the importance of the environment and what happens if people don't do anything. It truly works. Oliver takes them on day trips and plays games with them to make the topic become alive. The next step is to involve the children parents as it is not only the future generation but also the current one to which Oliver should focus. Besides, working for a company that is focused on environmental education makes it hard to not being sustainable himself. Oliver gets used to it.

The feedback is great. If (and yes this sounds quite cliché) he had not decided to go on that trip, he thinks that he was still in the same position. Luckily he did make the call. It wasn't all glamour, he has a bit of pocket money and a shared apartment twice as small as his old house, this job is much more meaningful to Oliver!

5 Connecting Life and Research

Based upon the personal stories of the repatriated travellers that contained their lived travel experiences, this chapter connects their narrated experiences with the earlier discussed philosophical and theoretical framework. Based upon my interpretation, I have identified some overarching themes that were repetitively recounted. The themes derived from the second and third part of the memory-work assignment: (2) experiences gained during travelling that nurtured a change in the traveller's perspectives; (3) and how this has been incorporated into the daily lives of travellers upon return home.

It is important to note that these main themes are interwoven in both travelling and repatriating and are thus significantly interrelated. Experiences are divided under the following three themes:

- **Reliving key travel experiences** (environmental and intercultural);
- **Increase in awareness** (self- and global awareness).
- **In search for like-minded people** (peer travellers; locals; travel organisations);

Table 5.1 outlines the overarching themes and characterising features in more detail.

Table 5.1: Key themes during sojourn and upon repatriation

TRAVELLING ABROAD	REPATRATION "HOME"	EXPLANATION
Characteristic feature: - Freedom (no constraints)	*Characteristic feature*: - Lack of understanding	
Key travel experiences: - Environment, nature - Intercultural communication	Reliving **key travel experiences**: - Emotions through objects (photos, souvenirs) - Emotions through people (memories, storytelling)	*Recalling experiences brings positive energy.*

Increase in awareness:
 	
-   Self-awareness (self-confident)
 	
-   Put things into perspective
 	
  - Aware of materialistic home society
 	
  - cross-cultural awareness
	Share awareness:
	
	- Global Awareness
	
	- Share experiences/insights
	
	- Education:
	
	  - environment
	
	  - culture
		Gained awareness during travelling is shared by repatriated travellers through joining forces with like-minded people. As such, awareness reaches a global level

Like-minded people	In search for **like-minded people**:	
- Peer travellers	- (repatriated) travellers - (travel) organizations	*Lack of understanding of family and close friends leads to search for 'like-minded people'*

Prior to discussing these themes, it is important to note that repatriation home was a noticeable constraining factor experienced amongst all participants. Thus, in contrary to abovementioned powerful themes that are filled with potentialities that enabled change, the lack of understanding of family and close friends upon repatriation, must be addressed as well. Yet first, I will discuss a key feature that the travellers experienced *during* their sojourn.

5.1   Sojourning abroad: Free from constraints

All four participants went away for a long period of time, ranging from 4 months up to 4 years. All participants originated from Europe, and three of them travelled to certain Asian countries followed by Australia / New Zealand. One participant went to Africa (Madagascar) for volunteering whereas one participant travelled and worked abroad and the other two participants solely travelled abroad. All participants travelled by themselves and had travelled before.

Given the fact that they undertook different journeys to different countries, some commonalities can be found with regard to what they (unintentionally) left behind in their home country. Eventually, all travellers repatriated to their passport country, though both Oliver and Jack went abroad again for an indefinite period.

When the participants were away from the everyday environment, which is temporarily away from their loved ones and job, studies or whatsoever, they all report at a certain stage how free they felt. This not only relates to the freedom of travelling around and looking at things without assumptions, but also implies an indirect reference to be free from the expectations of other people in their daily lives—They realised there were no interventions, no justifications to be made, no constraining deadlines; they felt free. Paradoxically, all participants come from highly developed western countries where they had the possibility and individually choose to embark on a long-term journey. The concept of freedom and feeling free is thus viewed from a Eurocentric perspective, as the concept of freedom of an individual in the 'developed country' versus the freedom of someone in a 'developing country', indicates a different understanding. Therefore, the notion of freedom must be taken with care. In this sense, the travellers all relate to a *felt* lack of freedom that is more

characterized by constraints of expectations of significant others and society, than the absolute notion of freedom; that is freedom to manoeuvre around by individual choice. It is then the *perceived* freedom that all participants experienced during travelling. The travellers felt that they were being lived by society. Even though they can make their own decisions and have the freedom to choose for e.g. a certain political direction, they felt that they had to justify all their choices and felt indirect pressure. By being away from that, by travelling for a long time, the participants were able to retrieve their own 'inner voice'. They were valued as a person, instead of status etc. Jack provides a useful illustration as he narrates that when he was travelling in Thailand, conversations with backpackers made him feel valued as a person, instead of being judged upon a job, money or what kind of social level one comes from:

Jack: *"You just accept each other as a person...everyone walks around in the same clothing..you don't judge each other on the way you look or what kind of great job you have or not you know. So yeah those are great moments! Jack means here back home, a job, clothing is seriously where everyone is interested in".*

The power and potential of travelling discussed so far indicates a strength, yet the fact that all travellers reported difficulties upon return home, negatively influences the transformative power of the sojourn. This will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraph.

5.2   Repatriating "home": Lack of understanding

The impact the return home had on one's life was sometimes underestimated. Moments of enjoyment were accompanied by feelings of despair and misunderstanding. This is congruent with suggested literature (Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Kim, 2001; Sussman, 2000, 2002; Szkudlarek, 2008; Thompson & Christofi, 2006), that the return home could be an unanticipated emotional ride (Pocock & McIntosh, 2010). In addition, the change underwent by the travellers was fairly little understood by their home environment. Although all four participants have managed to break through this and maintain change, they all report difficult times during the process of transformation. For instance, Calamba compares her journey abroad to be an intense rollercoaster ride that finished abruptly upon return home. She longed for another ride, but notes that due to the lack of understanding for her experiences, the rollercoaster ride "*did not depart from her own home country. People did not understand. They were supportive at first, but all the pictures and stories Calamba had, could not be shared".* Jack experienced the same, as his friends did not really

understand the depth of his experiences. This becomes clear from the following statement of Jack: *"he felt so different abroad but felt like he had to live according to how they knew him from before [...] feeling personal emptiness that no-one else understood".* He coins it as 'superficial interest'.

In addition, both Jack and Isa compare their repatriation experiences with a broken relationship. Jack explains the emptiness he felt after his broken relationship and relates this to his current feelings upon return. Likewise, Isa uses the example for the continues whining over a broken relationship as friends experienced her being nagging over and over again when she talked about her journeys.

Though all the moments that exemplified the difficulties for make the change happen are described as dark moments, <u>these dark moments were simultaneously breakthrough moments,</u> as eventually their frustration, anger or despair lead them to actively seek for other people that did share their dreams, thoughts and aspirations.

As all participants did manage to make the change happen, to live their travel experiences and have incorporated them in their 'daily lives', all participants are characterised by a high level of perseverance. If we think of Nancy Adler's model (see figure 2.4) and the various adaptation methods she introduced, all participants are characterized by a pro-active style in which they try to make the change happen. Isa provides a useful insight in this matter:

"Especially if other people are constantly putting you down, considering you are too idealistic and ask you when you really start to find a job".

Likewise, Oliver who changed his job to meet his new values notes in the beginning that little support was found by friends prior to and during the implementation of his new ideas. Only when the project has reached a higher level of success, friends started to support him. In the meantime, Oliver actively sought support from other friends that finally resulted in living experiences that nurtured his spirit.

The participants not only experienced a lack of understanding from their family and close friends if they wanted to talk about their experiences, but also upon integration of their new ideas, new perspectives. By means of reliving their travel experiences, they eased this discomfort. This will be discussed subsequently.

5.3 Reliving key travel experiences

Reliving powerful travel memories through both objects and people compensates the lack of sharing stories with family members and close friends due to little interest. Photos, souvenirs, songs, food and even particular odours all led to reliving the experiences, especially during the moments they found little support.

Environment / nature

With regard to the environment, both Jack and Calamba were 'grabbed' by nature. They highlight the active lifestyle and enjoy spending time outside in the nature. Calamba feels closer to nature (compared to home) as she is bedazzled by the numerous stars at night and admires the simplicity of life.

Calamba: "*The simply being-one-with-nature-feeling. Camping at an empty spot, falling asleep by the rippling sound of the ocean, and wake up again by the first rays of sunlight and birdsongs. The greatest thing. Waking up like this, being active the whole day, being dictated by seasons. It is such a more natural way of living*". Likewise, the being in nature reflects Jack's current lifestyle:

"*It's great, he can play around all day, show people the beautiful spots, having a great work-out!*"

Intercultural communication with locals

The intercultural communication with other people provided the participants with new fresh insights. Sometimes a true eye-opener. It evoked something in them, something they truly realised upon return. This is well-captured by Isa, who recalls the interesting conversations that were an eye-opener to her:

"*she learned more from the Malagasy than they might have learned from Isa [...] The Malagasy changed her look at things and now she is giving them something back [...] provided her such a mirror [...] Youth back home is not even happy to learn, they are ignorant, they don't understand the luxury position they possess*".

Also Calamba refers to meetings with local people that grabbed her, especially the optimistic perspective of young generations were appealing to her. This is also shared by Isa, who often refers to the happy smiling faces of the Malagasy.

During Jack's second trip to Australia, he realises he matured a bit as he recalls that due to the Wwoofing (Willing workers on organic farms), he had more contact with locals and therefore experienced a different part of the country (opposed to his party-journey before). This interesting perspective Jack provides, coheres with the reviewed literature before. Zahra and McIntosh (2007)

stated that travellers characterised with a more altruistic intention, are more likely to have cathartic travel experiences. Jack refers to his first backpacking trip as mostly hedonistic and reflects upon himself when he embarked on his second trip to be matured. This time, for some reason he chose to work on farms that eventually provided him with more in-depth experiences that he still values.

Intercultural communication with peer travellers

The important insights derived from intercultural communication with others not only take place at countries with different cultures, but also relate to conversations with fellow international travellers. Both Jack, Calamba and Oliver refer to the contact with peer travellers during their trip whom have provided them numerous insights. Talking about yourself to others, but also listening to other (heroic) stories and personal life-paths so far, further nurtured their spirits. Jack clearly points this out when he narrates that he felt understood, he felt he was finally meeting like-minded people. The things they told him and the ways they looked upon certain things could have come from his own mouth. Jack further explains that it was not only one or two peer travellers, but at every new place there was at least someone that he felt connected with. Interestingly, Jack cannot find these people in his own home country and decides to continue living abroad. Oliver also reflects on this matter: "*he spoke with fellow travellers about life. Great perspectives of people. So many interesting talks. It is interesting you are able to meet a bunch of them when you're holidaying whilst back home... well, you got your own little circle*".

It is then noteworthy to say that intercultural communication with 'local people' goes beyond communication with a complete 'other' culture, as communication with locals have always provided participants to be a certain eye-opener to things. The intercultural encounters of Isa, Oliver and Calamba relate to new insights from a complete different cultural environment, while especially Jack relates to locals from a western culture but with a very different lifestyle. Though Oliver captures this in '*key memories in travelling are exposures to cultures different from our own',* it shows the difficult terminology of 'culture' – especially as culture is highly dynamic and fluid (Hall, 2005a; Hottola, 2004).

Though a complete contrasting environment might provide a better mirror to one's own society, communication with others can be considered as an essential element for the repatriated travellers; something which is still of high value to them (regarding their narrations).

In sum, experiences of a complete other culture, the being in a different natural environment with different tastes, senses and hearing all stimulated the travellers spirits.

5.4   Increase in awareness

As a result of being away from the everyday environment, accompanied by recounted key travel experiences, all participants were able to experience a process of change. All personal narratives reveal an increased level of awareness, which is an increase of self-awareness and as a result an increase of global awareness. Both will be discussed subsequently.

5.4.1   Self-awareness

During their sojourn, all participants eventually placed themselves in a bigger picture. As we all look to the world through glasses and we can never take them fully of, we can however become aware of them. The participants all became aware of their glasses and changed them, so to say. Travelling provided the participants with a mirror to their own (western) society.

Without the intention to fall into a traditional gender dichotomy, it is noteworthy to say that the two female participants reflect on their travel experiences to have provided them with more self-confidence. Calamba experienced independence, strength and she was much more self-confident before she departed. In a similar vein, Isa recounts a big change in her self-confidence upon arrival and departure during her volunteer work in Madagascar. Though direct narrations of an increase in self-confidence are lacking by the two male participants, they all share notions of an increase in self-awareness, which is being able to reflect upon yourself, being aware of your position with regard to others. Parenthetically, though the male participants have not narrated an increase in self-confidence, it does not imply that they have not experienced this. They do however, report self-awareness as they put things in perspective and are more critical about things and life in general – something that can be noted throughout all participants' stories.

In addition, all participants came to the conclusion that at first, it is not a change of society that plays a role, but the finding of yourself, to find rest in yourself. Calamba and Jack both found this moment of peace in camping in nature, whereas Oliver experienced a more spiritual moment. All participants describe a moment of solitude where they were able to find inner peace to think about themselves, to analyse what road to travel. Oliver, who spent a considerable amount of time in an ashram in India, notes that in the end, he got the true meaning of life. He had tremendous time to think about this. In a less extreme way, the other participants report similar experiences of equivalent value.

In contrast to joyful things during their sojourn, horrible experiences and encounters also triggered something to the participants. Both Calamba, Isa and Oliver very briefly recount negative, awful but

touching experiences that enabled them to bring things in perspective. Oliver reflects on this saying it is quite paradoxical he needed something like that to open his eyes:

Oliver: *"The natural environment was beautiful [...] he realised it had been prettier and will not stay like this either. People tend to forget them. These negative things. They should not do that. Life might be good for some, but it should be good for all!"*

Abovementioned increase of self-awareness was (unconsciously) taken to a broader level as a higher level of self-awareness enabled them to look differently to things; with a more open mind. As Inglehart (2008) notes, this more open mind-set of the new generation, implies the first step towards value change. Given the fact that key travel experiences mostly consisted of intercultural contact with locals, intercultural communication seems to play a key role.

5.4.2   Global awareness: mirror to 'home' society

On the one hand, the reported increases in consciousness of the participants reflects what role they have played and want to play in their lives, but it can also be viewed as a certain 'wake-up' call for the participants – that is, seeing commonalities instead of differences in the world. Everything is connected. Jack notes this when he argues backpackers value each other as a person, not on materialistic things or status. Calamba reconnects again with nature; Jack redecorates his life to meet his passion for nature and outdoors.

Besides seeing the beauty of things and embracing diversity, they also take a more critical attitude towards 'western' society, as they reflect on their daily lives to be dominated by rush, materialism and a perceived lack of freedom. As noted before, though the intentions of these participants have not been explicitly asked for, they all reflect that during their sojourn abroad, they realized how different life back home was. During their travels, they applaud the lack of expectations, interference and pressure. The settings in which the travellers find themselves provide a contrast, they express their negative feelings about materialism and regain new perspectives about how they want to live their experiences upon return home. The following narratives of Isa, Oliver and Jack further illustrate this:

Isa: *"After a couple of weeks, she completely adjusted to the life in Madagascar and she realized she wasn't missing the hassle in which she was living before [...] She also realised how hurried and organised her own society was. That she had the idea she had to fill up every moment of her time, as time is money as how is believed in western society [...] the ease of which things are dealt with back home and the stupid stupid worries of people bothered her a lot. Always hurrying, no one is happy".*

In a similar vein, "*Oliver realized he had less and less affinity with the commercial goals of his job* […] *the freedom he experienced. Doing anything he wanted without being attached to something. No deadlines*".

In his closing reflection, Jack complains about the lack of determination of society; that segment that is not living the change:

"*Seriously, they still CAN do it. They're just too lousy, too afraid. Society has expectations, that someone lives a wealthy life. The path is there when you are 18, and most people just walk that one*".

Above narratives not only illustrate the increased level of self-awareness and how the participants perceive and critique their own 'home' society, but it also exemplifies their own changed perspectives. Materialism is thrown overboard; the participants report new values of simplicity, the true meaning of life, the appreciation for nature, their cultural awareness. In their narratives, they critique their western 'home' society as it exemplifies contrasting experiences. It can be said that the participants are in search for something that equals their new perspectives.

As such, this partly aids to explain why the travellers experience a lack of understanding / recognition upon return home. Both family and close friends (as discussed in §5.2), are not mirroring their thoughts. Yet, as all travellers showed a high level determination (§5.2), they actively sought for like-minded people as will become apparent in the next paragraph.

5.5   In search for like-minded people

As the lack of understanding from family and close friends from one's home society was missing, all repatriated travellers showed initiative to find like-minded people. They searched for people with similar experiences, either contacting repatriated travellers through organizations or via one's personal contacts or joining meetings etc.

Both Calamba, Isa and Jack either contacted or were contacted by travel organisation to give a presentation for future travellers, to join a return day or Jack who voluntarily sought contact with such an organisation to nurture his travel spirit again.

Jack: "*To break this negative circle, he started contacting agencies to go abroad again […] people going abroad and prepare them for the travel […] but loved the travel aspiration and spirit*".

Isa: *"The organization with whom Isa engaged to go to Madagascar the first time, asked her for some presentations etc. for future volunteers. She loved the opportunity to talk about her experiences and show photos to people as she had the idea her friends were bored with that. So she organized meetings, first in cooperation with the company that send her to Madagascar in the first place. Later on, she found one other volunteer that also went to Madagascar in the same time, and they joined forces together".*

The combination of a need to narrate their travel experiences and to make people aware of what they experienced, to make other people aware of this; all four participants take (or are planning to take) a somewhat educational position in their lives, to share their experiences and raise awareness. The following paragraph further elaborates on this, illustrated with some narratives.

5.6   Share experiences: Towards global change

All four participants have successfully incorporated change in their lives, upon repatriation. Oliver reflects on this change as such:

Oliver: *"It was tough to listen to the heart and not to the mind. Rationality is what he used all his life. To a local NGO that already taught the local children English, he introduced the possibility to further expand the education program. First, he started to learn them about the importance of the environment and what happens if we don't do anything. It truly works. Oliver takes them on day trips and plays games with them to make the topic become alive. The next step is to involve the children parents as it is not only the future generation but also the current one to which Oliver should focus".*

For Isa, doing volunteer work in Madagascar has been a process of consciousness that she now wants to share with others. As she recounts, her vision changed due to the conversations with local Malagasy and the experience of ordinary daily life.

Isa: *"She wanted to show people that instead of what the western world wants to teach to the 'developing' world [...] Isa aims to make them aware. The project is still in its infant stage, but Isa aims to facilitate workshops with Malagasy youth as well and foster intercultural exchange. If you get to know different cultures, your perspective changes. Learning from doing and seeing, before judging".*

Jack, who chose to live abroad to continue his active lifestyle and to be surrounded with 'like-minded people', has become a cycle tour guide with a focus on nature. As such, he perfectly combines his

active lifestyle that was already present before embarking on long-term travels, and his increased interest and appreciation for nature, as the following narrated sentence highlights:

Jack: "*It's great, he can play around all day, show people the beautiful spots, having a great work-out! All in exchange for a bit of pocket money, a bike, the alps, a roof over his head, great mates and the ability to enthuse more people* ☺".

Calamba has the aspiration to reach more people by writing a book, and has changed her current life in a sense that it meets her new values – that mostly connected with aspects that mirrored in eastern philosophies. Besides the fact that a major change in their daily occupation was recounted, some of the travellers report an incorporated change in little things in their daily lives, such as being more involved and conscious towards nature or becoming a vegetarian for instance. As Oliver notes: "*working for a company that is focused on environmental education makes it hard to not being sustainable himself. Oliver gets used to it*".

In this sense, on a small scale the participants changed their personal behaviour plus on a larger scale as they all aim to reach awareness in a way that reflect their new values.

5.7   Conclusion

Based upon the personal stories participants provided, we can see that change can happen at any kind of tourism, only if a person is open to change. The various intentions of the participants to go travelling reveals and open attitude towards change as embracing the possibility of embarking on a long-term journey relates to a certain open attitude towards change, regardless age, travel purpose or destination.

By thinking of the great moments of travelling and the energy they felt during that time, they were able to transcend the positive energy in their daily lives. In this sense, the great moments during their sojourn served to overcome barriers in their daily life. Though there were only four participants whom participated in this in-depth study, key travel experiences were highly characterised by intercultural communication with locals and peer travellers.

The provided personal stories of participants all mirror a profound personal change within themselves. By all, this self-awareness is taken to a higher level as they also note a global awareness. In this sense, they all share the idea to change the world can only be done by changing yourself first.

Congruent with the participant's stories as well as the literature regarding transformative travelling (Brown, 2009; Kottler, 1997; Lean, 2009; Lee & Woosnam, 2010; Noy, 2004; Pocock & McIntosh, 2010), long-term travelling has an important added value: it can bring about change. Not only for the

development of yourself, but also for the world. Travelling has the potentialities to make people directly aware of themselves and the fortunate position westerners possess. Yet it is not something that just happens, it is a long, sometimes hard process full of contradictions in which the traveller first becomes aware of the self and subsequently (re)discovers one's values. This took place in a certain personal space, where the participants were away from the everyday environment, away from constraining factors such as hassle, interventions and expectations of both significant others and their (home) society. The intercultural communication with other people (both local and peer travellers) provided the participants with new fresh insights. Sometimes a true eye-opener. In addition, experiences of a complete other culture compared to home, the being in a different natural environment with different tastes, senses and hearing all stimulated the travellers spirits. It evoked something in them, something they truly realised upon return.

Upon return home, the lack of understanding from friends and participants' inability to share their experiences were coined as 'dark moments'. Incorporating change certainly has its own complexities as they often found themselves in between a constant push and pull, experiencing contradictions. Though all the moments that exemplified the difficulties for make the change happen are described as dark moments, these dark moments were simultaneously breakthrough moments, as eventually their frustration, anger or despair lead them to actively seek for other people that did share their dreams, thoughts and aspirations.

As all participants did manage to make the change happen, to live their travel experiences and have incorporated them in their 'daily lives', all participants are characterised by a high level of perseverance. Natural strategies were developed, as support was found by repatriated peer travellers; active search for like-minded people at e.g. organisations that mirrored their new ideas and values; return-days for repatriated travellers; but also by reliving experiences through more personal items such as souvenirs, food, photo's that served as a new input of energy derived from travelling.

It can be said therefore that discovering change, increasingly becoming aware of this and incorporating this change is a continuous process that requires perseverance. There is no single rule or guideline that brings about change nor is there a single method of fostering change. All participants had different travel experiences and have changed in different ways. What however can be said is that away from the everyday environment due to travelling abroad brings new perspectives and successfully enables travellers to look at their home society with different glasses.

In sum, travelling can serve as a powerful metaphor for travellers to nurture their awareness, not only of themselves but also on a more global scale, as all repatriated travellers have successfully incorporated new values in their daily lives. How this relates to the claimed emergence of transmodernity, will be revealed in the closing chapter (6).

6   The Road ahead

6.1   Discussion and Conclusion

This closing chapter treats the overall conclusions and discussions of this research and what road lies ahead. This chapter views the findings of chapter five within the broader understanding of the claimed emergence of transmodernity.

The main purpose of this thesis was to explore the transformative power of travelling and the extent to which positive changes were maintained, all within the framework of transmodernity. The consciousness of Earth citizenship forms an important role within the claimed emergence of the paradigm shift towards transmodernity. This is noted by the academic world as various scholars (Ateljevic, 2009; Dolan & Raich, 2009; Dussel, 2002; Elgin & LeDrew, 1997; Ghisi, 2001; Grosfoguel, 2008; Inglehart, 2008; Magda, 2004; Rifkin, 2004) point towards a silent shift in values and worldviews of individuals, but also the recent discovery by the business world that focuses on cultural creatives. This subgroup coined by Ray and Anderson (2000) slowly leads to a new market segment in society (MarketResponse, 2006).

The impact long-term travelling had on repatriated travellers and the profound way this has been sustained, illustrates the powerful potentialities of travelling. It has the potential to build a bridge not only between people of different backgrounds and cultures, but also to provide western travellers with a mirror to their home society. The different perspectives gained all led to an increase in awareness, both of the self and on a more global environmental scale, as all repatriated travellers recounted enhanced positive social change in the long-term. A process that does not go without complete struggles, as participants had to overcome barriers, before they incorporated change.

It is therefore important to prevail over the negative perspective currently put on travelling, its impacts and the reasons of younger people to embark on long-term travels whom are sometimes regarded as curriculum-vitae builders. It is important to note that this postmodern critique sheds a wrong light on travelling, as it undermines the positive outcomes of travelling. The power and potential of travelling discussed so far are strong, yet the fact that all travellers reported difficulties upon return home, does downsize the transformative power of the sojourn.

The aim to explore if travelling has positive effects on long-term travellers during and upon repatriation is confirmed as that all four participants provided personal stories that mirror profound personal change within themselves. By all, this self-awareness is taken to a higher level as they also note a more global awareness. The changes they made in their lives can be considered as deep change which was sometimes hard and contradictory, mostly due to a lack of understanding from their close friends and family, but also due to the often ignorant attitude of contemporary western society. Returning home from travelling and incorporating change certainly has its own complexities as repatriated travellers often found themselves in between a constant push and pull, experiencing contradictions. The key in enabling change and put ideas into action was found in finding like-minded people. People that shared the same values and characteristics of repatriated travellers enhanced the positive energy the travellers found during the sojourn but sometimes lost upon return home. In this thesis, like-minded people ranged from (repatriated) peer travellers to people they met via travel organisations – intentionally searched for during their way to incorporate change. Two participants crossed boundaries permanently, as they opted for enabling change in their country of sojourn instead of home. This links with the findings of Christofi & Thompson (2007), who reported various international students whom had difficulties with adjusting back home and therefore felt more comfortable with their new lives in their country of sojourn. Likewise, this coheres with Cohen's (2011) study, who researched travellers who have expanded their long-term backpack journey into an indefinite way of living. These 'lifestyle travellers' choose to live their experiences back in their country of sojourn opposed to adjusting back home. Instead of coping with difficulties back home, living abroad gave them more room to manoeuvre, hereby avoiding the possibility to fall back into old patterns.

The level of acceptation; the pressure of current structures in society; and deep-rooted patterns, all provide evidence that if not addressed properly enough, transmodern changes cannot be integrated. Regardless the new home environment of the repatriated travellers, all participants can be characterised by an active search to relive their travel experiences and make the change happen.

Travelling & Repatriation

This important finding not only provides evidence for long-term travellers to be included into the terminology of sojourners as being used in repatriation studies, but also to be considered as a serious field of study which is currently quite undermined. It shows that the impact of returning home after travelling is a highly intense one and is – according to the travellers – characterized by a lack of understanding of their direct home environment. Even though travellers have managed to foster change to which like-minded people play an important role, the process could have been less stressful if attention was paid to repatriation process. The four repatriated travellers that

participated in this study can be characterized by a high level of perseverance. This, in combination with finding like-minded people enabled them to incorporate change. Yet, repatriated travellers with less determination might not be able to foster (profound) change.

"*Re-entering with no re-entry training often means that the intercultural sojourn becomes encapsulated (Bennet, 1993), tucked away in the mind of the sojourner, and the opportunity is lost to integrate the personal growth and professional knowledge into the sojourners current life*".

'All the literature points to the need for training, but there appears to be very little formal training provided to help returning students and professional sojourners' (Martin & Harrell, 2004: 312).

Though the eventual outcome of this change is positive, the struggles repatriated travellers have gone through indicate it was a process that sometimes demanded much determination.

Although some participants narrated about a return day where they were able to share their experiences with other repatriated travellers, more should be done in terms of easing repatriation distress. I therefore follow Brown (2009), Lean (2009), Zahra and McIntosh (2007) and Pocock & McIntosh (2010) who all note that the potential power of tourism upon return home is a topic in great need for further investigation.

Travelling & Transmodernity

The key in enabling change and put ideas into action was found in finding like-minded people. People that shared the same values and characteristics of repatriated travellers enhanced the positive energy the travellers found during the sojourn but sometimes lost upon return home.

This also leads to the point that *if* the claimed emergence of transmodernity will become more common; *if* more people could see the potentialities and celebrate diversity, changing through travelling is likely to happen more quickly upon return home.

A paradigm shift towards transmodernity can offer the '*potential of an optimistic, hopeful vision of the future through redefining the relationship between human and material capital, between life and work, between the intuitive and the rational; between society, science and ethics*' (Pritchard et al., 2011: 4).

Especially within the transmodernity framework, one can see the power of travelling and the positive change it can bring about: a self-discovery and enduring change in perspectives. A more positive focus on tourism itself is further extended by Brown (2009) who is amongst the first to regard long-term tourists as sojourners. Subsequently, she urges for more research on the post travel phase (Brown, 2009; Hottola, 2004; Lean, 2009; Pocock & McIntosh, 2010), as finally it is the coping with changes back home, the incorporation that can sustain the new values congruent with the claimed emergence of transmodernity.

The tipping point

Yet this makes us come to the point to discover how it can become more mainstream. The travellers that returned all report how difficult it was to establish the change, to find like minded-people. All participants reported that they found support back home lacking.

As both Ghisi (2008) and Inglehart (2008) note, the new generation already embody transmodern values. After the repatriated travellers found like-minded people, they all regained travel energy and managed to incorporate change. In a sense, these like-minded people did 'fit' with their new ideas and changed lifestyles. The importance of these people should not be underestimated, as it is interesting to come to a better understanding how transmodern changes might spread further throughout society.

Everett Rogers (1995) has developed an approach to examine the different processes that will take place when innovation (thus transformation through tourism) will be diffused. Different factors will influence whether an innovation will be rejected or adopted by society (Perloff, 2008). The extent to which new transmodern beliefs will be adopted can be determined by the characteristics of the individual him/herself. The differences in an individual's behaviour are a mixture of the social and cultural background, demographic features, the level of education, life cycle and beliefs and attitudes (Holden, 2008). According to Rogers (1995), there are in total five different types of adopters, ranging from innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards. This partly explains how new transmodern worldviews of repatriated travellers, *slowly* diffuse through society.

As such, the change of society towards transmodernity is 'carried' by a relatively small group of people (Fogel, 2010; Ray & Anderson, 2000). In a similar vein, this is discussed by Malcolm Gladwell in his book 'the tipping point' where he uses numerous example of (now) famous brands, that are all characterized by a 'magic moment when ideas, trends and social behaviours cross a threshold, tip and spread like wildfire' (Gladwell, 2007).

The road ahead

So far, this study has shown the powerful potentialities of (long-term) travelling and provided an account of four repatriated travellers that have successfully established change in their lives, which much coheres with transmodern values. Even though these repatriated travellers reported a lack of understanding from their direct home environment, they all found a way to foster change. If, in the future transmodernity will be acknowledged by a larger public, changes will be recognised and can be embraced better by more people. I am not arguing that it will be easy, as Ghisi (2008) noted that it will be a painful change, but and would like to end my thesis in an optimist vein, congruent with transmodernity and Pritchard, Morgan and Ateljevic (2011) whom plea for tourism to be hopeful, that the increase of people that undergo change and the increase in research that is done so far

points towards a promising future. We just have to believe, embrace and above all stimulate it. I hope I have done so by writing this thesis and made more people aware of it. The memory-work assignment has already provided (repatriated) travellers with more thinking and acknowledgment and hopefully the call will be heard for further research into the area of transmodernity and the post-travel phase.

6.2   Recommendations

This section gives suggestions for future research, all related to transmodern changes, transformative travelling and repatriation.

🌐 *Improving research on travellers' repatriation home*

The reported lack of understanding of the direct home environment was reported by the repatriated travellers. Therefore, it might be interesting to investigate the perspectives and experiences of the direct home environment of repatriated travellers. How do they perceive the homecoming; what do they experience? As such, a less stressful transition would be possible – with regard to the future. (E.g. interviews can be conducted amongst repatriated sojourners and family / close friends; a fruitful example is the study of Chang [2009]).

In addition, it might be interesting to integrate the influence of social media during sojourning and upon repatriation. Today's interconnectedness of the world and blogs of travellers have constituted a whole new world where stories and pictures are shared. It might be interesting to research the influences of these platforms on the process of adjustment back home during and after long-term travelling.

🌐 *Research on travellers who decide to live abroad for an indefinite period*

In addition to the findings of Christofi and Thompson (2007) and Cohen (2011), plus the findings of this study, it would be interesting to further investigate sojourners that leave their 'home' country again. Is there a relation with adjustment problems and people choosing to leave their country again?

🌐 *Longitudinal study*

A longitudinal study can provide a better insight in the life course of the individuals and can better report their experiences; all to come to a better understanding and to aid the repatriation process.

🌐 *Research on transformation through short-term travels*

Though this study has found examined change experienced by long-term travellers (4 months to 4 years) it does not imply that change through short-term travelling is not impossible. Given the fact that a large share of people embark on short holidays, those holidays that are characterized by a more altruistic motive might provide transformation as well. It might be a slower, more difficult process to cope with, but certainly not impossible.

🌐 *Research on elder segment of society*

Though most researchers note that the transmodern change is already (subconsciously) present in the *younger generation* of society (e.g. Ghisi, 2008; Inglehart, 2008), Robertson (2002) found that the retired cohort of society has the 'desire to be impacted by their world'. This would imply that besides the noted value change amongst the younger generation of society, travel can provide change amongst the willingly *elderly* who are open to change.

6.3   Limitations of the study

This section shows an awareness of the limitations of the study and possible problems involved when the research was carried out.

🌐 The dataset was identified via the researcher's personal network; therefore other potential repatriated travellers that fostered change were excluded from this study.

🌐 The findings of this study are based on the narratives of repatriated travellers. As such, participants could fill in the assignment upon their own ideas. In contrast to interviews that are characterized by a more direct approach of gaining information, some helpful insights might have been lost. In addition to this, due to constraining factors of time, the memory-work assignment has not been discussed collectively amongst the participants, which could have provided more interesting insights.

🌐 Another shortcoming of the data-collection is that the results are a snapshot in time. As such, they might have been prone to the emotional wellbeing of the person in that moment of time (if you are very happy during the interview you might talk different about your experiences as when you have a bad day).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Invitation Email

Informal email sent to fellow travel contacts of the researcher

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Subject: Experienced Change through Travelling? – my research

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Greetings fellow travellers!

I send this mail to you because I know **you love travelling** and I was wondering if you ever thought about the possible changes it constituted?

My master thesis focuses on transformation through travelling and how travelling has the potential to change your worldview/values. But also: how have you dealt with these experiences upon return home?
If you think you have changed through travelling, have 'opened' your eyes and now look at the world with a different perspective, I urge you to take a closer look at the **attachment**.

The assignment provides a unique enjoyable way to have your say, a task that allows you to **immerse yourself back into these great travel experiences** and to share your thoughts with me. I call it another form of armchair travelling :-)

The information you provide will be kept confidential at all times. It is your chosen pseudonym that will be mentioned in the research.

For any questions/suggestions, please email me.

Hope to hear from you soon!

Cheers, Joke

P.S. It is greatly appreciated if you could **forward** this message to anyone else you might know who has changed after his/hers travels.

Appendix B: Assignments Memory Work

RULES FOR WRITING:

- Give name to a character, a pseudonym, thus write in a narrative style (i.e. the moment Jack hopped on the train, he realised he was free again. Free from work and a broken relationship. He shivered....etc.)
- Immerse yourself in this character, try to describe as clearly as possible what emotions, feelings, senses he/she experienced. Don't think too much, just write.
- Above all, it should be an enjoyable exercise, so ENJOY! ☺

The Life Story of *< fill in your chosen pseudonym, the name of the character >*

Assignment 1: Personal Context   *Please tell something about yourself (e.g. your background, your hopes, aspirations, dreams, fears)*   *What <u>moves</u> you? Where do you come from? What is your life story? How do you present yourself?*

Assignment 2: Travel Memoires

Could you please go back to your key moments of travelling. When did you feel something moved inside you? Try to describe your feelings, when you 'opened' your eyes, something – it could be anything – that triggered you, that made you start thinking. If you look back on your travels, what were the precious moments? Try to describe them as intense as you felt them. Close your eyes, indulge yourself back into those moments.

Assignment 3: Living the Change

Could you please describe the moments when you returned home after travelling, what did you feel? What happened with you? How have you incorporated the change? What were the dark moments, the breakthrough moments. Have you been able to capture the great feelings during your travelling?