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‘Invisible women’: German migrant women’s cultural identity in Western Australia, 1945-1973

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‘Invisible women’: German migrant women’s cultural identity in Western Australia, 1945-1973

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Bachelor of Arts (Writing)

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Honours

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This study focused on the lived experiences of four German women who immigrated to Western Australia between 1945 and 1973. In 1945 post-WWII European migrants were permitted to immigrate to Australia for the first time since Federation and the introduction of the White Australia policy in 1901. 1973 signified the end of the White Australia policy and the beginning of establishing equality for migrants in Australia. Between 1945 and 1973 all migrants were expected to assimilate to the Australian culture and way of life and relinquish their own cultural identity. The aims of this study were to explore the impacts that negotiating the Australian way of life had on the German women’s cultural identity. Through their settlement experiences, the research sought to understand the ways in which the women developed a sense of belonging in Australia. Furthermore, this study sought to determine whether the women’s cultural identity could be visually represented through diptych photo-narratives composed of their portrait and a photograph of their mementoes.

The project employed new ethnography and visual ethnography methodologies in life history interviews with four German women. Life histories are intensely personal and the aim of applying a new ethnographic focus was to represent the women’s stories in a way that reflected their lived realities. This was achieved through presenting each woman’s account in a storytelling format that offered a unique way of engaging with and analysing their cultural identities. The women participated in three interviews and had their portraits taken. They were asked to select personal mementoes that signified their cultural identity, which were then photographed. The aim of using a visual ethnographic approach was to create visual texts that reflected the women’s cultural identity in the context in which they interpreted their own identity. The photographic representation of the German women’s cultural identity through mementoes offered a new way of looking at and exploring cultural identity.

The women’s experiences negotiating the Australian way of life were analysed against the theoretical frameworks of cultural identity, hybridity and
national identity as defined by Stuart Hall (1992) and Homi Bhabha (1990). Taking a new ethnographic approach to the life history interviews of the four women produced rich, nuanced accounts of their settlement experiences. Analysis of the narratives found that despite encountering assimilation expectations and discrimination, 3 of the 4 women identified culturally as being Australian, while simultaneously retaining connections to their German identity. One of the women displayed a hybrid cultural identity, as defined by Bhabha (1990), that was developed through engagement with German and English languages within social and education contexts in Western Australia. The use of language provided a third space for creating meaning between the home and host cultures. For all of the women, development of a sense of belonging in Australia was influenced by government policy and the attitudes of the Australian people, as well as emotional and physical connections to Germany. Through the incorporation of mementoes, the diptych photo-narratives produced ‘portraits’ of the four women’s cultural identities that contained complex narratives that co-existed within the one space.

The German migrant women’s narratives provided rich and powerful insights into the process of developing multiple cultural identities when negotiating life in Australia. The use of this new ethnographic approach aimed to transform the women from anonymous migrants to real, visible people. The multilayered narrative images visually represented the women’s processes of engagement with Australian and German cultures across multiple timeframes. The photographs seek to contribute to the space of discussion and understanding on the development of cultural identity. The results of this study may be beneficial for future immigration policy revisions or to better inform the greater community of the migrant experience in developing cultural identity and a sense of belonging in Australia.
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signed:

Date: 7 June 2017
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks go to Frauke Chambers, Johanna Janssen, Ramona Janssen, Gisela Morris and Susanne Strobel for talking to me and trusting me with their stories. Each of them shared their time and experiences with me so that I could understand what the Australian way of life was like during their settlement years and the ways in which cultural identity changes through migration.

I would like to thank my supervisor Danielle Brady for her enthusiasm for my project and her valuable guidance. I am grateful to the many people who talked to me about my project and assisted me in my search for participants. A big thank you to Catherine Manley for sharing her knowledge of ethnography and in-depth interviewing, and for her ongoing interest and support for this project.
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INTRODUCTION

My mother was ten years old when she immigrated from Germany to Sydney, Australia, in 1955. Settling into a new life in Australia was difficult; she was called a Nazi, spat at, and told to go home by children at her school. Despite these early difficulties, in her adult life she cultivated solid friendships with both Australian and German women. Although she assimilated into Australian culture, she married a German and our home was very much a German household—she cooked predominantly German food, we celebrated German festive holidays and German was my first language, spoken at home. Out in public, however, my mother spoke English and adhered to Australian customs and the way of life. Fifty years after her arrival in Australia, my mother returned to Germany for the first time. Some ten years later, over coffee one day, my mother told me that she’d felt a sense of belonging during her visit to Germany that she hadn’t experienced in 60 years of living in Australia. She’d felt a connection to the culture, the people and the lifestyle that gave her a sense of being ‘home’. My mother had kept her true feelings about her cultural identity hidden for decades. Her experiences inspired me to understand what other German women’s immigration experiences were like.

***

This research project explored the ways German women immigrating to Western Australia navigated the process of adapting to a new culture whilst retaining connection to their cultural origins. It investigated what factors contributed toward the development of a sense of belonging. The project immigration timeframe was 1945 to 1973. In 1945 post-World War Two European migrants were permitted entry to Australia for the first time since Federation in 1901 (Haebich, 2008, p. 165; Kunz, 1988, p. xvii; Peters, 2001, p. 8). 1973 signified the end of the White Australia policy and the introduction of the Australian Citizenship Bill which removed discrimination based on colour, race or nationality (Whitlam, 1985, p. 502). German women immigrating to Australia between 1945 and 1973 had to adapt to a culture that was vastly different from their own.
My analysis consists of a thesis and a supporting creative photographic component. The thesis examined German women’s immigration and settlement experiences to provide valuable insights into understanding cultural identity and the migrant experience. I drew on existing literature related to cultural and national identity, and new and narrative ethnography, as well as my experiences in the field interviewing four German women who immigrated to Western Australia between 1945 and 1973. Primarily narrated through their own voices, the gathering of the women’s immigration and settlement experiences allowed individual perspectives to convey lived realities.

The photographic component aimed to add depth to the interpretation of cultural identity through exploring the use of mementoes as visual representation of cultural identity. Drawing on visual ethnography methodology and literature on material culture, as well as my professional experiences in the field of photography, diptych photo-narratives were produced. Each diptych consisted of a portrait and a photograph of memorabilia objects that each woman nominated as representing her cultural identity.

German migrant women settling in Western Australia between 1945 and 1973 came from different backgrounds and had different reasons for immigrating. Once the women arrived in Western Australia, they encountered political conditions such as the White Australia Policy and expectations to assimilate. The White Australia Policy had been developed to ensure “racial and cultural homogeneity” (Tavan, 2005, p. 11). The policy was revised in the post-World War Two era to allow non-British migrants entry to Australia under the condition that they be white and eager to assimilate into the Australian culture (Richards, 2008, p. 167). Migrants were expected to assimilate to the Australian way of life with the view to becoming absorbed into the homogenous Australian society (Haebich, 2002, p. 62; Murphy, 1993, p. 135; Richards, 2008, p. 167; Tavan, 1997, pp. 80-81; Wende, 2010, p. 84). These factors impacted upon the German migrant women’s cultural identity.

The act of migration displaces individuals, disrupts their sense of home culture. This results in a need for revision of their self-identity (Bhabha, 1994, p. 172; Hall, 1992, p. 310; Papastergiadis, 1992, p. 152). According to Hall (1992), the development of cultural identity is a process that is created within oneself through
“interactions’ between the self and society” (p. 276) and as such our identity is subject to change depending on the society we live in and the experiences we encounter. People who have been dispersed from their country of origin are required to adjust to the new culture, which may result in a hybrid cultural identity (Hall, 1992, p. 310). Bhabha (1990) defines cultural hybridity as a continually evolving process whereby two cultures may converge giving rise to a new space, which he refers to as the “third space” (p. 211), thereby allowing new areas of meaning, representation and identity to emerge. As such, some migrants may have developed hybrid cultural identities.

As part of our cultural identity we develop a national identity that is constructed through complex forms of narrative and storytelling, and the invention of traditions and founding nation myths (B. Anderson, 1991, p. 6; Haebich, 2008, p. 85; Hall, 1992, pp. 293-295). My research into German migrants arriving in Australia between 1945 and 1973 indicated that this ethnic group are perceived to have relinquished their cultural identity and effectively assimilated into the Australian society and way of life (Hatoss, 2006, pp. 90-91; Muenstermann, 1997, p. 141; Tampke, 2006, p. 157). Further examination of German migrants found that the high level of assimilation largely rendered them invisible within Australian society (C. V. Anderson, 2015, p. 5; Hatoss, 2006, pp. 90-91; Tampke, 2006, p. 167). Few texts analyse the context of cultural identity against German migrant women’s experiences, and given the low visibility of this cultural group, further investigation into this area was warranted.

The collection of German women’s life histories for this study provided an opportunity to examine of their sense of cultural identity in their settlement years and in the present, in 2016. The gathering of life histories illuminated the lived realities of women who may have been marginalised thus allowing their life stories to be heard and making the women visible (Saukko, 2003, p. 6; "Why use oral history," 2016). Becker (cited in Harvey & MacDonald, 1993) supports the value and contribution of life histories stating that “every story plays its part in building a picture of the social life of the time, place and group under investigation” (p. 195). In her book about refugees in Australia, Sayer (2015) provides a clear example of the benefit of lived histories arguing that “[b]y sharing those stories, by listening and
talking, maybe we can develop a new conversation in Australia that is more inclusive and welcoming to those who have come here as refugees and asylum seekers” (location 210). The analysis of German migrant women’s experiences provided rich and powerful insights that transformed the women from anonymous migrants to real people. The results of this study may be beneficial for future immigration policy revisions or to better inform the greater community of the migrant experience in developing cultural identity and a sense of belonging in Australia.

**Research aims and questions**

The aim of project was to fill the gap in our understanding of post-World War Two German migrant women’s settlement experiences in Western Australia. To achieve this, I critically examined the women’s experiences in relation to their sense of cultural identity. I focused on the women’s engagement with Australian culture and how they navigated new ways of living. I was interested in whether the women integrated to the extent that: they felt Western Australia was their home, they continued to long for their country of origin, or they constructed multiple identities in an attempt to adapt to the new country’s culture whilst retaining their own German identity, resulting in cultural hybridity.

**Main question**

How did post-World War Two (1945-1973) German migrant women negotiate the Australian way of life, and how did this impact on their cultural identity?

**Sub-questions**

How do the women describe their experience of settling in Western Australia and did they develop a sense of belonging?

Can photographic images of the women’s portraits and personal mementoes represent the development or retention of their cultural identity?
CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The topic of post-World War Two German migrant women’s experiences of arriving in Australia, between 1945 and 1973, and the way they adapted to the new culture is a large and complex subject. This literature review provides a basic historical overview of the political, social and cultural conditions that German migrant women faced when coming to Australia, along with the impact that these conditions had on their cultural identity. The ways in which cultural identity may be represented through mementoes and whether the medium of photography can visually portray the women’s cultural identity are also considered. The first section examines the framework of migration in Australia through the White Australia Policy and government policy of assimilation of all migrants into the Australian way of life. These polices and concepts, which formed the general attitudes toward non-British immigrants arriving in Australia, are investigated to establish how they may have shaped German women’s settlement experiences. The second section analyses the theoretical perspectives of cultural and national identity against the experience of being a migrant in (Western) Australia. The act of migration, sense of displacement and the revision of one’s identity, home culture and beliefs (Hall, 1992, p. 310; Papastergiadis, 1992, p. 152) are considered against German migrant women’s experiences of arriving in Western Australia and the impact that political, social and cultural policies may have had on their identity. The final section discusses how mementoes can serve as physical representations of cultural identity. The use of photography to create a portrait symbolising cultural identity through personal memorabilia is also explored. The visual portrayal of cultural identity and hybridity and how different viewers interpret messages contained within an image are discussed in this section.

The literature in this area indicates that there is limited information available about post-World War Two German migrant women in Western Australia, in relation to other European migrants. Consequently, this study offers an opportunity to provide new information that would contribute to the State’s understanding of this migrant group.
Post-war migration in Australia 1945-1973

The end of World War Two had a dramatic impact upon Australia’s immigration policies. Confronted with a declining population and fears of invasion by the Japanese, the Commonwealth government sought to increase Australia’s population and workforce which resulted in the amendment of the White Australia Policy to allow entry to select groups of non-British European migrants (Kunz, 1988, p. xvii; Murphy, 1993, p. 85; Peters, 2001, p. 8). The White Australia Policy, introduced in 1901, was “founded upon the principles of racial and cultural homogeneity” (Tavan, 2005, p. 11) and focused on creating a British-based, white Australia. The policy was revised to provide entry conditions for selected non-British European migrants through sponsorship, full-fare passage (Peters, 2001, p. 46) or assisted passage schemes for refugees and displaced persons (Haebich, 2008, p. 165; Kunz, 1988, p. xvii; Peters, 2001, pp. 17-18). These immigrants will have come from a diverse range of backgrounds, which will have influenced their assimilation experiences.

Historically, Western Australia had a low German population compared to other Australian states. This was in part due to the fact that subsidised immigration schemes for non-British immigrants were not available in Western Australia until after 1945 (Ludewig, 2016, p. 15). In 1952 Australia signed an immigration agreement with the West German government that granted entry to assisted and unassisted German migrants (Eubel, 2010b, p. 38; Mennicken-Coley, 1993, p. 116). The assisted passage scheme between Australia and West Germany operated from 1952 until 1962. German migrants entering Western Australia on an assisted passage scheme during this time were required to complete a two-year work contract (Ludewig, 2016, p. 78). During this time, migrant women mainly filled domestic roles and process jobs in factories or were housewives and mothers. Migrant women arriving on full fare passage were not restricted to contract conditions and could search for their own jobs, while sponsored migrants worked for the organisation that sponsored them (Peters, 2001, p. 173). These work conditions may have impacted on German migrant women’s family relationships and their ability to develop friendship networks and community connections in Western Australia (R. Berger, 2004, pp. 5-6).
Australia’s assimilation policy was designed to eliminate different migrant groups’ ethnic backgrounds with the aim of continuing a homogenous society (Murphy, 1993, p. 135; Tavan, 1997, pp. 80-81). In 1949, Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell’s aim was to “Australianise all our migrants… in as short a time as possible” (cited in Tavan, 1997, p. 78). In her discussion on assimilation, Haebich (2002) asserts that “[d]uring the 1950s and 1960s Australian Governments sought to translate the vision of a modern racially harmonious nation into a lived reality” (p. 62). On a state level, Wende (2010) reports that Western Australia “did not encourage their migrants to preserve their own culture and language” (p. 84). It is evident then that all non-British European migrants were expected to assimilate to the Australian way of life, a process that disregarded their ethnicity.

According to Markus and Taft (2015), these “extreme assimilationist views” (p. 237) were not adopted by all Australians. They argue that the 1950s saw the development of more contemporary views toward assimilation. For example, G. W. Brown, Chairman of the 1954 Citizenship Convention, states that “assimilation of newcomers was not a one-way process. The newcomers [have] much to offer as well as to receive” (cited in Markus & Taft, 2015, p. 238). In addition, Craig (1995) argues that in 1953 it, “[was] more common to hear the view that immigrant groups should be allowed, if not actively encouraged, to retain ‘the best of their cultural traditions’” (p. 92). She advocates that maintaining migrants’ cultural traditions runs parallel to the allowance of cultural groups (Craig, 1995, p. 92).

The concept of the Australian way of life features consistently in literature written on post-World War Two immigration and the assimilation processes. Invented in the 1940s and heavily promoted through the 1950s, the term has no distinct definition yet all non-British immigrants were expected to relinquish their own ethnic background and adopt the Australian way of life (Haebich, 2008, p. 93; Markus & Taft, 2015, p. 237; Murphy, 1993, p. 135; White, 1981b, pp. 158-161). The vagueness of the term is evident in the 1956 Citizenship Convention speech given by Sir Richard Boyer (1995) who states, “Putting [the Australian way of life] into words was one of the hardest tasks that I have ever had” (p. 70). According to Haebich (2008), the term relates to “lifestyle, family, home ownership, suburban living, mateship and a fair go for all” (p. 70). The adoption of the Australian way of
life was considered to be successful when immigrants became naturalised (Seitz & Foster, 1985, p. 415), the term given to citizenship. Conversely, those immigrants who did not take on citizenship were viewed as rejecting the Australian way of life and perceived as engaging in a “silent expression of hostility towards the host society” (Kunz, 1988, p. 216).

An enormous change in policy occurred in 1973 with the abolition of the White Australia policy. Additionally, the Citizenship Act was amended to establish equality for all people applying for Australian citizenship (Whitlam, 1985, p. 502). Gough Whitlam and the Labor administration affected changes to Australia’s immigration laws by removing legislation that was discriminatory stating that “there must be no discrimination on grounds of race or colour or nationality” (Whitlam, 1985, p. 498). The Labor government shifted the focus of immigration from building the size of the nation’s population to emphasising racial tolerance, providing assistance for migrants and reuniting migrants already in Australia with family members (Whitlam, 1985, p. 498). The new government policies were applicable to all migrants immigrating to Australia in 1973.

In order to establish the impacts of political, social and cultural conditions that German migrant women may have experienced when settling in Australia, I have explored in this section the historical framework of the White Australia Policy and assimilation expectations. German women from diverse backgrounds will have immigrated to Australia under different methods of passage and entry conditions. In Western Australia, employment conditions for women were predominantly domestic or factory roles. Alternatively, women occupied positions as the housewife and mother in the home. It has been widely acknowledged that all immigrants were expected to relinquish their cultural background and assimilate into the homogenous Australian way of life. All of these factors will have impacted upon the German women’s sense of cultural identity and may have influenced whether or not they came to identify as being Australian.
German migrant women’s cultural identity and sense of belonging in (Western) Australia

The analysis of German women’s migration experiences may provide insights into the ways in which they developed a sense of identity and belonging in Australia. When considering migrant cultural identities, Hall (1992) states that the act of migration requires a revision of the identity by drawing on cross-overs between cultural traditions (p. 310). Papastergiadis (1992) contends that “migration involves displacement from one social location to another” (p. 152) which leads the individual to question their own beliefs and home culture. Bhabha (1994) states that culture “create[s] a symbolic textuality, to give the alienating everyday an aura of selfhood” (p. 172). In migrants this sense of culture and self-identity becomes altered and disrupted. According to Bhabha (1994), “The transnational dimension of cultural transformation—migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation—makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification” (p. 172). This results in a separation from and prevents immediate access to unifying national identities of the ethnic culture (Bhabha, 1994, p. 172).

Both Bhabha and Hall speak of a hybrid cultural identity. Hall (1992) determines that hybridity occurs in people who have been “dispersed” from their country of origin and are required to adjust to the new culture “without simply assimilating to [it] and losing their identities completely” (p. 310). For Bhabha (1990) hybridity is not about the merging of the two original cultures but instead “hybridity to me is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge” (p. 211). In her examination of immigrant women, R. Berger (2004) reports that they developed a “fluid sense of identity or ‘multiple identities’” (p. 194). In her study on German immigrants in Western Australia, Wende (2010) determines that the participants identified as being either German or Australian; as predominantly one culture or the other; as having “melded” the two cultures; or as having developed an altogether different identity (pp. 174-176). These findings display the complexity of cultural identity and its various perspectives.

In his discussion on national identity, Hall (1992) asserts that the country that we are born into provides a form of identity through the construction of national narratives, myths and traditions that function as a sense of collective belonging (pp.
Similarly, Anderson (1991) contends that all nations are formed of “imagined communities” because members of a country carry an image of national rapport and comradeship despite never meeting most of their fellow countrymen (p. 6). This construction of national narratives and myths is evidenced in Australia’s creation of national symbols of family and lifestyle in an attempt to create a unified, assimilated nation (Haebich, 2008, pp. 85-86). In the 1940s through to the 1960s, women’s role in the Australian way of life consisted of two major identities: housewife or mother, with strong consumer capabilities (Haebich, 2008, p. 98; White, 1981b, p. 165). It is possible that German migrant women, carrying their own national narratives, had to navigate this constructed Australian national identity in the process of renegotiating their identity.

A shaping factor in migrant experiences is the attitude of the host country toward the immigrant’s cultural background (Hatoss, 2006, p. 81). Expected to become indistinguishable from the British-migrant majority, immigrants from the Netherlands and Germany appear to have assimilated more effectively into Australian society than cultures from other European ethnic backgrounds (Muenstermann, 1997, p. 141; Tampke, 2006, p. 157). Faced with the pressure to adopt Australian cultural values, Vleeskens (1992), a Dutch child migrant arriving in the late 1950s, asserts that “we threw off our own culture and became invisible” (p. 191). Post-World War Two German migrants display similar traits in casting off their cultural background. Johnston’s (1979) analysis of Western Australian German immigrants indicates that they assimilated well into the Australian way of life (p. 43). In her research, Muenstermann (1997) contends that high rates of German out-marriage accelerated the assimilation process (p. 143), along with rapid adoption of the English language (Jupp, 1994, p. 63; Münstermann, 2011, p. 418). Jupp states that German migrants are “perceived to have assimilated well” (cited in C. V. Anderson, 2015, p. 5), which, he argues, has rendered them as hidden or invisible within Australia. Correspondingly, Seitz and Foster (1985) contend that there is an “assumption that German immigrants are assimilated” (p. 422) due to high rates of naturalisation. The above literature indicates that further investigation into the reasons why German migrants wanted to assimilate so thoroughly is warranted.
There is reasonable consensus that attitudes toward German migrants were positive during the 1950s and 1960s, if stereotypical. In his evaluation of German migrants in South Australia, Schmortte (2005) reports that they were seen as “industrious and loyal people” (p. 532), while in Queensland Hatoss (2006) contends that German migrants were “good working people” who were viewed as “valu[ing] the adoption of the cultural identity of the host community” (p. 83). Kaplan’s (1994) analysis of public media opinion of German immigrants determines that they were viewed as “industrious” and “hardworking”, potentially due to positive stereotypes reflecting on earlier periods of German immigration within Australia (p. 98). In regards to women’s roles, Eubel (2010a) states that “the stereotype of the good German housewife and mother” (p. 750) was enforced as late as 1961, as is evidenced by an Australian immigration officer stating, “The German girls are really nice. We admire them in particular because they are good housewives and mothers!” ('Mister Walker' cited in Eubel, 2010a, p. 750).

Contrary to the positive stereotypes, there were negative perspectives towards Germans. Seitz and Foster (1985) argue that German migrants experienced strong negative attitudes due to World War Two, and that many Germans felt negative connotations of shame and guilt in relation to their own cultural identity (p. 423). Hatoss (2006) finds that negative Australian reactions toward German migrants, especially in the 1950s, resulted in German migrants attempting to become invisible through removing their culture and language in the public sphere (pp. 90-91). In Western Australia, Peters (2001) reports that German migrants “were not well received” (p. 218), while Johnston’s study of immigrants in Perth determines that German migrants “suffered the highest discrimination rate” (Cited in Wende, 2010, p. 101) as a result of World War Two. Therefore, German migrants embraced assimilation as a means of forgetting the past and any associations with the Nazi regime. Assimilation provided the opportunity of a new identity (Johnston, 1979, p. 44; Münstermann, 2011, p. 142). Tampke (2006) contends that, when compared to other immigrant cultures, “the Germans assimilated too readily into the Australian lifestyle” (p. 176) resulting in a lack of distinct German culture within the Australian landscape.
Examination of the theoretical concepts of cultural identity through authors Bhabha, Hall and Papastergiardis establish that national and cultural identities are narratives constructed through the stories and myths of imagined communities. For migrants, the idea of home or belonging may be tied to their ethnic background or evolve over time to include the new host country’s ideals, thereby forming a hybrid identity. This means that German migrant women may have engaged in a process of renegotiating their identity. The literature indicates that German immigrants showed a propensity to adopt the Australian culture in an effort to forget their past. This has fostered the perception that Germans assimilated well into Australian society. Despite these conditions, authors R. Berger and Wende affirm it is possible that German women may have retained links to their ethnic traditions and simultaneously formed an emotional attachment to Australia. Alternatively, the women may identify with one dominant culture or identify as having an identity that reflects neither culture. German migrant women’s roles as predominantly wives and mothers combined with high assimilation has resulted in this group lacking visibility. As few texts investigate the aspect of cultural identity in relation to this group, further exploration into this area is warranted.

Photographic representation of cultural identity through mementoes

The representation of cultural identity through the media of photography and material objects presents a new and exciting way of looking at cultural identity. This project has a creative component and as such this section outlines the significance of mementoes and the meanings migrants may attach to these objects. It investigates the expression of cultural identity through photography, and addresses ways of reading the photographic image.

Mementoes are material objects that have acquired new and complex meanings that extend beyond their physical representation and often stand for a person, place or event (Gordon, 1986, p. 137; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005, p. 32; Stewart, 1998, p. 136). Hoskins (1998) defines objects that carry personal meaning as a “biographical object” (p. 11). Similarly, Boym (2001) states that personal souvenirs may represent a “fragmentary biography” or “collective memory” of the
Memorabilia and souvenirs carry narratives that are attached to the owner and cannot be replicated (Stewart, 1998, p. 136). For people who have lost their home due to extreme circumstances (Parkin, 1999, p. 304) or feel a disparity between their cultural identity and that of their new host country (Pechurina, 2011, p. 104), material objects can serve to create a sense of self or home (Marcoux, 2001, p. 72; Parkin, 1999, p. 304; Pechurina, 2011, p. 104). In her study of Italian migration, Baldassar (2011) states that mementoes can serve as physical surrogates for “the spirit of the longed-for people or place” and include iconic items such as “traditional handcrafts (bedcovers, crocheted doilies, lace)” (p. 183). Photographs can also be used as surrogate objects in place of a person, event or place (Sontag, 1977, p. 155), thereby functioning as “a memento from a life being lived” (J. Berger, 2013, p. 53). Pechurina and Boym examine personal material objects in relation to Russian immigrants’ sense of cultural identity, in the United Kingdom and America respectively. According to Pechurina (2011), “some objects become diasporic products through which deteritorialised [sic] migrant communities can both express and maintain their identity” (p. 99), while Boym (2001) states that immigrants’ homes become “a personal memory museum” (p. 328). It is evident that mementoes are part of a narrative that is intricately tied to the owner and the place or person that the object represents. These objects may portray in physical form a sense of cultural identity and home when that space no longer exists.

The medium of photography visually records material objects, people and moments in time. It stands to reason then that photographing mementoes can portray narratives of identity. An example of this is photographer Bertien van Manen’s body of work, *Give me your image* (2006a), which explores history and culture through other people’s photographs and personal material objects (Dykstra, 2005, para. 5). Dykstra (2005) asserts that van Manen’s photographs examine “visual manifestations” of culture (para. 1). The placement of printed photographs amongst personal objects illustrates complex narratives of identity via “a process of connecting people to places and identities to people” (Wombell, 2006). This is evident in the photograph *München 2004* (van Manen, 2006b) (Figure 1) in which time collapses as the various mementoes and material objects convey different periods in time (Wombell, 2006). Consequently, van Manen creates a new image that
conveys a narrative and identity that is vastly different to that of the original photograph.

Figure 1: Bertien van Manen, (2006b), München 2004, photograph.
(Exception to copyright. Section: ss40, 103C. Exception: Research or study.)

As previously discussed, post-World War Two German migrant women arriving in Australia will have encountered assimilation policies. This may have resulted in the process of negotiating the structures of and in-between both cultures, thereby encountering Bhabha’s third space (1994, p. 38). It is possible to use visual media such as photography to capture elements of this process of engagement with two different cultures and any resulting hybridity. Photographs provide a space to examine the host and the home cultures and view the development of cultural identity in a new way. For example, video artist John Di Stefano (2002) explores “betweenness”, the negotiating of spaces between two cultures, which may or may not result in hybridity (p. 40). Similarly, Mangalanayagam (2015) analyses hybridity through the medium of photography and video arts. In relation to her photographic work, Mangalanayagam (2015, p. 176) states:

It is not a ‘real’ space but it is a virtual space for contradictory meanings created in between photographer, photographed and viewer. It is a space where these
contradictions and conflicts can be addressed, a space where viewers can disseminate their own identifications without having to take side of being one or the other category, a space where I as an artist, in-between black and white constructions, can concentrate on hybridity as a process between identifications rather than a category or another construction. It opens up a space for discussion.

These two artists’ examples indicate that it is possible to visually portray the results of hybridity and the process of addressing different cultural identities. The messages contained in photographs will be interpreted differently depending on the viewer and their cultural and historical background. Therefore, understanding the numerous influences that viewers bring to reading an image is an important aspect of working with and producing photographic representations of cultural identity.

While the photographic representation of cultural identity is possible, how a photograph is read depends upon the meanings contained within the image and the viewers’ own interpretation, based on their cultural background and lived experiences (Pink, 2007, p. 68; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 49). In his analysis of reading the photograph, J. Berger (2013) states that photographs are ambiguous as they contain messages about the event depicted yet also present a gap between the event and the time the image is viewed, which requires invention to fill the gap (pp. 62-63). Barthes’ theory of semiotic analysis further defines this message system. He asserts that the photographic image contains messages, which he refers to as denoted and connoted meaning (Barthes, 1982, p. 197). The denoted message is the literal meaning, while the connoted message contains “social, cultural and historical meanings” (p. 20) that add meaning to the denoted person or object (Barthes, 1982, pp. 196-197; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009). Additionally, Barthes (1982) maintains that myths of cultural ideologies and values can be conveyed through connotative meaning, such as stereotypes about culture (p. 197). This means, for example, that people participating in a visual ethnographic project will apply a different interpretation to photographs they are portrayed in, compared to other viewers, because they will understand both the denoted and connoted messages within the image (Pink, 2007, p. 68). Other viewers of those same images will draw on their own connoted messages and may “engage with the imaginary” (p. 47) to construct the photographs’ meaning (Di Stefano, 2002). This examination shows that
photographs carry messages that will be interpreted differently by different viewers, depending on their cultural, historical and lived experiences.

The concept of the home space and subsequently attached memories of home may be displayed through personal mementoes. Authors such as Baldassar, Parkin and Pechurina establish that cultural identity can be represented through personal mementoes that may act as surrogates for a place, person or time that can no longer be accessed. Critical consideration of photographer Bertien van Manen’s work assists in determining that it is possible to creatively portray aspects of people’s cultural identity through the use of mementoes and the photographic image. Artists Di Stefano and Mangalanayagam affirm that visual representation of hybridity is possible. Examination of how a photograph is read, by authors Pink, Sturken and Cartwright, finds that the interpretation depends upon the meanings as deciphered by viewer, based on their cultural background and personal experiences.

Conclusion

The literature in this review establishes the political, social and cultural frameworks and historical attitudes toward immigration in post-World War Two Australia. However, it is apparent that many of the issues are examined against a framework of immigration and assimilation policies and pre-determined cultural markers. This approach ignores the experiences of real people’s settlement experiences and the varying perspectives of the individual. This is where ethnography and the gathering of life histories in relation to cultural identity can play a part. I contend that key information specific to the identification of Western Australian German migrant women’s sense of cultural identity and belonging have been obtained through the results of this thesis, thereby contributing to the current core body of literature. The portrayal of German women’s cultural identity through mementoes and photography adds new dimensions to the current literature on the interpretation of cultural identity.
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

My project is composed of two parts: a thesis and supporting creative photographs. The objective of the research was to critically examine post-World War Two German migrant women’s experiences of settling in Western Australia, the ways they navigated the Australian way of life, and the impacts on their sense of cultural identity. This study focused on the women’s lived experiences which were analysed against the theoretical framework of cultural identity, hybridity and national identity. This theoretical perspective was applied to ascertain what changes occurred in the women’s cultural identity and whether or not they developed a sense of belonging through the process of navigating the Australian way of life. A new ethnographic approach was applied to the thesis component and the findings are presented in a creative narrative format. Taking a narrative methodological approach afforded an alternative way of engaging with the results and allowed for a deep understanding of the participants’ experiences and cultural identities. For the photographs, the aim was to visually represent the German migrant women’s cultural identities through mementoes, the presentation of which was a diptych photo-narrative format. A visual ethnographic approach to photographing the women and their selected memorabilia presented the possibility of a fresh perspective for analysing cultural identity.

Theoretical framework

The lens of cultural theorists Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha have been applied to the examination of the cultural identity and sense of belonging experienced by the German women interviewed for this study. Hall (1990) states that cultural identity can be viewed from at least two different perspectives. The first position views cultural identity as being composed of a shared culture, ancestry and historical experiences creating stable, constant points of reference and meaning resulting in a sense of “oneness” (p. 223). The second position acknowledges the similarities a culture may share but also recognises the “critical points of deep and significant
difference” (Hall, 1990, p. 225) that serve to illuminate what the culture may become. As such, cultural identity is not fixed; it is developed through shared histories and cultural codes that undergo constant transformation to become something new.

Bhabha (1990) defines identity through the theory of cultural hybridity. Hybridity occurs when we are confronted with a new situation that requires rethinking old cultural ideas and principles, and converting and extending these concepts to allow new structures of authority to emerge (p. 216). According to Bhabha (1990), the hybrid identity is constructed through processing the representations of cultural identification, such as social, political and racial identities, and ideas surrounding our ethnicity and history. These representations are open to constant translation meaning they can be replicated, simulated and transformed into a new version of the original idea (pp. 210-211). It is through negotiating these old and new cultural representations and allowing them to create something new, a space between the two, that the third space emerges (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). Therefore, how we view our identity in relation to these elements and the ways in which we discern the space of the Other—the new culture encountered—contributes to the development of cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211; Hall, 1996, p. 6).

For much of the twentieth century national identity formed a large part of our cultural identity. The nation we are born into provides a structure for defining ourselves. We may view ourselves as being Australian, Chinese or Indian, however, this labelling is symbolic in nature, a way of coding ourselves, and can be changed (Hall, 1992, p. 291). According to Hall (1992), national identity is a construct created to convey meanings about the nation through narratives, traditions, symbols and myths (pp. 293-295). Similarly, Anthony D. Smith (1991) asserts that “national identity is an abstract and multidimensional construct that touches on a wide range of spheres of life and manifests many permutations and combinations” (p. 144). Benedict Anderson’s (1991) view that “the difference between nations lie in the different ways they are imagined” (p. 6) also corresponds with Hall’s theories. Bhabha (cited in Hall, 1992) supports these definitions stating that “Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind’s eye” (p. 293). Hall (1992) argues that in our globalised world, identity
is not fixed to a national ideal, rather it is conceived to be in a state of continual change and transformation achieved through interaction with the external world, encounters with cultural representations, and then processed by personal, internal narratives (p. 277). In summary, these discussions indicate that our national identity can change depending on the narratives we are exposed to, and that through engagement with the host country’s traditions, stories and myths we can recreate our own cultural and national identity.

In Australia, a strong national identity was portrayed through the Australian way of life, an identity constructed in the 1940s and actively promoted throughout the 1950s (Haebich, 2008, pp. 85-86; White, 1981a, p. 158). At this time it was expected that migrants would relinquish their cultural background and assimilate into the new host society. German women immigrating to Australia between 1945 and 1973 may have needed to adjust their personal internal narratives as they navigated their new external world and develop new ways of representing themselves and their identity. Merging into a new culture may have required the women to “inhabit at least two identities, to speak two cultural languages, [and] to translate and negotiate between them” (Hall, 1992, p. 310), thus developing hybrid cultural identity.

The application of these theoretical perspectives to this study endeavoured to ascertain whether post-World War Two German migrant women adapted to the Australian way of life, and establish what cultural representations the women may have used to define their identity. This perspective has been used to analyse whether the women “translated” (Hall, 1992, p. 310) their experiences to feel that they belonged simultaneously to more than one home, and whether they were able to engage in new cultural meanings and discourses, thus experiencing a third space (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211).

**Methodological approach**

Two ethnographic approaches were applied to this project. The first methodology was new ethnography (also known as narrative ethnography), as defined by Paula Saukko in *Doing research in cultural studies* (2003). The second methodology utilised was Sarah Pink’s theories of visual ethnography in her book

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Doing visual ethnography (2007). These methodologies informed the in-depth interview and photographic processes that formed part of this study.

Saukko (2003) states that new ethnography defines itself from other ethnographic methodologies through its “commitment to be ‘truer’ to lived realities of other people” (p. 56). Narrative ethnography, according to Goodall (2004), is “a cross-disciplinary communication project aimed at re-establishing the centrality of personal experience and identity in the social construction of knowledge” (p. 187). This aim of focusing on the other person’s experience is achieved through being aware of shifts between the perspectives of the researcher and the person being interviewed. The process requires “analyzing the other [person’s] experiences by reflecting on how they are similar to, and different from, our own [experiences]” (Saukko, 2003, p. 57) and then faithfully representing the lives of the people interviewed. Saukko (2003) asserts that when applying new ethnography methodologies researchers need to be aware of their own perspectives and the similarities and differences between themselves and the people they interview (p. 57). Goodall (2000) further defines new ethnography as the production of creative narrative accounts of communication and culture combined with personal, self-reflexive narratives (p. 79). Using creative non-fiction techniques allows for the representation of real lived stories (Goodall, 2008, pp. 22-23). The application of a new ethnographic approach facilitated an awareness of my own perspectives and those of the people that I interviewed. New ethnographies are “intensely personal, saturated with self-reflexivity, emotive laden, evocative, often political, and concerned with social justice” (Herrman & DiFate, 2014, p. 4) requiring an approach that encourages attempting to present the world in the way the other person sees it. With these considerations in mind, I focused on a small group of participants with the purpose of gaining rich contextual information. The incorporation of “personable, reflective and prose-like modes of writing” (Saukko, 2003, p. 58) enabled me to represent the women’s experiences in a way that they felt replicated their perspectives on their identity.

My project included photographs of the German women that were interviewed and the production of these images incorporated a visual ethnographic approach. Pink (2007) stresses the importance of understanding the methodology of
ethnography, which can also be applied to visual images, so as to be aware of the different meanings that may be contained within an image (p. 52). Pink (2007) defines of ethnography as:

    a process of creating and representing knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) that is based on ethnographers’ own experiences… [and] should aim to offer versions of ethnographers’ experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced. (p. 22)

    In the development of visual texts, Pink (2007) states that “there are no fixed criteria that determine which photographs are ethnographic” (p. 67). This means that any photograph can be interpreted to have ethnographic value, the interpretation of which is subject to change depending on the person reading the image. As result, it is important that researchers are aware that the “ethnographicness of photography is determined by discourse and content” (Pink, 2007, pp. 66-67). Pink (2007) advocates the importance of “researchers being aware of the theories that inform their own photographic practice, of their relationships with their photographic subjects, and the theories that inform their subjects’ approaches to photography” (p. 69). I applied a reflexive approach to taking photographs of the women I interviewed and their memorabilia. This assisted me in analysing the photographic process and the image content, and developed my awareness of the subjectivity in visual texts.

    The application of these research methodologies allowed me to effectively record and analyse the interview participants’ responses to my research questions and present the information using written and visual texts. The combination of these methods resulted in representation of the women’s experiences and cultural identities in a way that closely resembles their own perspectives on these areas.

**Participants and recruitment**

    My aim was to analyse the life histories of a small group of German migrant women through the application of a new ethnographic approach using qualitative single in-depth interviews. This section explains the recruitment process and the final sample size. This research project was approved by the Edith Cowan University WAAPA/SAH Ethics Sub-Committee.
Four German women who immigrated to Western Australia between 1945 and 1973 were the participants in this study (Table 1). They were recruited using the informal method of contacting friends and work colleagues through social media and email to source potential interview subjects (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, p. 202). Permission was obtained to conduct radio interviews and I was interviewed by multicultural radio station 6EBA to talk about the study and promote the search for interview participants. Additionally, I employed a formal approach sending an information letter to the German migrant ethnic cultural organisation, the Rhein-Donau Club, to find interview participants. The formal method of recruitment yielded no participants. The informal method combined with the utilisation of snowball sampling, whereby existing contacts recommended the study to friends, family and acquaintances (Branley, Covey, & Hardey, 2014, p. 4), was the most effective method of participant recruitment and yielded the best results. Women interested in participating either contacted me directly or gave permission for snowball contacts to pass on contact details to me. All women who expressed interest in participating received an information letter (Appendix A) explaining the aims of the project and a consent form (Appendix B) requesting that they agree to the interview and photography processes (Appendix C). All participants were offered the option of being de-identified. They were free to withdraw from the project at any time, and without penalty, should they decide that they did not wish to be identified through the use of photography, or for any other reason. To participate in the study, participants needed to be women of German nationality who immigrated to Western Australia between 1945 and 1973. The women interviewed were aged between 73 and 88 years of age and arrived either by ship or plane. Three women arrived directly into Perth by plane. One woman arrived on a ship that did not stop at Fremantle and docked in Melbourne. She caught the train from Melbourne to Perth. All four women nominated to be identified in the study.
Table 1: Participant demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth year</th>
<th>Immigrated</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Transport method</th>
<th>Age in 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johanna</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>Ship</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frauke</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>Plane</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisela</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>Plane</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanne</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>Plane</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research methods

Interviews

I commenced my documentary research by looking at oral histories accessing sources such as archival material relevant to the timeframe, which was available through the State Library of Western Australia and the Ancestry.com database. This preliminary work was used to supplement the interview data.

In accordance with a new ethnographic approach (Saukko, 2003), I organised in-depth interviews to be conducted in the women’s homes, at a time that best suited them. Interviews were conducted in the home so that the women would feel comfortable and relaxed in their surroundings, and to provide easy access to their mementoes, which featured in the photo-narratives. Interviews did not commence until after I had obtained completed written consent forms. All interviews were recorded using a digital audio recording device to be later transcribed by myself. The interviews were guided by the use of open-ended questions (Appendix D) to prompt the women toward open discussion about their immigration and settlement experiences. I kept a reflective journal to record my thoughts and observations after each interview as part of the process of identifying my own personal ways of viewing the world, the participants’ viewpoints and whether there were any points of alignment or difference. Each of the women were given a professionally printed 10 inch x 12 inch portrait of themselves as a token of appreciation for their participation in the study.
Each woman participated in three interviews conducted on three separate occasions, over several weeks (Appendix E). Each interview lasted no longer than two hours. The first meeting consisted of in-depth interviews regarding the women’s settlement experiences and sense of belonging in relation to their cultural identity. The second meeting involved taking photographs of the women and the mementoes that they nominated as representing their cultural identity. The women were asked how these mementoes symbolised their identity. The final meeting comprised showing each woman the diptych photo-narrative to gather individual responses to the photograph to establish whether or not the image accurately portrayed her cultural identity in visual form.

Prior to conducting each interview, I discussed the topic with each of the women and encouraged them to ask questions about the study. At the first interview, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, should they wish to do so. Each person was informed that they had the option to be de-identified in the text but that they may be identifiable through the photographic narrative component of the study. Once the women signed the consent forms signifying their agreement to the research terms, the first interviews formally commenced. All of the women participated in one in-depth interview that was directed by the interview guide. Questions were open ended to stimulate discussion and promote a conversational environment that allowed for prompting and expansion on topics when necessary. This process aligned with the methodological approach consisting of gathering information through a focussed discussion and following up on points for clarity, where required, while allowing for expression of events in their own way (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, pp. 205-206; Sherman-Heyl, 2001, p. 369). Rapport was established in two ways: first through asking participants initial questions relating to their immigration to Australia including the year they arrived, how old they were, their reason for migrating, and where they first lived upon arrival; and second through the use of supportive actions such as smiling and nodding encouragingly, and using remarks that showed understanding or alignment with the discussion topic (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, p. 206). The interview progressed to asking participants to describe their settlement experiences, including interactions and engagement with Australian customs and culture, knowledge and awareness of the Australian way of life, women’s roles as housewives and mothers,
employment and social network connections, and how connections were maintained to their German identity. In the final stage of the interview participants were asked to describe their cultural identity in 2016. Following this interview structure allowed for probing and clarification of information, where necessary, whilst keeping the conversation engaging and focused. At the end of each interview, the women were thanked for their time and participation.

**Photographic narrative**

The creative photographic component comprised of taking two photographs: a portrait of each woman plus a photograph of memorabilia that was determined by the owner to convey their cultural identity. This diptych photo-narrative was intended to be read as one image: a portrait of the person’s cultural identity. To create the diptychs, I drew on Sarah Pink’s (2007) theories of visual ethnography. At the end of the first interview, I organised a second meeting to photograph the women and their mementoes. I discussed with the women selecting material objects and mementoes that signified their cultural identity and encouraged them to ask questions. All photographs were taken at the women’s homes to ensure maximum comfort and easy access to their mementoes. At the second meeting, prior to taking photographs, I explained the photographic processes and discussed the women’s preferred locations in the home for the portraits to be taken. The women had the opportunity to talk about their mementoes, prior to the photographs being taken, which provided an opportunity for them to ask more questions and revise their choice of selected memorabilia, as occurred on two occasions. These discussions served to inform as well as create awareness in myself of the women’s nervousness about being photographed. By taking the time to explain the process, I was able to establish a rapport and create a relaxed atmosphere. The mementoes were photographed first and the women’s portraits were taken second. The women were then asked to describe how their selected mementoes symbolised their German and/or Australian identities. The photographic sessions ranged between 60 and 90 minutes.

I used an analogue Asahi Pentax 6x7 medium format camera to take the portrait photographs and a Lumix GF2 digital SLR camera to photograph the mementoes. I chose to use the analogue camera for the portraits because the 105mm F2.4 lens provides a very shallow depth of field that is suited to portrait photography.
The focal point is sharp on a small specific focus area and the remaining sections of the image are then softly blurred. Additionally, the use of professional 120 colour film produces a deep colour richness in photographs, particularly when printed. The 120 film was developed by a professional print lab and I scanned the negatives to create a digital negative. The high standard of the film quality and images meant that only minor photo editing using Photoshop, such as cropping and slight colour adjustment, was required. I emailed each person their portrait images to choose one photograph that they liked best, to be printed. This process was performed to generate interest in the diptychs and create trust in my photographic expertise (Pink, 2007, p. 73). The nominated photograph was then professionally printed in a 10 inch x 12 inch format on art stock paper. The Lumix digital SLR was used for the mementoes so the images could be checked for correct exposure, blur and framing at the time of taking the photographs. The memento images also underwent minor photo editing using Photoshop. Photographs of the women’s mementoes and their portrait were selected based on composition, framing, lighting, colour and how well the paired images worked to create a diptych that best conveyed each woman’s cultural identity.

I returned for a third meeting with the women to show them the final diptych photo-narrative image. I explained that the diptych was intended to be read as one image, that of a portrait of their cultural identity. The women were asked to respond to their ‘portraits’ and describe their impressions looking at a visual representation of their cultural identity in relation to two cultures: German and Australian. They were also asked to comment on whether or not they felt the photo-narrative was successful in depicting their cultural identity. These final images were shown to the women on a laptop computer. The final meetings ranged between 30 and 60 minutes.

**Data analysis**

After all interviews had been conducted, a transcript of the recorded interviews was drafted verbatim, including pauses and laughter. Adopting a collaborative interview approach (Sherman-Heyl, 2001, p. 376), the women were provided with a copy of their interview transcript, either by email or post depending
on their requested format, for approval and comment. This process allowed for minor changes, such as grammatical errors, to be made. Additionally, all four women provided clarification on the translation of expressions and ideas from German to English.

Thematic analysis was applied to the interview transcripts to identify key patterns and themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79; Longhurst et al., 2008, p. 93). Major themes for analysis were determined from the research questions and subsequent coding of the data revealed sub-themes and patterned responses occurring across all the participants’ experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Based on the three research questions, a thematic analysis of the transcripts was performed using the NVivo software program. The three major themes of focus and corresponding sub-themes relating to the historical, political and cultural frameworks of the study are discussed in Chapter 4.

Additionally, narrative analysis of the women’s accounts was performed to identify major event structures. The details of these event structures provided context and understanding of what occurred. Narrative analysis was conducted to identify points in the women’s accounts that indicated their perspective and evaluation of the events discussed. This method of analysis aligned with new (narrative) ethnographic methodology by providing “access to the textual interpretive world of the teller” (Cortazzi, 2011, pp. 384-385).

**Writing the Cultural Identity Narrative Accounts**

Once the primary data had been analysed, I used narrative conventions to present the women’s lived experiences in a storytelling format. The purpose of this was to enable the telling of multilayered stories that conveyed each person’s reality, in relation to their cultural identity (Cortazzi, 2011, p. 385; Hannigan, 2014; Saukko, 2003, pp. 57-58). The scope of the narrative accounts focused on the results of the thematic analysis of the women’s transcripts (see Table 2). To understand the women’s experiences through their individual voices, I constructed the narratives using only words from their transcripts and combined sections and sentences that contained rich points of cultural knowledge, which aligned with new (narrative)
ethnography conventions (Goodall, 2000, p. 108). As part of the composition process, I included observations of verbal cues, gestures and descriptions of the interview settings, as well as observations from my reflective journal, to provide a sense of the present and the past within each narrative. The narrative accounts presented in Chapter 3 also contain the women’s diptych portraits and a discussion of the personal meanings applied to the chosen mementoes. Through piecing together each woman’s account of settling and living in Australia, I aimed to construct multilayered narratives that reflected their cultural identity as they saw it. Continuing my collaborative approach (Sherman-Heyl, 2001, p. 376), I met with the women individually so they could read the narrative account of their experiences. I sat with the women while they read their stories. This approach provided them with an opportunity to offer feedback and have any questions answered immediately. I considered this a crucial step in ensuring that the constructed narratives accurately reflected the women’s experiences and viewpoints and that no misrepresentation occurred. This final meeting lasted approximately 60 minutes.

**Limitations**

The new ethnographic methodology applied to this project involved the collection of life histories through interviews where participants recalled their individual lived experiences. These personal testimonies were shaped by the importance the individual placed on their experiences (Sherman-Heyl, 2001, p. 369) and the collective memory of the community they lived in (Wall, 2010, p. 380). Life histories are composed and constructed through the narrative and point of view of the person telling the story and as such are subjective, variable and to some extent artificial (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, p. 195; Plummer, 2001, pp. 399-401). During the collection of life histories, individuals may unconsciously add narrative conventions such as tension to make their story more dramatic, they may prioritise some memories over others and engage in selective recounting of memories (Plummer, 2001, p. 399), or their attitudes and emotions towards selected lived events may change over time (Hatoss, 2006, pp. 89-90). The person’s ability to recall lived events can be affected by physical or mental tiredness, or an inability to recall circumstances (Plummer, 2001, p. 402; Wenger, 2003, p. 113). Problems with
memory in older people, specifically those aged 80+, may include forgetfulness or cognitive impairment, however, it is important to note that those people aged between 60 and 80 interview similarly to younger adults (Wenger, 2003, p. 113). Ethnographic researchers are therefore limited to the subjectivities involved with conducting life history interviews and the associated variables, such as the interviewee applying narrative techniques, the unreliability of memory, and changes in the importance applied to the events after the passing of time.

Although it is not my intention to generalise, the small sample group limits the conclusions that can be drawn. I attempted to select participants with different backgrounds and social conditions to provide a heterogeneous sample. Due to the small sample size of my study, the opinions and circumstances of one individual interviewed may appear to carry more weight than others in the group. The sample size may be small, however, it is not my intention to represent a large demographic, rather to obtain rich detailed information about their experiences immigrating to and living in Western Australia, in relation to their cultural identity.
CHAPTER THREE: CULTURAL IDENTITY NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS

Introduction

Using narrative conventions, this section contains four narrative accounts that have been constructed from four German women’s immigration stories. The women’s words, obtained from the interview transcripts, were used to compose narratives that tell their past immigration and settlement stories coupled with their sense of cultural identity and belonging in Australia in 2016. The storytelling format allowed the women’s multilayered accounts to convey their experiences as they interpreted them, offering the reader a view inside the women’s lives. Each narrative account contains a diptych composed of the person’s portrait and a photograph of mementoes that represent their cultural identity. This diptych is intended to be read as one image: a ‘portrait’ of each woman’s cultural identity. The women were shown their cultural identity portraits and they commented in detail on the mementoes that they selected. This process revealed that these personal objects carried multiple stories and meanings far greater than their denoted purpose. The technique of combining storytelling conventions and a photo-narrative served to bring forth the human qualities of the women participating in this study. It provided an insight into “understand[ing] different lived worlds” (Saukko, 2003, p. 56) while simultaneously critically interrogating the concept of cultural identity of the four German women who immigrated to Western Australia in the post-World War Two era between 1945 and 1973.

Johanna, immigrated 1954, aged 26

I was introduced to Johanna through her daughter, Ramona, who contacted me saying that her mother was interested in telling me her immigration stories. Nervous about doing the interviews alone, Johanna requested that Ramona be present during all sessions. Stoneville, in the Perth Hills, was ablaze in spring colour when I first met Johanna at her home. She shyly invited me inside and we sat in the lounge room, Johanna in her favourite armchair that had a view of the garden, and me in a
chair next to her. Over the course of our meeting, Johanna’s shyness and nerves faded exposing a delightful sense of humour and an earnest recounting of her experiences in Perth.

Well, my husband came first, in 1953, to learn to be a pilot. They told him, in Germany, that there were opportunities here. I followed in 1954. We weren’t married then. We were in Australia when we married. Anyway, I first arrived in Melbourne because the ship didn’t come to Fremantle. There were five of us on that trip: Ingrid and Heinz, and another couple, and we became friends.

I tried to speak my first English on the boat coming over. They had English classes, but it wasn’t much good. I was determined to learn English because I wanted a job so bad. When we arrived, we all spent the night in Melbourne, which we were very happy about. We, all of us, wanted ham and eggs. That’s all we could say: ham and eggs! Two days later we got on the train and came to Perth. On the train, we worked as Kellner (waiters) but we did everything wrong. We set the tables all wrong. Then, when we got to Perth, three of us—myself, Ingrid and Heinz, we all started jobs straight away.

When we got to Perth, all I thought was, I need to earn money. I couldn’t speak English at the start and I became desperate because everywhere I went to apply for a job I had to use the little bit of English that I knew. I got a job as a waitress, but then she wouldn’t have me because I couldn’t speak English. I desperately, desperately wanted to speak English!

Tears formed in Johanna’s eyes as she recalled the event. After a long pause, during which she composed herself, she continued.

Then I went upstairs in a hotel to ask if they had any jobs. But, the woman, she passed me a pencil and I interpreted it as, ‘You can’t speak English.’ I was embarrassed. A few days later, there was an ad in the paper for a waitress and I thought, I’ll try there. And that was the same lady that had interviewed me just before! For the other job. And she put her arm round me, I’ll never forget, and she said, ‘Dear, you can stay now and I’ll give you an outfit.’

The people that were eating in hotels, they couldn’t just walk in, they had to be guests. And the guests knew I couldn’t understand what they said, so they put their finger on the menu. That’s how I went to the kitchen, with my finger on the menu, to the chef and said, ‘Dis. Dis.’

Johanna chuckled. ‘That’s all I could say. But, here I am.’

After I arrived, my husband and I lived in an area where there were about four or five boarding houses that were let. It’s where the freeway is now, just at the top of St Georges Terrace. In this particular boarding house, we all had only one room. It was not nice. We couldn’t lock up the room. We had to leave it open because the house
owner used to vacuum it. Then, I was walking down Hay Street to do some shopping and I saw the woman that lived in the room next door to me, passing on the other side, with my clothes on. She stole my clothes!

But, I didn’t have enough nerve to call the police—they were up and down the street all the time. I could have easily done that. But they were so anti-foreigners. Oh, we couldn’t even stand in front of the Schaufenster (shop window) because they kept coming and told us to ‘Carry on. Carry on. Don’t stop’. I thought I’d never have a right, by telling them, ‘That’s my clothes.’ *Alles war neu*—it was all new clothes that I had bought.

I was surprised that the police were so openly discriminatory toward migrants and could understand how intimidating this must have been. I asked Johanna about her experiences with ordinary Australians.

Some of them, they do a big turnaround. We couldn’t speak English, so we weren’t worth talking to. But others, they accepted one by face value. Not because you looked different or you spoke different. That had nothing to do with it. They would ask, ‘Where you from? Germany? Oh, interesting, interesting.’ They wanted you to say something in German. They just accepted you.

Johanna leaned forward and spoke conspiratorially.

I knew nothing about Australia before I came. I used to work in Karstadt, in Bremen, and the boss said, ‘You’ll be so disappointed!’ Then, I was getting a perm and the hairdresser, he said, ‘You’ll be so sorry you went because wild animals are running around.’ He was dinkum. He meant it.

She laughed. ‘But, I liked Perth, the warmth and the sunshine. My husband and I, we bought a car and went for outings. We just spent all our time on the beach at Scarborough. No, we weren’t sorry.’

When I returned to take the photographs, Johanna and Ramona gathered the mementoes and we positioned them on the coffee table. For her portrait, I photographed Johanna in her favourite armchair by the window. At our final meeting, Ramona made us all a cup of tea while Johanna looked at the diptych photo-narrative. Although she was in high spirits when I showed her the portrait, at times Johanna became distracted and vague when talking about the mementoes.
Well, to start with, that’s my husband. He is very German. It’s a pity you can’t meet my husband. He was a real charmer! He belonged to the Aero Club because he was doing his pilot’s licence, so automatically we were involved with and accepted by the people there. He worked at the Kwinana Refinery and he always had German people to work with him. It was very important to us to keep the German part alive. My husband and I always spoke German at home. I could only cook German stuff for my husband. He’d say, ‘I’m not eating Hammelfleisch (mutton).’

We built a house in Dianella and no sooner had we started to build when they started to build next door. And my husband said, ‘I’m not going to stay here. I’m going to find a platz (place) without neighbours.’ I don’t mind people, but my husband didn’t like many people around.

Johanna’s husband’s desire to be away from people reminded me of my own father. He too disliked being near people and constantly sought to live further and further away from town, which resulted in isolation for my mother and us kids. I asked Johanna if she ever felt isolated.

Oh, no. I’ve never been isolated. I’ve always had people, friends. Like you can see on the picture. That’s when I started at the refinery. My husband, he got the job first and then he made sure that I got a job.

The hand-written text under the photo reads: 1957 International Canteen Staff – Kwinana Refinery. Johanna pointed to one of the girls first, then to the others.

This one came over with me on the train from Melbourne. They were German, Dutch, Scottish. They were all international. Everything except English. There were so many people. They were all in catering. I was behind the counter just dishing out meals. Then the boss, he put
me in the shop there selling chocolate and all sorts of soft drink. And cigarettes. People used to buy cigarettes on the way out. And, one day, I had a redback spider in my uniform pocket!

Johanna gave a merry laugh. ‘Really! I put my hand in my pocket and felt something crawling. I knew it was a killer!’ She chuckled again at the memory.

Looking again at the mementoes photograph, Johanna pointed to one of the books. ‘I’ve got quite a few things about Bad Zwischenahn, where I was born. It’s a beautiful little place!’ She pointed to the book’s cover, ‘They’re all Bauernhäuser (farm houses).’

Ramona clarifies, ‘Lots of houses with thatched and shingled roofs. It’s also about quaint German villagey things.’

Johanna pointed to the left of the photograph, ‘Here’s the book Bremen Kaput. Everything is ruined. And all upside down. Bremen city, with the Dom (Cathedral), dates back to twelve hundred something.’

Ramona provided some additional information.

The Dom is in this huge cobbled marketplace. While it was being built, one of the builders fell off the spire. North spire, I think. Anyway, they shoved him in the cellar, and then some time later, somebody said, ‘Oh, what about Hans?’ Whoops! They went and found his body had kind of mummified. The cellar had lead in the walls. So, they started throwing all sorts of things in there to preserve them.

Johanna then pointed to the wooden statue in the back of the photograph. ‘Oh, that’s Roland. We’ve still got him. My sister and I, we always used to meet at the Roland. He’s so special to me because, well, he was not destroyed.’

Ramona offered extra details. ‘Historically, I think Roland was a knight. There’s a tall concrete statue of Roland in the middle of the medieval square, in Bremen.’

I asked Johanna whether she felt that the two photographs together showed her cultural identity, and she replied, ‘Oh, very much!’
Talking about her cultural identity in 2016 appeared to trigger conflict in Johanna. She seemed to have a clear opinion about her own identity but was hesitant at times to discuss the topic in detail.

‘I’ll always be German. It’s just the way I feel. I’ll never change. It’s just not possible.’

I asked Johanna what made her feel that way. After a lengthy silence she pointed to her midriff and said, ‘I just feel it. Just in there. It’s part of me.’

Johanna wrestled with verbalising an answer to whether she felt Australian in any way. Again, she was silent. She shook her head, ‘No. No, I’ve got to stay quiet.’

I reassured Johanna that there were no right or wrong answers, that cultural identity was personal. I wondered, however, if the current negative attitudes surrounding immigrants and refugees in Australia, covered widely in the media, had impacted on her reluctance to express her viewpoint.

‘It’s okay, you don’t have to feel Australian,’ I said gently and waited for her to continue.

‘I wouldn’t be happy if somebody called me Australian. I don’t think I’ve got the… real attitude like an Australian.’

Uncomfortable with the topic, Johanna turned to Ramona for help explaining.

My dad really didn’t like Australia or Australians because he experienced a lot of racism after the war. For example, when dad went for a job interview, for a pilot’s job, the guy asked where dad was from. He basically closed his file and said, ‘I’m not hiring you. If there’s another war, you’ll be the first to drop bombs on us.’ That would have probably been in the mid to late fifties.

And I think mum just developed that mind set from being with dad. I honestly do. Mum, I think you’d have been quite happy to be Australian, to be honest.

Johanna, more confident, took a sip of her tea before adding a final comment.

Now, the people here, they tell me that they’ve gone to Germany, and they say, ‘No, I don’t want to go again. It’s not friendly.’ I said, ‘Well could it be, maybe, because you don’t give them a chance to be?’ If they were friendly first, the Germans would be friendly back. Usually you’re friendly back. But, back then, in the fifties, I think we were too new. It was too soon.
Frauke, immigrated 1967, aged 28

It was a chilly winter morning when I first met Frauke at her home in Cottesloe. She is a slender, small framed woman with a spritely energy. Frauke welcomed me into her home and then led me out the back, through the garden and upstairs to her guest house where she assured me it was warmer, a more pleasant place to talk. It was a clear day and pale sun shone through the sliding glass doors onto the small wooden table where we sat opposite each other. After a few minutes of chatting, Frauke began her story.

I arrived in Australia in September 1967. I had met my husband in the February of that year in Edinburgh, where he had been teaching. I had gone back to see friends because that’s where I studied a Master’s Degree in English Literature. We fell in love very quickly and within ten days we decided we’d get married. We got married in Germany, in July, because we had to get all the papers together. In those days, the Australian Government actually paid me to come out here. So, I came like a twenty pound Pom!

Frauke laughed a big joyous laugh. We both laughed together.

I was a bit of a risk-taker and I loved the idea of a totally new experience in my life. I associated Australia with being very far away, very different and a very sunny country. And having fallen in love with an Australian, whom I thought was just absolutely wonderful, I associated everything about Australia with him.

So, we arrived in Perth in October and stayed with my husband’s parents in Mt Lawley and then I saw this very dilapidated house in Cottesloe and fell in love with it. The house was an old weatherboard house that had an old chip heater and a toilet out in the garden. So, we cleaned it up and moved there. It was all very romantic and very different from metropolitan life in Hamburg, which appealed to my romantic spirit.

My husband’s parents, both born in Australia, were second and third generation Australians. His brother was in Perth, and I had met his sister, who lived in Canberra. My husband’s family was so incredibly welcoming and kind and accepting. Although, it must also have been a bit of a shock to my husband’s mother to get this new daughter-in-law and, almost immediately, a grandson as well. But they were totally uncritical. I was part of that family. So, the concept of assimilation wasn’t something I was aware of because I was accepted without any question or criticism. To me, his family were the Australian way of life, and my new life.

At the beginning, what actually determined my life very much was our son and so I was part of a neighbourhood babysitting group. And they were all Australians. They came from England, Holland and
South Africa, but they were all Australians. I mean we all felt that since we were living in Perth, we were Australians. I was permanent the moment I put foot on Australian ground. I was on the electoral role and everything. In those days, to come here, you were immediately a kind of accepted part of Australia. Taking on the Australian culture wasn’t articulated. It wasn’t that we said, ‘Oh well, we had to leave our culture behind and become Australians.’ It wasn’t like that. It was all about babies. We were all within the same locality and would babysit in each other’s houses. We would also drop in to each other or we’d ring and say, ‘It’s such a lovely day, let’s go somewhere.’ It was all very informal.

In those days we had not a lot of money and we had all these little kids, which we then brought to each other’s houses. That was the thing about Australia, people didn’t have small flats, they had houses, so you could bring your kids along and you could have these dinner parties to which everybody brings something. The Australian way of bringing a plate. The first time I was invited I thought, ‘That’s really a funny thing to have to bring your own plate.’ Because I thought they didn’t have enough plates!

Predominantly life was being a mum and a wife. I was twenty-eight when I had my first child, and then at thirty-one I had a second kid. My husband went to university full time, and I had the meals ready for him, like a good old housewife. But I didn’t feel that it was anything that I didn’t want to do. It wasn’t a kind of coercion or limitation of what I wanted to do. Right from the start, I had the feeling I could do whatever I wanted to do and so it was very much a kind of pleasure life.

I also worked a little bit at UWA. First of all as a research assistant in the German and Education departments, and then relieving lecturers. Sometimes I would be an examiner for the Junior German students. So that was a connection to German and the German language but it was not consciously done, it just sort of happened. It never deteriorated into work. It was only a bit of fun on the side. I made almost no money from that kind of thing. But, it was a kind of stimulation because I did something that I knew I could do well. And, I could do it without impeding on any of my pleasures of being a mother.

As I listened to Frauke talk, her joy and happiness were palpable. I was buoyed by her recollections, and deeply relieved that she’d had positive experiences. My mother’s stories of life in Australia were darker and as such Frauke’s genuine happiness was unexpected. Her stories enabled me to view Australians in a different light. When the topic changed to discuss her German identity, Frauke became more sombre, the timbre in her voice dropped. The joy and infectious laughter were gone. She paused, sighed deeply. I waited for her to speak.
Being German is very much tainted by this whole Nazi thing and the Second World War, and the Jewish question, and so on. My generation, we were very politically aware of a progressive political stance to combat the past. We would go on demonstrations, and that was very much part of my identity. I felt very much that Germans had to fight for democracy and fight for freedom. Because I studied English, I went to England and I experienced tolerance and freedom there that I felt was very desirable for… anybody. So that was very much part of my German identity too, to think that we wanted that kind of tolerance in our society, that kind of acceptance, that kind of freedom.

For Germans in the first fifteen years after the war, it was very much about survival and rebuilding. We called it the ‘Acquisition stage’. Where everybody acquired things, because everything was destroyed. I mean Hamburg had been destroyed, so we lived in the rubble after the war. Then slowly people had a flat or house and started working to buy things. It was a kind of building up of a new existence. People didn’t talk much about the past. At all.

So, I think it was quite tough and post-war Germany was quite tough, and that’s part of my identity too. It was all very, very different from what an Australian experience would have been. I think my expectations of life were relatively low in comparison to what it might be now. So what I experienced in Australia was just paradisiacal in comparison to what I had expected my life to be.

When I met with Frauke two weeks later to take photographs of her chosen mementoes, she had set up an artful display on a table outside on the veranda. Frauke told me a little about her chosen mementos and afterwards I shot her portrait photographs on the veranda, despite the winter chill. The veranda was Frauke’s favourite place in the house and only later did I come to understand its deeper significance. For our final meeting, we once again sat in the sun-filled warmth of the guest unit while Frauke looked at diptych of her portrait and mementoes, and commented on what she saw.
The photo of Keith and myself is just where it all started, with our wedding in 1967. It was a very, very happy occasion and has been very happy for the last 49 years! These three bowls are the first things I ever bought when I was eighteen and moved into my first room and started cooking for myself. And they have been with me all my life! Then there’s my black leather coat, which was the first good, new garment that I bought with my first salary. It is now about 60 years old and I still wear it regularly.

I love the red and the acid black in behind it, with the picture of Hamburg reflecting the red as well. I think Hamburg and Perth are comparable cities because they’re both cities on the water. Both cities are very close to my heart. The red and the black are actually quite symbolic—the red is the love and the joy that has been prevalent in my life ever since I came to Australia. Whereas the black outside could be interpreted as the time that went before.

This is my favourite photo of our kids because it shows how our son is being quite lovely with our daughter. He’s got a kind of protective way of holding her hand and she was a very determined girl! Also, this photo shows very much the Australian lifestyle—the slightly unkempt lawn, the picket fence in the background and they’re both barefoot.

My dictionaries and Shakespeare symbolise very much my life as a teacher, interpreter and translator. The two languages are very much part of my life. Part of my cultural identity. To me, Shakespeare is the epitome of the search for the meaning of words, their connotations and their infinite possibilities. And my grandfather edited the collection of German Ballads, which I am a little bit proud of.

What is so nice about your photo is that it has a glow about it. A kind of warmth. Whereas this is quite stark and light, but I think that’s good too. Because I think that’s part of Australia. That kind of
relentless light. And you know, Keith said, ‘Oh, you know why do you have everything out on the veranda?’ And I think it’s because the light is very much part of our life here.

That’s why I actually like the white background and the weatherboard. Because that’s been my life ever since I came here. We’ve been living in the weatherboard house. David Malouf, he talks about his childhood and being in weatherboard house—I read that when I first came out here—and the fact that when you look through the gaps in the veranda boards, you see this mysterious space underneath. And I’ve always felt that there was this mysterious space underneath because every now and then you’d hear noises. And it might be a blue tongue lizard finding its way around and so on.

When we talked about her identity in 2016, Frauke was high-spirited and passionate in her response.

Well, I feel I’m a little bit schizophrenic in my identity because I do feel very Australian but I also don’t want to abandon my German identity. I’ve been going back fairly regularly in the last fifty years, particularly in the last sixteen years that I’ve retired. But, I’ve only just started my process to become an Australian citizen. Because before that the Germans made you give up your German identity in order to get an Australian passport. Now it’s possible to have both and I’ve just got the certificate that allows me to apply for Australian citizenship. It took a long time and I do feel a bit ashamed because I would have liked to do it straight away.

And two years ago, I was awarded Citizen of the Year for Cottesloe because I do a lot of voluntary work for Cottesloe. When they rang to tell me I said, ‘Are you aware of the fact that I’m not an Australian citizen?’ and they said, ‘Oh that doesn’t matter.’ I thought that was wonderful. I felt very honoured. And extremely pleased that they were so accepting of somebody like me. So, you know, it gave me this feeling of belonging.

But, my German identity is still there. Every time I go back to Hamburg and I go down to the harbour and I smell that totally incomparable smell of the Hamburg harbour, I feel, ‘This is me. This is part of me being down here.’ And, I still have good friends in Germany. We kept it up through all these years. First by letters and now by email. And sending each other photos. They come here and we go there, and their kids, they come here. So, there’s still a strong bond.

But, I probably identify more with Australian culture, and Australian people and my Australian life. I’ve become a bit of a greenie. I do feel very strongly about the environment. And some things that Australia does, like coal fire power stations, I get very excited about those sorts of things and I sign petitions, I make submissions. So, my 1960s political feelings about Germany have transferred to 2016 Australian environment issues.
Gisela, immigrated 1969, aged 26

I first met Gisela at her home in Cottesloe. She led me through her immaculate house that exuded an understated elegance and we sat at the dining table in her kitchen where I explained my project in more detail. Gisela was initially brisk and businesslike as she answered my questions, but as the interview progressed she warmed to the topic and openly shared her experiences.

Well, I’m not your typical immigrant. I was working in South Africa and I was leaving my job, returning to Europe. My cousin lived in Perth and he rang me on my last day on the ward and said, ‘You’re halfway here, why don’t you come?’ So, I did. First, I went back to Germany and arranged to get a working permit. It was dead easy. I was a trained nurse and midwife. I had trained in Scotland for five years, so that was internationally recognised. Plus, I learned to sort of speak English. I’d learned English at school. But the Scottish English that took me a long time!

Gisela laughed cheekily. We both laughed.

I arrived here in September 1969 with a working permit and lived with my cousin in South Perth. He was married to a local girl. I had a job within one week. I don’t call my arrival immigration because I was only going to stop off here and then go on to Singapore, Hong Kong and those mystic places you hear of in Europe. But, then I met my husband and that’s why I’m still here. It was really an adventure. I didn’t want to live in Germany. I didn’t like the way…

Gisela sighed deeply. Her light heartedness evaporated, she became serious before continuing.

…the Jews were always pushed into our faces and mind. Sure, my parents’ generation, but I was the next generation. I just wanted to get out. So, I just set off on an adventure. I never really thought about Australia. I knew absolutely nothing except that it was hot and dry. I knew that by getting a job I’d get to know the real Australia. Especially in the nursing profession. I got a job with Silver Chain which meant I worked in the community.

I met my husband two months after I arrived. We met at the opening of the Royal Perth Yacht Club. I thought the Australian way of life—if that involved sailing, sun, people who were laughing, looked so healthy—was a great way of life. Happy people. Europeans weren’t happy people. So here I was doing sails, the sun was shining, people were telling jokes, laughing, having a drink. I really thought it was a wonderful way of life.

I knew I had to settle into the Australian way of life but I can’t remember hearing the term. For me, it just meant everyday life with
my husband. He was a member of the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club (‘Freshie’). So, he was western suburbs, he was private schools. He’d done Duntroon. When I met him, he’d left the army and he was a chartered accountant. I arrived in September, met him probably in October, we got married the following January.

When I married my husband, I was entitled to a permanent visa. I do remember them trying to say, ‘Why don’t you just become an Australian?’ because it was the White Australia, and I was perfect. They always reckoned that the Germans were very good at assimilating. But, I wasn’t keen on it because I felt split. For a long time… I was more German than Australian. I was always divided. I didn’t want to let the German side go. Especially since I knew I’d be going back visiting the family. After my mother died, I did become an Australian citizen.

It was very hard for somebody coming from the outside and fitting into the western suburbs social life. Everybody knew everybody. They had gone to ‘kindie’ together, gone to school together. They knew each other’s background. The first questions if a stranger came into the circle were, ‘Where are you from? What do you do?’ Just to slot you in. I think they were very curious of where I came from. They were very welcoming and open-armed, however, only a few included me in their life.

Gisela was momentarily silent. ‘So that was… very hard for me. I just came from such a different background that I just couldn’t even imagine what their life had been like as children.’

Life wasn’t very social in Germany after the war. Family occasions—birthdays, christenings, didn’t happen until I was ten years old. I wasn’t very practiced at making friends. But, I did make two very good friends, one Australian and one from Tasmania. They were both very supportive and welcoming.

I knew if I was to make a life here I had to fit in. It wasn’t for me to analyse, criticise. I was desperate to feel at home somewhere. Scotland wasn’t home. I had left Germany. I was here and adopting the Australian lifestyle helped me feel at home.

We didn’t have a German culture when I grew up. It was all taken away after the war. We were occupied. Well, Germany was occupied. German identity was suppressed because what had German identity achieved? Two world wars! All it did do to me was that I felt guilty. A tremendous sense of guilt. Over what happened during the war. And that was fostered. You can’t really call that an identity, can you? That’s probably why I don’t feel German any longer.

A heaviness descended on the room as Gisela spoke. A clocked chimed from one of the rooms in the house. I recognised a familiar feeling of intangible guilt, a sense that being German was bad, acquired through my parents’ repeated
recollections of life in post-war Germany. It wasn’t my project’s aim to delve into such painful memories, so I re-focused the conversation to life in Perth in Gisela’s early years.

There’s a separation between the things you get included in with your husband and the things, you know, with the women. I had a very busy social life, but then I got pregnant. My daughter was born almost twelve months after we got married. And then… I became isolated. I think because I hadn’t this connection with the other girls, and I didn’t know what to do with the baby. And I couldn’t work because when your husband leaves home at seven o’clock in the morning and doesn’t return until nine o’clock at night, you have got a full time job. Apart from that, in 1971 we moved out to Halgania Way, out to ‘whoop whoop’. I did have visits but they were arranged. You couldn’t just drop in for a cup of coffee, which is what happened before. There was a lot of loneliness for me because Halgania Way, Carine Glades, was being built at that time. One street had been completed, with a little playground. Round about was still all bush. The tractors moved in and all you heard were these trees being removed and new houses going up. It was a lonely time going round and round the street, stopping at the playground and maybe having a ‘hi’ over the fence with somebody. I wasn’t happy. In 1974, we sold and bought here in Cottesloe, and I’ve been here ever since. Very much happier. When we married, we lived in Cottesloe. So, Cottesloe really was home. If Australia was home, Cottesloe was that.

When I met with Gisela two weeks later to take photographs, she’d nominated two paintings as having special significance to her cultural identity. They were mounted in two separate rooms, so I photographed her with the painting that she felt strongly represents her connection to Australia. For our final meeting, we sat once more at the kitchen table and Gisela was animated as she discussed her chosen mementoes and the diptych portrait.
That painting [right] is actually done by quite a famous painter, a neighbour of ours. That’s where I grew up, in Oldenburg, very close to Bad Zwischenahn. The landscape, it’s moorland, it’s very, very flat. The sky is entirely different. The spoons are from Bad Zwischenahn, which is a health spa village. There is a very old farm and one of the buildings was converted into a very traditional restaurant with wooden beams and big open fire place. The waiters, big burly men, were dressed in old local clothing, which was a chequered shirt, black breeches with leather suspenders, thick white knee-high socks and clogs on their feet. We’d always end up in the restaurant. Have an eel, which was the local delicacy. Eels are very fatty food. In order to digest them, we always drank a schnapps afterwards. This was a very old custom. The waiter would fill these pewter spoons to the brim with schnapps. You’d have to drown it in one go. Lick it. Then you had to put the spoon upside down and if there are any drops you’d have to pay for the next round. So, naturally, we learned to lick the spoon! I left Germany when I was about seventeen so that’s a connection with my youth.

That’s the first painting I bought here [left]. That was the way I perceived the Australian bush. Strange, foreign. Foreign creatures. Strange plants I’d never seen before. But shapes! Look at the trees. European trees, in the winter, not a leaf in sight—it’s all branches and stark. But here, you get shape all the time. My first trip home to Germany, after six years here, I was so excited. I stayed the summer months. By the time I left I was thoroughly bored. It was all green but there was no shape! I realised that Germany really wasn’t my home any longer. My memories didn’t serve me any longer. I’d been away for a long time. I’m comfortable with the landscape here now. I developed an eye for the differences in shapes and colour and so on.
Gisela considered the two paintings for a moment. She pointed to the painting on the left, ‘This is a belonging. The other one is a memory.’

I asked Gisela how she felt looking at a visual representation of her cultural identity and whether or not the photo-narrative portrait reflected a significant aspect her cultural identity.

Absolutely! I think it’s pretty accurate. There’s the landscape where I grew up in. Some of it. And some good memories of my youth. And then the painting very much represents the strange Australia I came to, the strange landscape which I’m now very fond of.

Gisela pointed first to the image on the right, then to the left, ‘Well, there’s the past, and there’s the present’. Still studying at her portrait, ‘I think it’s me too. In as much as it’s not cluttered. I don’t like clutter. I like individual things to talk for themselves.’

When I asked Gisela about her cultural identity in 2016, she became subdued. ‘I have to tell you that my husband died and I had a partner who was actually German. He passed away two, three years ago.’

I couldn’t imagine losing one partner, let alone two. ‘I’m sorry for your loss,’ I said softly. I waited to see if she would like to continue. After a pause, Gisela returned to telling her story.

We were together for twelve years. And I thought it was nice being reacquainted with my Germanness. We lived together, very happily. After he died, I thought, ‘Well, what am I going to do? I have to make myself a new life.’ I actually went back to my life prior of getting together with him. Because this is where I’ve got all my connections, still. And, I was very happy. I have to say, reconnecting with the Australian way of life, and the Australians: I liked them a hell of a lot better than the Germans.

I think it was because I really had grown away from being German and everyday Australian life took over. I feel comfortable here. I feel at home. I know what the Australians are about. I can talk to the Australians. I know, yeah, I must be Australian. But I do get a bit upset when people ask me, ‘Where do you come from?’ Because I really do consider myself well adjusted. But that question always comes up. Because of my accent. Some put me down as Dutch. Some still hear the Scottish accent. They don’t quite pick it. But they ask.

I asked Gisela whether she felt the reason people asked where she came from was out of curiosity or if it was connected to something else. She considered my
question before answering. ‘I think in Perth the Australians very much like to put you into your little… slot.’

But, in regards to identity, I think you’re in-between. You’re never one or the other. But it’s a lot better than it was, say ten or twenty years ago, when [as a migrant] you were definitely neither. And you just didn’t know where you belonged. I belong in Australia now. Very much so. I really do think I’m Australian in my attitude. Because something in myself became more grounded in the here and now. A few things you never leave behind—tidiness, cleanliness. That’s the German thing! But, I’ve got a lot of lady friends now. They come from the country. I love the country people! Down to earth, honest. Real values. And, I can relate to that.

Susanne, immigrated 1973, aged 30

Susanne and I first met and at Stammitisch, a monthly German cultural exchange luncheon. She had invited me to come along to meet the group prior to our interview, which occurred a few weeks later. A charming and stylish woman, Susanne welcomed me into her Mount Claremont home, made me a coffee, and we sat at her dining table, the centre piece of the living room, as she recounted her immigration experiences.

Well, I arrived in August 1973. And all for love, I must say, because I had met an Anglo-Irish gentleman in Crete, on holidays, the year before. He was working for British overseas development aid as a psychiatrist in Kampala. Idi Amin, the dictator, was in power then and all overseas workers had a three-month deadline to leave Kampala. So, he came to Perth, along with many of the medical staff of Kampala University. I was still teaching in Germany—I was an English teacher—so I had to wait for the end of my school year, then I packed two suitcases and came.

But, I had some trouble at first. I had been denied a visitor’s permit because the Australian government were very wary of people, like mail order brides, who would sneak into Australia. They were very full of mistrust. They gave no reason why I was not allowed the tourist visa. Well, my father, a civil servant in Germany, wrote to the Australian Ambassador in Cologne asking why they don’t grant the visiting permit to somebody with a police clearance—as a teacher, I was a civil servant. The next letter I received was a form I had to sign, that I wouldn’t marry Frank. If I wanted to marry him, I would have to go back to Germany. I was very happy that I could get the permit, and so I did sign. And I… I realised that…
Susanne struggled to find the words to express the circumstances she had faced. ‘I realised the really enormous consequences.’

I can fully understand the asylum seekers, now, how they feel rejected. I can fully understand the… despair when you’re not allowed into the country for this type of reason. Because you don’t fit their… Well, they are just so wary.

I didn’t know what to say. Although she’d tried to make light of the events, the circumstances surrounding Susanne’s immigration to Australia were upsetting. I couldn’t imagine the confusion, fear and pain of being refused entry to another country based on suspicion alone. As she continued narrating the events of arriving and settling in Australia, Susanne’s cheerful demeanour resurfaced.

Anyway, it worked out very nicely. Frank was much needed here and so he had this ‘oomph’ to say we would both disappear if I couldn’t stay. That bought us special ground or something and later I got permanent residence. And I haven’t regretted it a bit! I was very keen to come. I knew nothing much about Australia before I arrived. I had a friend who was a guest teacher in our gymnasium (German equivalent to high school) and she told me about the vastness, and the laidbackness of Australians.

After I arrived, we rented all around Graylands, the mental hospital, because Frank worked as a psychiatrist. It was a very privileged start for me, here in the southern and the western suburbs because they were well-off. I fell in love with Australia and the weather, and the friendliness of the people. I had never seen a more beautiful ocean than the Indian one. In October, we went down south and the wildness of the western coast! I took pictures and showed slides when I went to visit Germany. I was like a cultural ambassador, ‘Come to Australia! Visit!’

In the beginning, I felt totally uprooted. I realised I had left behind all my friends, my family. So, I stayed loyal to my dearest and oldest friends all my life. But, I had to find my feet again, slowly find my own career. My main interest was teaching German and making it as popular as possible. It was really a bit Victorian here, still, because they put an accent on grammar. There was never the chance to speak. They only talked in English about German! I had trained as a German teacher: you had to speak the language in class and that was something new here.

I introduced the German Goethe Institut certificate. They didn’t have it here. It’s like the British Council standardised exams. I ran courses, actually in this house! Sometimes we combined it with coffee and Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte (Black Forest cake). Do it total immersion. And teaching German through music, like Oktoberfest songs. Music makes everything easier—the rhythms and the patterns.
In that respect, it was a new mixture which nobody else did at that time. I taught kids for five years in the Rhein-Donau Club. I was a part time tutor at UWA and we started a student radio, German Neue Welle (New Wave) on 6PR. I was a cultural ambassador, in a private way, and that was probably my most rewarding role. Frank, of course, brought home the bacon, and I only had pocket money from teaching.

When I got the chance to teach full time at private boys’ schools, I grasped it. It was very male-dominant and I had never been such a rarity before in my life! But, they were very gentleman-like. What I found, though, was that the boys in these schools saw me as… as a Nazi girl. They had a total cliché view of Germany. It was not their fault, nor the teachers, because that generation, they grew up on Hogan’s Heroes. There was a lovely boy in my class, I was checking his homework and he said, ‘You have killed three or six million Jews! You shouldn’t be setting this homework.’

I gasped, mortified. Susanne gave a small laugh, then continued speaking.

These little teenage boys, they really saw it like that. And, I can fully understand it. But, I was speechless. I just couldn’t say anything. I later sent the Year Eleven boys to Germany, on an exchange for four weeks, so they had a real view. I arranged for them to stay with guest families in Munich, and at my old boarding school. It was lovely because they came back really full of enthusiasm. Youth friendship was my main thing, to send these kids and let them come to their own understanding because then there will never be xenophobia anymore.

When I returned to take the photographs, Susanne positioned her memorabilia collection on the dining table, which I learned held special significance. Our final meeting was also conducted at this table, as Susanne viewed her photo-narrative portrait and reflected on her cultural identity.
The koala, in kangaroo fur, that was my totem object forty-three years ago when I had to wait to come to Australia. I remember seeing the koalas in Berlin zoo, that was almost a fetish for me. You wouldn’t believe how Germans loved koala bears! They were the symbol of the laidback Australian lifestyle.

In the middle, you see my memoir *Y Diet Don’t Cook-Book*. You can survive beautifully in this paradise with raw food. I’m interested in health now, in making life easier. Take it easy, make it easy. Keep alive and prolong life of everybody. In a way, that is my life chord with Australia.

The *Stammtisch Glocke* (bell) is the symbol of our privately started German Cultural Club, which I founded because the old Goethe Society didn’t want to get changed by us younger ones. We had our own cultural program and I ran classes and workshops at *this table*. We also had a mobile *Stammtisch* meeting in different favourite restaurants. *Kaffeeklatsch mit Kultur* (coffee gossip with culture), we called it. That was our specialty and it lasted for almost thirty years, and it’s still ongoing.

The baby in the bathwater, for me, is the baby of democracy. Australia, at the moment, has this fear of boat people arriving and treats them almost like criminals, as a possible terrorist suspect. And, that is not the case. It is just fear mongering and political footballing. I mean, the treatment of migrants, of war refugees, asylum seekers from the bombed areas of Iraq and Afghanistan and Syria, they don’t deserve to be treated as terrorists en bloc. Concerning immigration policies and multiculturality it would be so terrible to lose Australia, in the global scene, as a welcoming multicultural country. So, don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater by listening to the politicians who want to be re-elected.
Only a few days ago, I was on the beach in Yanchep with my overseas visitors, who were quite shocked about this dog soiling the pristine sand on the people’s beach. In my still very German accent, I said to the owner, ‘Would you please go to the dog beach? I’ll show you where it is.’

Susanne took a breath. She hesitated before continuing. ‘And the man was getting abusive and shouting and told me I should go… ah, to an asylum, like the asylum seekers.’

A stickler for clean beaches myself, I was appalled that the delicately-framed older woman sitting before me was subjected to such aggression. I struggled to comprehend shouting abuse at any older person. I admired Susanne’s ability to rationalise the situation, without anger.

I mean, practically all Australians, everybody has an accent anyway. As a linguist and language teacher, I want to make it clear, it belongs to human freedom to have a certain accent.

I asked Susanne about her impressions on whether she felt the photo-narrative portrait reflected aspects of her cultural identity.

Well, I can see myself. Me and my world, and this togetherness. I can see my visual delights all through life. They are little stepping stones of me still having one foot in the German cultural background and then the wonderful new world of Australia. A slightly quirky look at life. Other people might see it as pure junk. Which it is, in a way. In the long run, junk is what you make of it. This is interesting, to have this self-reflection visible there. It shows what nostalgic animals we all are.

Clearly passionate about her life in Australia, Susanne’s zest for life was evident as she offered her views about her cultural identity in 2016.

Well, it’s really the best of both worlds. I had a win-win situation because I didn’t have to discard my old identity. Australia is a very welcoming country. I’ve always felt like a welcomed, not a tourist… between a guest and new comer, migrant. It’s something I think maybe all migrants feel, even the English migrants. My partner, Robin, is from England and he still speaks with his English accent. His kids, they’re in their fifties, they are very Aussie. It’s interesting how one generation really integrates fully into Australia. But, Frank and I arrived when we were already thirty. And it’s different. If we had been teenagers or in our twenties it probably would have been totally different. Our culture was already set.

I’ve been here for forty-three years, not to forget. And spent only thirty years in Germany. You are conscious of being the newcomer
here. The migrant. I want to be conscious of that. As a migrant, you have to learn what impact you present to the Others. You have this different cultural background. I have the perspective of both the German and Australian cultures and a reflection of how and what was misunderstood, through tiny little sentences, for example. It’s endless. You get new perspectives, in old age especially, because you have more overview. And it’s nice. Life is very interesting with all the different people in it.

I still get these journals from Germany because I want to keep in touch. And the German SBS news is wonderful. I’m almost on a drip there! So, I don’t want to give that up, either. I couldn’t. Somehow, it’s second nature. Yet, when I go to Germany, I see it like a foreign visitor now. I haven’t got the right vocab anymore. Of course, it’s a crystallised version of Germany, of about forty-something years ago. But, it’s nice to have this vintage perspective too. It’s a retro sport!

Susanne laughs cheekily as she waves a hand taking in the room, ‘As you can see around here, this is retro too!’ We both laugh.

After about ten years I gave up my German nationality. I changed very gladly and very gratefully to an Australian. I’m really an enthusiastic Australian now. It’s the epitome of freedom, health and beauty, and natural beauty too. I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else. On Australia Day, we go to Yanchep to the free breakfast with hundreds of lovely Aussies dressed with the Australian flag and so on. The vastness and the primeval oldness of the Australian continent is just wonderful. But, I still can’t understand the Australians with all their sports and the over-enthusiasm!

**Conclusion**

The narrative accounts in this chapter convey the cultural identity and sense of belonging of four German women who immigrated to Western Australia in the post-World War Two years between 1945 and 1973. There were both commonalities and differences in the women’s settlement experiences and their perceptions of cultural identity. All of the women had clear ideas and concepts about their own cultural identity and the ways in which their identity had changed between first arriving in Australia and in the present, in 2016. The findings of this study are discussed in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I discuss the ways in which immigration to a new country impacted upon the women’s cultural identity and their sense of belonging in Australia. I consider whether any of the women developed a hybrid identity through engagement with a third space. The diptych portraits and the visual
representation of the women’s cultural identity through mementoes are also discussed.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE MULTIPLE FACES OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

Introduction

In this chapter I first discuss the German women’s settlement experiences and the development of a sense of belonging, followed by the visual representation of cultural identity using portraits and mementoes. The conclusion to this chapter addresses how the German women in this study negotiated the Australian way of life and the impact this had on their cultural identity. This chapter is structured around three major themes that related to the research questions: settlement experiences informing cultural identity and belonging; visual representation of cultural identity; and cultural identity in 2016. These three major themes and associated sub-themes were identified through the thematic analysis of the transcripts (Table 2). The theoretical frameworks of cultural identity, hybridity and national identity, as defined by Stuart Hall (1992) and Homi Bhabha (1990), were applied to the findings.

Table 2. Major themes and sub-themes identified

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Settlement experiences informing cultural identity and belonging

How do the women describe their experience of settling in Western Australia and did they develop a sense of belonging?

Australian way of life

The concept ‘the Australian way of life’ has no clear and distinct definition yet all migrants were expected to adopt this way of life (Haebich, 2008, p. 93; Markus & Taft, 2015, p. 237; Murphy, 1993, p. 135; White, 1981b, pp. 158-161). To establish the culture that the German women encountered when they settled in Australia, this research drew on two sub-themes that were identified in the data analysis stage: women’s roles—mother, housewife, employment; and lifestyle and social activities. These sub-themes aligned with the topics “lifestyle, family, home ownership [and] suburban living” (p. 70), defined by Haebich (2008) as forming the Australian way of life.

Motherhood and being a housewife were prevalent ideals at the time of the women’s immigration and were dominant roles for the women during their settlement years. This aligns with the literature that states between the 1940s and 1960s, women’s roles in the Australian way of life consisted of two major identities: housewife or mother (Haebich, 2008, p. 98; White, 1981b, p. 165). These roles are evidenced through Frauke’s joyous recollections of her life as a wife and mother, and Gisela’s statement that motherhood was a full time job. The women described social activities such as dinner parties and outdoor activities as providing opportunities for learning about Australian culture. One example of this is Frauke’s experience of “bringing a plate” to a dinner party (p.37).

Despite the focus on family life and motherhood, employment also featured heavily in all of the women’s narrative accounts. They worked either part time or full time, depending on their family commitments. None of the women immigrated under contract conditions which allowed them to search freely for work. Employment heightened the women’s exposure to Australian culture and all four women undertook employment in traditionally female occupations. Johanna worked as a waitress, a common employment option for migrant women (Peters, 2001, p. 173). Gisela described working as a nurse as providing a way to “get to know the real
Australia” (p.41). Frauke and Susanne used their teaching qualifications and advanced English skills to teach German to Australian students at Western Australian high schools, the University of Western Australia, the Rhein-Donau Club, and in the creation of a German Cultural Club, which provided an opportunity to talk openly about German culture in an Australian context.

For three of the women, marriage to an Australian/Anglo-Irishman provided access to immediate family support and social networks that assisted their adjustment to the Australian culture. This familial and social inclusion contributed toward the women feeling a sense of belonging. Belonging was also generated by community involvement such as teaching or volunteering. Susanne viewed teaching as a form of cultural exchange and the community involvement gave her a sense of belonging. Frauke described feeling a sense of honour and belonging when she was awarded the Citizen of the Year for Cottesloe, prior to receiving Australian citizenship. These examples show the ways in which the women revised their identity by drawing on cross-overs between cultural traditions to adapt to the Australian way of life (Hall, 1992, p. 310).

It is evident that participation in the constructed national narratives defined as the Australian family, lifestyle, social activities and women’s roles (Haebich, 2008, pp. 85-86) assisted the women to assimilate and develop a sense of belonging.

**German identity**

All of the women in this study expressed feelings of conflict in relation to their German identity. Three of the women, Frauke, Gisela and Susanne, wanted to retain their German cultural identity yet simultaneously expressed desire to relinquish it and adopt the Australian culture. Only Johanna described her cultural identity as singularly German. The women described life in Germany in both negative and positive terms. Connotations that Germans were Nazis was expressed explicitly and/or implicitly by all participants. German guilt was also mentioned. Frauke and Gisela described their life in Germany as exceedingly difficult and distressing. Despite the harsh conditions they experienced in Germany, the women retained their German cultural identity in positive ways that ranged from cooking German food, to speaking German with family and friends, to teaching German at a
variety of educational institutions in Perth. Retaining connections to German family and friends was an important factor in the women retaining their German cultural identity. Language was another major method of retaining connection to their German cultural identity. All of the women spoke German in private with family members and/or friends. Through their teaching roles Frauke and Susanne used the German language as a means of cross-cultural communication. While Frauke viewed teaching German as an enjoyable pastime, Susanne’s approach to teaching German was passionate and enthusiastic. She viewed teaching German as an opportunity to promote understanding of German culture, and ultimately to overcome xenophobia against Germans. Whether conscious or not, the women included their German cultural identity in their everyday lives.

The act of migration required the women to revise their cultural identities and find positions in social circles different to those in which they were accustomed (Hall, 1992; Papastergiadis, 1992, p. 152). The study found that the women’s cultural identity was disrupted and had to be altered to fit into the Australian culture. Through incorporating aspects of German culture into their Australian lives the women developed a “fluid sense of identity” (R. Berger, 2004, p. 194) that crossed back and forth between German and Australian identities. Speaking two languages—German and English—resulted in the women developing multiple identities. I contend that the development of these fluid cultural identities enabled the women to establish a sense of belonging within the Australian culture and societies in which they lived. The extent of this sense of belonging ranged from minimal, as in Johanna’s case, to a deeply felt sense of belonging in the other three women.

Assimilation/Discrimination

Assimilation

During the era of the White Australia Policy, each woman in the study experienced expectations to assimilate to some extent. Assimilation meant taking on the Australian customs, language and way of life and giving up one’s home culture (Haebich, 2002, p. 62; Murphy, 1993, p. 135; Tavan, 1997, pp. 80-81; Wende, 2010, p. 84). Only Gisela recalled direct awareness of the White Australia policy and pressures to assimilate. Her comments that Germans were good at assimilating aligns
with the literature that states Germans were perceived to have assimilated effectively into Australian society. The result is that Germans have been rendered hidden or invisible within Australia (C. V. Anderson, 2015, p. 5; Muenstermann, 1997, p. 141; Tampke, 2006, p. 157).

Three of the women, Frauke, Gisela and Susanne, had acquired English language skills before immigrating to Australia. The ability to speak English resulted in the women being able to communicate effectively with Australians, develop relationships and gain employment in the health and education industries. Having a command of the English language provided the women with a level of confidence and sense of belonging in their settlement years. Johanna had limited English language skills and as result she struggled to communicate, gain employment and establish relationships with Australians during her early settlement years. Her marriage to a German meant that the primary language spoken at home was German, and their friendships were predominantly with other German people. A lower level of English skills and problems communicating may have prevented Johanna from developing a deeper sense of belonging within Australia.

The women’s accounts indicated that marriage to an Australian/Anglo-Irish partner resulted in a diminished awareness of assimilation expectations. However, assimilation still occurred. Frauke, Gisela and Susanne’s narrative accounts clearly expressed that their partners’ family and friends provided social networks and offered the women a level of acceptance by Australians. Out-marriage provided an easier transition into Australian customs and way of life, and increased assimilation into Australian culture (Muenstermann, 1997, p. 143). I argue that these family and social networks contributed toward giving the women a sense of belonging in Australia. This is evidenced in Frauke’s comment that she was not aware of assimilation expectation due to the fact that she was wholeheartedly accepted by her husband’s family. The three women did not give up their German culture and become “homogenous” as the White Australia policy intended (Tavan, 2005, p. 11) but they did revise their self-identity in a cultural context (Bhabha, 1994, p. 172; Hall, 1992, p. 310; Papastergiadis, 1992, p. 152). Frauke, Gisela and Susanne considered their cultural identity in 2016 to be very much Australian. Their accounts indicated that they had relinquished elements of their German cultural identity and
assimilated into Australian society (Hatoss, 2006, pp. 90-91; Muenstermann, 1997, p. 141; Tampke, 2006, p. 157). By contrast, Johanna experienced a substantial sense of difference. The study showed that language skills, out-marriage and engagement with English speaking social networks were key factors in ability to engage with Australian culture.

Discrimination

Discrimination against being German was something that three out of four women experienced. Acknowledgement of discrimination among the women ranged from open awareness to vague references. Immigration conditions formed part of the White Australia policy (Kunz, 1988, p. xvii; Murphy, 1993, p. 85; Peters, 2001, p. 8) and Susanne was initially denied a visitor’s permit without reason. Johanna and her husband were denied work because they were German. Susanne’s students considered her a Nazi because she was German, and one student accused her of being responsible for killing millions of Jews. Gisela experienced more subtle discrimination from her husband’s social circle. Coming from a different cultural background meant that she was not fully accepted and only a few from the social group included her in their lives. For Gisela and Susanne, their German identity, recognisable through their accents, continued to expose them to racism and prejudice, despite the fact they have Australian citizenship and strongly view themselves as Australians. For Gisela, the regular questioning of where she comes from, because of her accent, is an indication of wanting to categorise her, a non-acceptance of her being an Australian. In 2016, Susanne was verbally abused and told she should be in a refugee asylum because she asked a man to pick up his dog’s faeces at a Yanchep beach. Despite their discrimination experiences, Gisela and Susanne expressed a positive view of being Australian.

The episodes of discrimination the women experienced during their settlement years highlight the narratives and myth of the Australian national identity as being a white, homogenous, British-based nation (B. Anderson, 1991, p. 6; Haebich, 2008, p. 85; Hall, 1992, pp. 293-295). Looking back on events provided the women in the study with a new perspective; the distance of time afforded them a more rational, less emotional reaction to experiences of discrimination. Nevertheless, these events made the women feel uncomfortable and impacted on their sense of
belonging at the time. This is evident in Johanna’s fear of talking to the police when her clothes were stolen because the police were “anti-foreigners” (p.32); Gisela’s feelings of isolation; and Susanne’s comments of feeling rejection and despair due to not fitting the ideal.

**Visual representation of cultural identity**

*Can photographic images of the women’s portraits and personal mementoes represent the development or retention of their cultural identity?*

**Mementoes and their meaning**

The act of selecting mementoes allowed the women to narrate their cultural identity from their personal perspectives. Attached to each memento were individual stories describing complex narratives of cultural identity, both German and Australian. The research found that there were a greater number of mementoes that represented German cultural identity, however, this was not an indication that the women felt more German than Australian. For example, the number of German mementoes that Frauke and Gisela selected outnumbered those symbolising Australia, yet they identified as more Australian than German in 2016. The German mementoes and their attached stories were described in nostalgic terms which represented a “fragmentary biography” or “collective memory” of the owner (Boym, 2001, p. 334). For all of the women, the German mementoes contained stories of a life lived before migrating to Australia. For example, for Johanna the statue of Roland held memories of the history of Bremen, the devastating effects of World War Two on Bremen, and meetings with her sister at the statue, in her youth. The Australian mementoes were generally described in terms that reflected hope, happiness and a connection to the present. Frauke described the red and black bowls as being symbolic in their representation of the joy of life in Australia versus life in Germany. Gisela described being attracted to the shapes of the Australian landscape and the Australian painting represented a landscape that she was now very attached to. She described the German painting as symbolising the past and the Australian painting as representing the present. Some mementoes crossed cultural boundaries. For example, Frauke described purchasing the set of red and black bowls in Germany
and then using the bowls consistently in her Australian life. As such the bowls symbolised two cultural identities: her German identity of the past and her Australian identity of the present. In Susanne’s case the baby doll in a red tin tub carried multilayered and complex narratives relating to Australia’s attitudes toward immigrants. These narratives included her own discriminatory immigration experiences along with current negative political biases directed at refugees, and her desire to see Australia remain a multicultural country. It is evident that cross-cultural narratives and multiple identities were attached to the women’s mementoes.

Analysis of the women’s narrative accounts found that their selected mementoes had taken on intricate meanings that extended beyond the physical representation (Gordon, 1986, p. 137; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005, p. 32; Stewart, 1998, p. 136). These material objects were substitutes for a people, places and events and carried multifaceted biographical narratives and personal meaning that were unique to each individual person (Hoskins, 1998, p. 11). The mementoes formed part of a narrative that was intricately tied to the owner and the cultural identity the object represented, which was not replicated among the participants (Stewart, 1998, p. 136). Some of these objects portrayed in physical form a sense of cultural identity and home where that space no longer existed, such as the representation of a Germany of the past, while other mementoes represented the women’s Australian cultural identity. The study found that the women clearly saw their cultural identities reflected in the mementoes were photographed.

Interpretation of the cultural identity portraits

Our cultural identity is an internal, non-visible perception of ourselves. It is based on how we view ourselves situated within the society and country within which we live. For migrants, the development and changes to cultural identity depend on the ways in which they discern the space of the Other—the new culture encountered (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211; Hall, 1996, p. 6). Creating diptych photo-narratives of the four German women provided a fresh and distinctive way of looking at cultural identity.
Just as the stories attached to the mementoes could only be fully understood by the individual women themselves, the diptychs could only be accurately read by each individual woman. This is because the reading of a photograph depends upon the messages contained within the image and the viewers’ interpretations, which are linked to their cultural background and lived experiences (Pink, 2007, p. 68; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 49). The study found that the diptychs contained two types of messages: the denoted message consisting of physical representation of the subject/object and connoted messages that contain “social, cultural and historical meanings” (p. 20) that add meaning to the denoted person or object (Barthes, 1982, pp. 196-197; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009). Examples of denoted messages of the represented objects include a book about Bremen, red and black bowls, two colourful paintings, a carved wooden statue, a brass bell and a baby doll in a tin tub. When the women were asked to read their portrait, they were able to read the deeper connoted messages within the image. Each woman also saw her cultural identity represented in her diptych portrait. Johanna felt that the image “very much” showed her cultural identity. Frauke’s reading contained layered connoted messages that reflected her German and Australian identities. Gisela read her portrait and immediately understood the connoted messages of her youth in Germany and her attachment to the Australian landscape. Susanne interpreted the connoted messages that affirmed her connection to both German and Australian cultures. Each of the women were able to clearly interpret the messages in their individual diptych portrait. This was because they were personally involved with the creation of the images, which enabled them to understand both the denoted and connoted messages within the image (Pink, 2007, p. 68).

General viewers attempting to read the diptychs would be able to interpret the denoted messages represented by the objects/subjects contained within the image, but would not be able to accurately read the connoted messages attached to them. Instead they would draw on their own connoted messages, informed by their own personal history and cultural ideologies (Barthes, 1982, p. 197). In addition, these viewers may engage with or draw on the imaginary to fill the gap when constructing the photographs’ meanings (J. Berger, 2013, pp. 62-63; Di Stefano, 2002, p. 47). This study has shown that although the diptych portraits contain messages that will be interpreted differently by different viewers, the women read and understood their
individual portrait. The women also confirmed that the photographic images clearly and accurately represented their cultural identity.

The diptych portraits visually recorded mementoes and people that reflected the women’s cultural identity. The photographs also captured the women’s identity in that specific moment in time when the images were taken, in 2016. As a result, in all the diptychs, time collapses as the various mementoes and portraits convey different periods in time (Wombell, 2006). The boundaries of time recede to reveal a space where complex, multilayered narratives are contained within the one space. The diptychs illustrated new and elaborate narratives of identity via “a process of connecting people to places and identities to people” (Wombell, 2006). These visually represented narratives showed engagement with German and Australian cultures and created an opportunity to explore the fluidity of cultural identity. I argue that these visual spaces provide an avenue for discussion around cultural identity in the spaces between the two identities represented. The visual representation of each woman’s cultural identity is a process that exists between the German and Australian identities and thereby occupies a third space (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). The exploration of the spaces between two cultures, may or may not reveal hybridity in the individual women (Di Stefano, 2002, p. 40), and is discussed in more detail in the Conclusion.

**Conclusion**

*How did post-World War Two (1945-1973) German migrant women negotiate the Australian way of life, and how did this impact on their cultural identity?*

The four German women who immigrated to Australia between 1945 and 1973 had different backgrounds and reasons for coming to Australia. The women described Germany as a country reduced to rubble and the post-World War Two years a period of rebuilding. The culture the women encountered in Australia was significantly different to their own; the White Australia policy was in effect and they were expected to assimilate into the Australian way of life. The women navigated this process through family and social networks, fulfilling expected roles as wives and mothers, participating in social activities, gaining employment, speaking English and enjoying the natural environment in Western Australia.
Support networks provided by partners and an ability to speak English assisted the process of navigating the Australian way of life. For three of the women, Frauke, Gisela and Susanne, marriage to Australian/Anglo-Irish partners and strong English skills contributed to the women’s sense of belonging and feeling that they were Australian. For Johanna and her German husband, learning the language and the way of life in Australia was more difficult. The lack of support networks may have contributed toward Johanna’s reduced sense of belonging in Western Australia and to her not feeling Australian in her cultural identity.

Connection to the Western Australian landscape played an important part in contributing to the women’s sense of belonging in Australia. They described a sense of joy and passion for the beaches and the Australian bush. Western Australian people were described as friendly and welcoming, which again, contributed to a sense of belonging as the women navigated the new culture they encountered.

Discrimination during the settlement years was experienced by three of the women, and two of the women continued to experience discrimination in 2016. Political bias in Australia against migrants and refugees, in the past and the present, was something that all the women were acutely aware of. The women were conscious of negative attitudes towards Germans and they expressed negative connotations of shame and guilt in relation to their own German cultural identity. These may have been motivating factors for three of the women to assimilate into the Australian way of life, which provided them with the opportunity of a new Australian identity and a reduction in the visibility of their German identity (Johnston, 1979, p. 44; Münstermann, 2011, p. 142). It is important to note that the 1950s saw the beginnings of more contemporary views toward assimilation which became more firmly developed in the early 1970s. These views were that migrants should be allowed to retain their culture and traditions (Craig, 1995, p. 92; Markus & Taft, 2015, p. 237). This was evidenced by two of the women working as German language teachers. This shows an acceptance of German people and their culture by Western Australians. As a result, Frauke and Susanne’s German cultural identities were more visible in Western Australian society than those of Johanna and Gisela.

Faced with a new culture in Australia, the women revised their cultural identity (Bhabha, 1994, p. 172; Hall, 1992, p. 310; Papastergiadis, 1992, p. 152).
During their settlement years, everyday interactions with neighbourhood babysitting groups, dinner parties and working enabled the women to adjust to the Australian way of life. In contrast to previous work suggesting that Germans are perceived to have relinquished their cultural identity and effectively assimilated into the Australian society (Hatoss, 2006, pp. 90-91; Muenstermann, 1997, p. 141; Tampke, 2006, p. 157), the women in this study did not relinquish their German culture and assimilate to the point of becoming homogenous (Tavan, 2005, p. 11). They retained their German cultural identity but also absorbed the Australian culture into their lives, in varying degrees.

However, the way the women navigated the Australian way of life was different for each person. Frauke, Gisela and Susanne actively embraced the Australian culture and as a result their cultural identities exhibited the greatest amount of change. In 2016, these three women described themselves as Australian and displayed distinctly Australian cultural identities. Nevertheless, they still retained their connection to their German cultural identities, thereby displaying hybrid identities, as defined by Hall (1992, p. 310). Johanna described her cultural identity as solely German, however, she had engaged in a process of learning English and was aware of Australian customs and culture, requiring her to develop multiple identities. As such, I argue that Johanna also exhibited a hybrid cultural identity, as defined by Hall (1992, p. 310). Through her role as a German language teacher, Susanne revised her German culture and translated it in such a way as to transfer her home culture to her Australian students. She engaged in a process of negotiating the Australian and German cultures creating a third space that resulted in hybridity, as defined by Bhabha, (1990, pp. 210-211).

The analysis of these German women’s experiences provided rich and powerful insights that transformed them from invisible to real people. In relation to other European migrants, there is limited information available about post-World War Two German migrant women in Western Australia and this study offers an abundance of insight into women’s lives between 1945 and 1973. These narrative accounts and diptych portraits are significant because they contribute to the space of discussion and understanding on the development of cultural identity. These methods are useful to reveal the small details of the domestic lives of women, which generally
have low visibility. Given the current nationalistic fixation with “Australianness” there is a need to understand migration and the many facets of identity formation. As Susanne pointed out, we all have an accent, and as many Australians are of migrant heritage it is important to understand hybrid cultural identities. Consequently, the results of this study may contribute to better informing the greater community of the migrant experience in developing cultural identity and a sense of belonging in Australia.
REFERENCES


Eubel, S. (2010b). 'German girls are really nice' - Gender as a structure in a migration context: West German migration to Western Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. (Doctor of Philosophy), University of Western Australia. Retrieved from research-repository.uwa.edu.au/files/3217347/Eubel_Sandra_2010.pdf

Goodall, H. L. J. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. Maryland, MD: Altamira Press.


APPENDIX A: INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Title of Project: ‘Invisible women’: German migrant women’s cultural identity in Western Australia, 1945-1973

My name is Sonja Porter and I am a postgraduate student undertaking a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. You are invited to take part in this research project, which I am conducting as part of the requirements of my degree. The research project has ethics approval from the WAAPA/SAH Ethics Sub-Committee.

This project aims to examine the cultural identity of post-World War Two German women who immigrated to Western Australia between 1945 and 1973. It aims to explore the migrant experience and the development of cultural identity in relation to settlement experiences. The project seeks to investigate whether photographic narratives of German migrant women and their personal mementoes can portray a sense of cultural identity.

If you choose to take part in the project you will be asked to attend an audio recorded interview, and have photographs taken of yourself and the mementoes that you select to discuss in the interview process. The interview and photographs will take place either at your home or a place of your choosing in which you feel most comfortable. If you decide to take part in the project, the interview process would take approximately one and a half to two hours, and the two photography sessions would take approximately one hour each. There will be limited additional contact to clarify or cross check data.

All information collected during the research project will be treated confidentially. You will have the option of being named or remaining anonymous in the research project. You may be recognisable from photographs in the research project. Your permission will be obtained before any information discussed in the interviews will be published. All data collected will be stored securely on ECU premises for five years after the project has concluded, and may be used as an oral history archive. Any negatives and/or any other storage device or medium in which the image is held and all rights in the photographs, including copyright, will remain the property of the student. The information will be presented in a written report (thesis), in which your identity will be revealed (unless you state otherwise). You may be sent a summary of the final report on request.

I do not anticipate any risks associated with participating in this research project.

Participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time and there will be no penalty for doing so. If you would like to take part in the project, please complete, sign and return the attached Consent Form to me.

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If you have any questions about the research project or require further information you may contact the following:

Student Researcher: Sonja Porter
Telephone number: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Supervisor: Dr Danielle Brady
Telephone: (+61 8) 9370 6741
Email: d.brady@ecu.edu.au

If you have any concerns or complaints and wish to contact an independent person about this research project, you may contact:

Dr Matthew Styles
Chair of the WAAPA/SAH Ethics Sub-Committee Phone:
Telephone: (+61 8) 9370 6065
Email: m.styles@ecu.edu.au
mailto:g.lowe@ecu.edu.au

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Sonja Porter
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: ‘Invisible women’: German migrant women’s cultural identity in Western Australia, 1945-1973

- I have been provided with a letter explaining the research project and I understand the letter.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily.
- I am aware that I can contact Dr Danielle Brady or Dr Matt Styles if I have any further queries, or if I have concerns or complaints. I have been given their contact details in the Information Letter.
- I understand that participating in this project will involve a recorded interview, perusal of personal mementoes, and photographs being taken of me.
- I consent to having my voice recorded and photographs taken during this research.
- I understand that the researcher will be able to identify me and I consent to my image being used. I understand that I have the option of remaining anonymous or being identified and the information I give will be kept confidential and will be accessed only by the researcher and her supervisor.
- I understand that I may be recognisable from the photographs.
- I understand that any negatives and/or any other storage device or medium in which the image is held and all rights in the photographs, including copyright, will remain the property of the student.
- I am aware that the information collected during this research will be stored in a locked cabinet at ECU for 5 years after the completion of the project and may be used as an oral history archive.
- I understand that I will be identified in any report, thesis, or presentation of the results of this research unless I state otherwise.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the research without penalty.
- Please select (tick) ONE of the options below:

  I agree to be identified in the thesis  □
  I do not agree to be identified in the thesis  □

- I freely agree to participate in this project:

  NAME: ____________________________________________

  SIGNATURE: ___________________________ DATE: _______

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## APPENDIX C: PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE FORM

**Photograph Release (For Use by ECU Student)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Photographed Person</th>
<th>(“the Subject”)</th>
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<td>Address of Subject</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the Student</td>
<td>(“the Student”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>(“the Location”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose**

- Please tick the applicable box:
  - [ ] for any purpose whatsoever
  - [ ] for inclusion in the Student’s assessable work or research material (including published research material)
  - [ ] other (please specify below)

**I, the Subject, hereby consent to and authorise Edith Cowan University (“ECU”) and / or the Student and persons authorised through them to photograph me at the Location and to reproduce, publish and communicate the photographs in any medium for the Purpose. Unless otherwise agreed in writing the preceding rights granted to ECU and the Student shall be perpetual, royalty free and worldwide.**

**I acknowledge that the negatives and / or any other storage device or medium in which the image is held and all rights in the photographs, including copyright, will remain the property of the Student.**

**Signed**

on this _____ day of ______________________, 20__.

(Where the Subject is under the age of 18 at the date of signing the Subject’s legal guardian must sign on their behalf and if the Subject may be considered capable of understanding the implications of consenting to this release than both the legal guardian and Subject should sign)

<table>
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<th>Signature of Subject / Legal Guardian of Subject</th>
<th>Name of Subject / Legal Guardian of Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

ECU_Photograph_Release -- student - February 2016
APPENDIX D: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Meeting 1: In-depth interview

(Questions were open-ended and varied so as to encourage detailed discussion.)

Background

To get started, I would like to ask you a series of questions about your migration and settlement in Australia

1) When did you arrive in Western Australia? How old were you?
2) How did you arrive and what were the conditions of your travel to Western Australia?
3) So, was that assisted passage, sponsorship or unassisted?
4) Did you migrate with family or friends, or were alone?
5) Where did you first live when you arrived in Western Australia? (arrival camp, hostel, house?)
6) (Migrated as a child) Were you aware of the reasons for your migration to Western Australia?
   OR
   (Migrated as an adult) What were the reasons for your migration to Western Australia.

Settlement experiences

I now have a few questions about your knowledge of Australia and experiences as a German migrant when you arrived in Western Australia.

7) What did you know about Australian culture when you first arrived?
   **Prompt questions:**
   a. Did you hear of the term the ‘Australian way of life’?
   b. (If yes) What did you understand it to mean?
   c. What was your understanding of the Australian way of life and the way Australian’s did things?
   d. What was your opinion about Australian culture and way of life?
8) Did you ever hear the term ‘assimilate’ or ‘integrate’? What did it mean to you?
9) Did you speak English or have any understanding of the language before you came to Western Australia?
   **Prompt questions:**
   a. (If no) Did you want to learn English? Why/why not?
   b. (If yes) Where did you learn English? How well did you speak the language?
10) What are some things that you would describe as forming your German cultural identity, before you came to Western Australia?

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11) How important was it to you to stay connected with your German culture (i.e. through customs and traditions)?

12) In what ways did you stay connected to your German culture?
   a. Were there any customs or traditions that you continued to follow?

13) Did you ever feel isolated or did you have a network of people that you could reach out to?

   **Prompt questions:**
   a. Did your network consist of German people only, or people from other ethnic backgrounds?

14) How important was it that you adopt the Australian culture such as the way of life, and/or customs and traditions?

15) (If yes) What did you do to fit in with the Australian way of life and culture?
   a. What kinds of lifestyle changes or customs did you adopt?

**Women’s roles**

*For these next questions, I want you to think specifically about your experiences and opportunities as a female migrant to Western Australia...*

16) How would you describe your main role as an adult in Western Australia (during your settlement period)?

   **Prompt question**
   a. (If housewife, Mother) Were there other opportunities available to you?

17) Were employment opportunities available to you after arriving in Western Australia?

18) (If yes) Can you describe the kind of work you did?

19) What kinds of social activities did you engage in?

20) Were these activities for women only or mixed?

**Identity in 2016**

*These final questions concern your cultural identity today, as a resident of Western Australia in 2016.*

21) How would you describe your cultural identity now?

22) Do you feel a sense of belonging in Australia? In your home country (Germany)?

23) To what level do you feel you identify with Australian culture versus German culture (i.e. customs, traditions, language)?

24) Which of the following best describes your sense of cultural identity?:
   Do you feel a strong sense of identification with Australian or German culture; even identification with both cultures; or little identification with Australian or German culture?
25) In your opinion, do feel that your cultural identity is neither strictly German nor Australian but instead occupies a space in-between those two cultures (a “third space”)?
26) Can you describe this ‘third’ space or give me an example of this ‘other’ space?

Meeting 2: Memorabilia and mementoes

Ask this question before taking photos

1) Can you tell me a little bit about these mementoes that you have chosen and how they symbolise your German and/or Australian identity?

Meeting 3: View and discuss portrait representing cultural identity

We’re going to have a look at the two photos that I have paired – your portrait and your mementoes. These are meant to be read as one image – as a portrait of your cultural identity. I’m interested in your response to these images.

1) How do you feel looking at this visual representation of your cultural identity?
   a. What are your impressions looking at the photograph/s?
2) Do you feel that this ‘portrait’ image reflect/depict your cultural identity to you?
   a. If, yes, in what ways?
   b. If no, why not?
   c. While it is impossible to capture your entire cultural identity, does this ‘portrait’ image reflect/depict a significant aspect of your cultural identity?
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW DATES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meeting 1 Date</th>
<th>Meeting 2 Date</th>
<th>Meeting 3 Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frauke</td>
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<td>Gisela</td>
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<td>Susanne</td>
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