

Migrant Voices in Austria

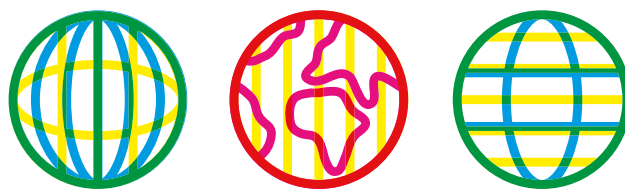
A Narrative Analysis
of Cross-Talk Interviews

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opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration



opportunities

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Please quote this working paper as: Carolin Gebauer (2025). *Migrant Voices in Austria: A Narrative Analysis of Cross-Talk Interviews*. University of Wuppertal. [Working paper of the OPPORTUNITIES project 101004945 – H2020.]



Horizon 2020
European Union Funding
for Research & Innovation

DISCLAIMER This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation program under Grant Agreement no. 101004945. The information in this deliverable reflects only the authors' views and the European Union is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

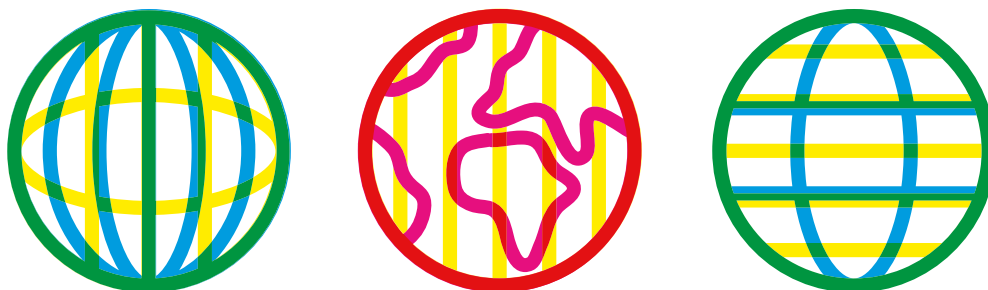
DISSEMINATION LEVEL: Public

Project: OPPORTUNITIES – Crises as Opportunities: Towards a Level Telling Field on Migration and a New Narrative of Successful Integration

GA: 101004945

Call: H2020-SC6-MIGRATION-2020

Type of action: RIA



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A Narrative Analysis of Cross-Talk Interviews

Work Package 3 – Deliverable 3.4, Part 2

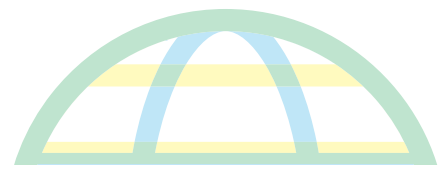
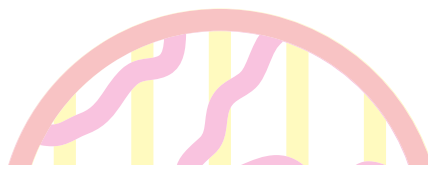
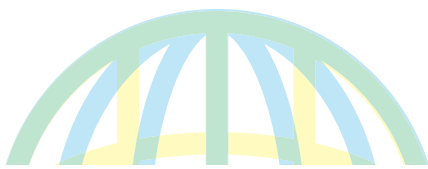
Lead Beneficiary: University of Wuppertal (BUW)

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Abstract

The Cross Talk methodology (CTM) developed by the OPPORTUNITIES project strives to create safe narrative environments for migrants to share their experiences in transit, as well as their views on integration and inclusion, with audiences who are interested in an exchange on an equal footing. What insights can migration studies gain from CTM? Focusing on Cross-Talk interviews as an integral part of CTM, this working paper sets out to explore how the migrant perspective differs from the perspective of politicians and stakeholders. The paper compares the CT interviews that were conducted in Austria with the findings of a previous frame analysis of Austrian journalistic interviews with politicians and stakeholders. By combining insights from literary narratology with narrative approaches from the social sciences, the comparative case study not only examines the issues raised by the migrant participants in the CT interviews, but also carves out the difficulties that arise in constellations of co-narration that involve vulnerable groups.



1. Introduction

In the introduction to *The Displaced* (2018), a collection of essays by refugee writers, Viet Than Nguyen criticizes the silencing of migrant voices in public discourse, observing that “much of the world does not want to hear the voiceless or cannot hear them” (20). Indeed, research in OPPORTUNITIES has shown that vicarious storytelling, i.e., speaking *for* others rather than enabling them to tell their own stories, dominates in migration discourses (Gebauer and Sommer 2024). How can we move beyond this situation, “creating a world of social, economic, cultural, and political opportunities that would allow all these voiceless to tell their stories and be heard, rather than be dependent on a writer or a representative of some kind” (Nguyen 2024, 20)?

The Cross-Talk methodology (CTM) developed by the OPPORTUNITIES project strives to create safe spaces for migrants, allowing them to share their experiences in transit, as well as their views on integration and inclusion, with sympathetic audiences. CTM is based on five consecutive steps. The first step consists in building trust, with researchers approaching potential candidates who might be willing to share their stories and establishing relationships that facilitate a confidential exchange. In semi-structured Cross-Talk interviews (CT interviews), migrants are then invited to tell their life stories (Step 2); the transcripts of these interviews subsequently serve as the basis for a collaborative process during which migrants and researchers co-create written stories (Step 3). These Cross-Talk stories (CT stories) are shared, in a fourth step of re-telling, with researchers and other migrants in a semi-public, and thus safe, space. It is only in the final step that the stories co-created by migrants and researchers are re-enacted in front of a public audience: At Cross-Talk events (CT events), migrants meet with stakeholders and, after reading the CT stories to each other, discuss issues and concerns related to migration and integration. CTM thus seeks to establish a dialogue between migrants and stakeholders on an equal footing, with the aim of changing current discourse practices that tend to exclude migrant voices from public debates.¹

What can migration studies learn from a critical engagement with CTM? More specifically, what new perspectives on migration does the analysis of the migrant stories that emerge during Cross-Talks unveil? The initial CT interviews provide experiential stories which allow us to explore how the migrant perspective differs from the perspective of politicians and stakeholders. Building on a previous frame analysis of Austrian newspaper interviews with the latter group (see Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023) and using the migrant interviews from Austrian CTs, this chapter performs a comparative analysis of both perspectives. The case study combines applied narratology (Moneander et al. 2024) with a narrative realities approach (Gubrium and Holstein 2009) to examine the issues and concerns that inform migrants’ lived realities. It also identifies the challenges migrants face when recounting their experiences and investigates how they manage to overcome these difficulties.



2. Narrative Work and Cross-Talk Interviews

In the social sciences, narrativity, or rather the question of what constitutes a narrative, is often approached from the perspective of social action (Gubrium and Holstein 2009). Social scientists analyze stories with a specific view to the functions they may serve in different social contexts, ranging from family life (McLean 2016) to organizational management (Boje 2001) to politics (Miskimmon et al. 2014). Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein have introduced two concepts for analyzing the “narrative realities” in which stories operate: *narrative work* and *narrative environments*. The former concept designates “the interactional activity through which narratives are constructed, communicated, and sustained or reconfigured,” whereas the latter represents “the contexts within which the work of story construction and storytelling gets done” (xvii).

The Cross-Talk methodology (CTM) integrates different forms of narrative work, including narrative interviews, the creation of migrant stories, and the public presentation of these stories. Cross-Talk interviews (CT interviews) consist of conversations between interviewers and migrants during which the latter group is invited to tell their life stories. The idea is to create safe narrative environments for migrants where they can share their experiences and their views without being judged or having to fear any consequences. The results of the CT interviews are then worked into Cross-Talk stories (CT stories), i.e., stories of migration that reflect the interviewees experiences.² With the migrants’ consent, these stories are re-enacted by stakeholders in front of a public audience, and, in some cases, translated into art-based products such as performances or films.³

Combining thematic and formal analysis, this study investigates the narrative work that comes to the fore in the CT interviews, the second step of CTM. While my thematic analysis of the CT interviews draws on frame analysis, a method widely used in the social sciences (see, e.g., van Dijk 2023 and van Hulst et al. 2024), my formal analysis takes its inspiration from narratology which opens new perspectives on interview material.⁴ In *Narrative Discourse*, a standard works for narratology, Gérard Genette (1980 [1972]) distinguishes three meanings of the term *narrative*: The first refers to the narrative content, i.e., the succession of events that make up a story; the second to the narrative discourse, i.e., the ways in which the events are presented; and the third to the act of narration itself (25–27). According to Genette, narrative analysis consists in the study of the relationships between these different meanings of narrative: “on the one hand the relationship between a discourse and the events that it recounts [...], on the other hand the relationship between the same discourse and the act that produces it” (27). A narratological analysis of the CT interviews consequently allows us not only to describe the structure of the conversation between interviewer and interviewee, but also to examine how the act of (co-)narration manifests itself in the text. Two concepts that are particularly useful for this undertaking are tellability and the notion of ‘broken’ narrative.

Tellability, a concept from conversational storytelling, comprises the “features that make a story worth telling” (Baroni 2014, 836). Stories with a high degree of tellability are often perceived as “worthy of being reported in specific contexts” (836), whereas stories with a low degree of tellability tend to be regarded as irrelevant. The question of whether a story is considered suitable to be told in a specific context can be approached from both a conversational and a thematic perspective (Sommer 2017, 218–219). In scenarios of conversational storytelling, tellability “is often negotiated and progressively co-constructed through discursive interaction” (Baroni 2014, 836). From a thematic angle, by contrast, the

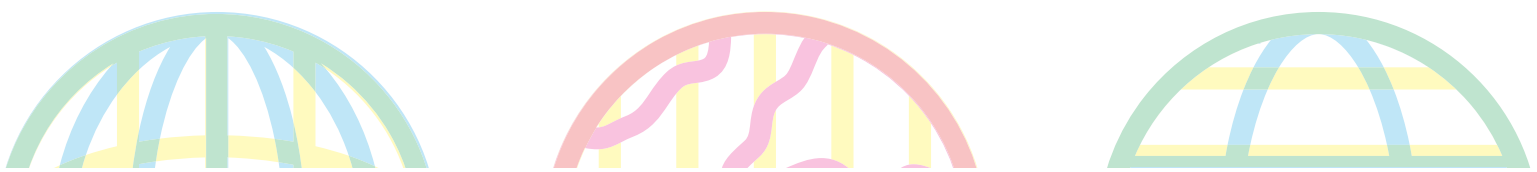


reportability of a story is often assessed in relation to “the everyday, quotidian untellable,” which constitutes the “lower-bounding side” of tellability (Norrick 2005, 323): If a story does not exhibit a certain degree of “newness, reportability, uniqueness and/or humor,” or if it does not at least offer “the prospect of conarration” (323), it does not meet the minimum requirements to be considered ‘worth telling.’

Notions of tellability need to be distinguished from an “individual’s need and urge to share personal experience with others and a community’s desire to learn about otherwise inaccessible experiences through such testimonials and life stories” (Sommer 2023, 53). In the context of migration, individual and collective interests in narrative are often in conflict. For example, many stories dealing with experiences of flight or forced displacement tend to lie on the “dark” or “upper-bounding” side of tellability (Norrick 2005), as their recounting might evoke traumatic memories or put storytellers or other affected persons in danger. Scenarios of this kind give rise to what can be described as a “narrative dilemma” (Sommer 2023, 54): More often than not lived experiences of migration are too painful and too risky for those affected to share; yet the public needs to learn about such testimonies in order to become aware of the complexities of migrants’ situations. Although CT interviews are not designed to facilitate psychological work, participants may nevertheless choose to share difficult experiences with their interviewer. If such a decision ultimately results in the transgression of the upper-bounding side of tellability, it may affect the act of (co-)narration, rendering the conversation difficult for both interlocutors.

A concept that proves helpful to analyze such conversational challenges in the context of CT interviews is that of *broken narrative*. Originating from the fields of health and illness studies, trauma studies, and life writing (Nünning and Nünning 2016, 40–48), the notion of broken narrative is often used to refer to the psychological effects of memory that hinder storytellers from sharing their experiences in a way that meets conventional ideas about well-formed, coherent stories.⁵ In their study on the role of narrative in emotion-focused therapy, for instance, Lynne E. Angus and Leslie S. Greenberg (2011, 59) describe “broken stories” as “states of narrative incoherence in which competing plotlines, and their accompanying emotions, block client’s efforts to achieve an integrated understanding of an emotionally unresolved or traumatic life-experience.”

From the perspective of literary narratology, by contrast, narrative brokenness is defined exclusively on the basis of formal characteristics. In narratological terms, a story qualifies as an example of broken narrative if it exhibits “a central event or kernel that revolves around a break, break-up or disruption” and that “entails a high degree of eventfulness” (Nünning and Nünning 2016, 55). Any broken narrative, moreover, “display[s] a profound lack of the various dimensions of narrative coherence,” which can become manifest through “temporal discontinuity and fragmentation, questioning or suspension of causality, and ‘abrupt discontinuities within and between topics’” (55). A closer look at these features reveals that narrative brokenness is not necessarily indicative of a psychological condition that prevents storytellers from articulating more coherent narratives. On the contrary, incoherence, fragmentation, and discontinuity can also serve as deliberate means to preserve narrative authority, for example in an attempt not to violate narrative taboos and to maintain control over the act of storytelling. Seen in this light, broken narrative can be conceptualized as a mode of representation that oscillates between pathologized forms of narrative incoherence and affirmations of narrative authority. As my narratological analysis of the CT interviews will show (see section 5), narrative authority can be expressed through various narrative strategies that serve to compensate for narrative incoherence, such as metanarrative comments, the use of ellipses, second-person address, or the recourse to metaphors and tropes.



3. The Austrian Cross-Talk Interview: Text Corpus and Methodology

Theresa Klinglmayr and Fatemeh Razaaee, members of the International Research Center for Social and Ethical Questions (ifz) in Salzburg, conducted interviews with migrants from Middle Eastern countries between December 2021 and June 2022, using CMT. The semi-structured interviews started with a series of questions designed to encourage participants to share their experiences freely. The interviewers had also prepared a set of standardized questions which served as additional narrative stimuli in case the interviewees needed support during the storytelling process (the questionnaire is provided in the appendix). Most interviews were carried out as in-person conversations at the ifz; only one interview was held via a video call. All interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed in an anonymized form.

Before the actual interview sessions, the ifz organized three preparatory events during which the interviewers and the participants could get to know each other in an informal atmosphere. The main purpose of these meetings was twofold: First, they served to establish mutual trust between the participants and the interviewers, preparing the ground for a narrative environment in which the participants felt comfortable and secure to tell their stories. Second, these meetings enabled the participants to exchange their experiences of migration, flight, and forced displacement as well as their views on life in Austria, thus giving them a forum to share their views on migration and integration. The interviewers used the outcome of these discussions to create the thematic sections and the sample questions for the interview guidelines.

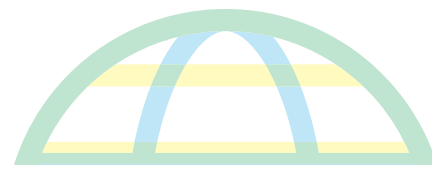
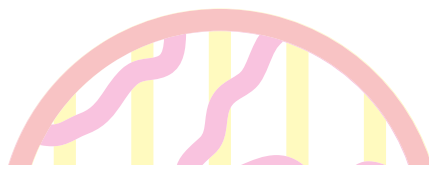
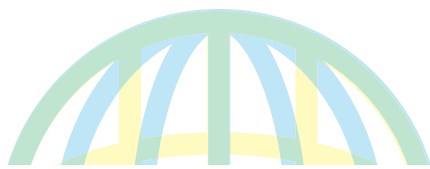
The ifz conducted fifteen interviews in total. Six of the interview partners, aged between 20 and 45, were female and nine were male. Seven participants came from Iran,⁶ five from Afghanistan. Two further interview partners had previously immigrated to Austria from Syria, and one from Iraq. While the majority of the interviewed group had fled their country of origin to escape war, violence, and persecution, some of the participants also mentioned other migration causes such as family migration and student mobility. Table 1 provides a list of interview partners, stating their gender, nationality, and reasons for migration.

My analysis of the Austrian CT interviews builds strongly on previous research conducted within the OPPORTUNITIES project, particularly an interdisciplinary study of 91 journalistic interviews with politicians, experts, and stakeholders that were published in Austrian newspapers in September 2015 and March 2022 (Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023). The goal was a comparative analysis of the representation of migration at the peak of the so-called European refugee crisis of 2015/16 and immediately after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Combining frame analysis with a narratological close reading, the paper foregrounded not only the topics covered in the interviews, but also the ways in which these topics were represented by the interviewees. The comparison of the findings from our study on Austrian journalistic interviews with the results from the analysis of the Austrian CT interviews in this paper enables me to juxtapose medial representations of migration with actual stories of migration in the same national context.



Table 1: Sociographic Data of the Interview Partners of the Austrian Cross-Talks

Interview Partner	Gender	Country of Origin	Migration Cause
Interview 1	female	Afghanistan	family migration
Interview 2	male	Afghanistan	flight
Interview 3	female	Afghanistan	flight
Interview 4	female	Afghanistan	flight
Interview 5	male	Iran	flight
Interview 6	male	Afghanistan	flight
Interview 7	female	Iran	family migration
Interview 8	male	Iran	flight
Interview 9	male	Iran	student mobility
Interview 10	male	Iraq	flight
Interview 11	male	Syria	flight / family migration
Interview 12	female	Iran	flight
Interview 13	male	Iran (but Afghan nationality)	flight
Interview 14	male	Iran	flight
Interview 15	female	Syria	flight



4. Thematic Analysis: Frames and Topics

It is a well-established fact that news media draw on certain frames when discussing migration (Bachmann-Medick and Kugele 2018, 3–4),⁷ and this is true for all kinds of conversation on the issue. In the corpus of the Austrian CT interviews I identified no less than 14 frames and topics that were repeatedly used by the interviewees to talk about migration. These include ‘citizenship,’ ‘cultural differences,’ ‘discrimination,’ ‘education,’ ‘family,’ ‘gender,’ ‘income,’ ‘integration,’ ‘media,’ ‘mental health,’ ‘politics,’ ‘religion,’ ‘security,’ and ‘stereotyping.’ Figure 1 shows all these frames in ascending order of the frequency with which they were deployed in the interview corpus.

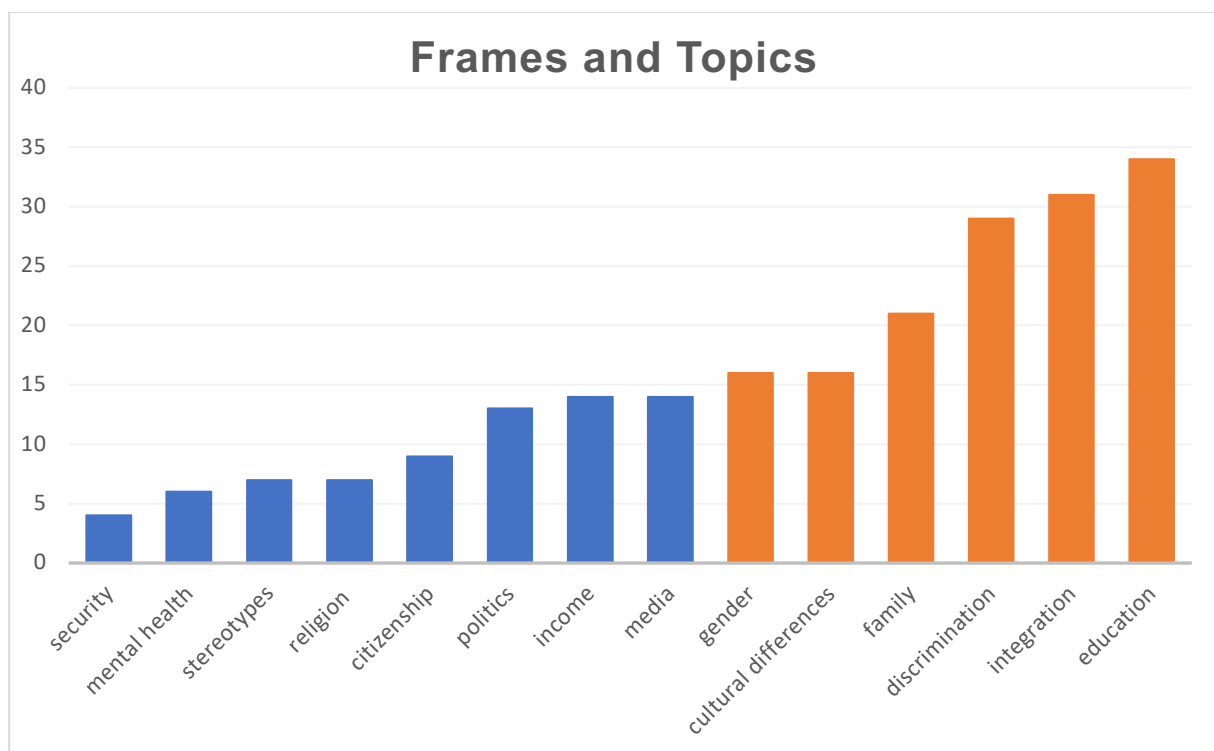


Figure 1: An Overview of the Frames Deployed and Topics Discussed in the Austrian CT Interviews

The frames colored in blue are mentioned between four and fourteen times in all interviews. Among these frames, ‘security’ is primarily used in connection with migration triggers: Some migrants mention that the lack of security was the main reason why they fled from their home country (Interview 12, 105; Interview 14, 118), whereas others stress that they appreciate the possibility of living in security in Austria (Interview 1, 7; Interview 8, 73). Closely linked to the frame of ‘security’ is that of ‘mental health’: More than half of the migrants who mention this aspect state that either they themselves or their family

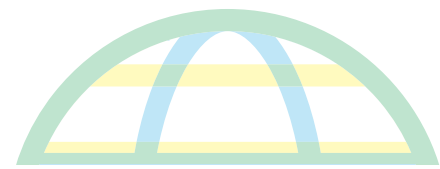
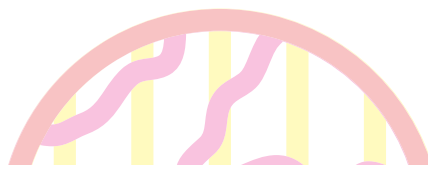
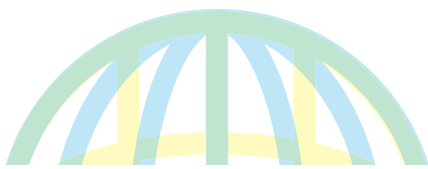
members are traumatized by experiences of flight, violence, or persecution (Interview 13, 108; Interview 14, 118; Interview 15, 125); in other cases, the topic is addressed primarily in connection with the question of how the migrants deal with challenges of integration (Interview 7, 63; Interview 12, 102). When the interviewees mention the topic of *'stereotyping'*, they typically recount negative responses to their status as asylum seekers or refugees within society in general (e.g., Interview 6, 55) or within their working environment in particular (e.g., Interview 3, 27; Interview 12, 102).

When it comes to *'income'*, it is striking that the interviewees often speak about the financial challenges they have to face in Austria due to unemployment or the lack of a recognized education (Interview 1, 8; Interview 3, 29, 31; Interview 11, 96–97). As Bahtić-Kunrath and I found out in our analysis of journalistic interviews, politicians often argue that migrants come to Austria primarily for economic reasons (Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023, 46). In this respect, the accounts of the migrants interviewed by ifz form a strong counter-narrative to the dominant views in public discourse.⁸ With regard to the topic of *media*, by contrast, the CT interviews convey a picture that reflects the findings from our previous study: When the interviewees are asked about how migration is represented in the media, the majority bemoans a fairly one-sided portrayal, criticizing that migrants are typically depicted in a negative light.⁹ This is in synch with our findings that in the 2015 corpus of journalistic interviews negative frames of migration outweigh positive or neutral ones (Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023, 50, esp. Figure 1).¹⁰

The frames highlighted in orange in Figure 1 occur more frequently than the frames indicated in blue, with the first example being *'gender'*. Our study of representations of migration in Austrian newspapers shows that, in the 2015 corpus of journalistic interviews, this frame is primarily used by politicians when addressing questions of *'deservingness'* and the stereotypical distinction between *'good'* and *'bad'* migrants (47). In the respective interviews, female migrants are depicted as vulnerable and in need of protection, whereas male migrants with a Muslim background are presented as a threat to Austrian culture (51), most specifically its democratic values and its ideas of gender equality (55–56).

In the stories of migration emerging from the Austrian CT interviews, the frame of *'gender'* is deployed by male and female interviewees from Afghanistan, Iran, and Syria. While all of these interviews confirm the view that the role of women is different in these countries than in Austria, only very few of these stories provide any basis for the public's fear that immigrants from Eastern countries endanger values of gender equality in Austria.¹¹ Quite the contrary, most interviewees emphasize positively that women have more rights in Austria (e.g., Interview 12, 102, 105; Interview 15, 127), and some of them even criticize the ways in which women are treated in their home countries: One of the female interviewees explains that she could never understand why girls do not have the same opportunities as boys do in Afghanistan, explaining that her wish for independence was the main reason why she decided to flee from home (Interview 4, 37–38); a male interview partner finds fault with the lack of feminist awareness-raising in Afghanistan (Interview 2, 20–21); and another female Afghani interviewee talks about her older brother who is with her in Austria and fervently supports all her efforts to complete an apprenticeship (Interview 3, 30). All these examples suggest that migrants from Afghanistan, Iran, and Syria do not wish to challenge values such as gender equality, but that they have actually come to Austria because they believe in these values themselves. The stories of migration that materialize in the CT interviews thus align with each other, creating a counter-narrative to the gender stereotypes perpetuated in the media.¹²

Closely related to (and even used more often than) the frame of *'gender'* is that of *'family'*. Most of the interviewees talk about the difficulties of leaving their kin behind and having to tackle life in a foreign country without being able to rely on a family network.¹³ The geographical distance to their kin poses a problem particularly to the female interviewees who struggle with childcare responsibilities, for example because they would like to work but cannot find a place in childcare facilities for their offspring (Interview 1, 8). The male participants who mention the topic rather talk about their desire to start a family in the (not too distant) future (e.g., Interview 6, 58, 60; Interview 9, 79; Interview 10, 8). Even though the ways



in which the interviewees address the topic of kinship in dependence of their gender tend to confirm traditional gender roles, they nevertheless serve to subvert the dominant narrative of the male migrant coming to Europe with the intention of bringing the rest of their family along later (see, e.g., Strindberg 2015).

A frame which is used as frequently as 'gender' is '*cultural differences*.' The topic comes up most often in connection with political and individual freedom,¹⁴ women's rights (Interview 1, 6; Interview 4, 39–40), and food.¹⁵ Notions of 'cultural difference' are depicted as both an obstacle to and an opportunity for integration. One of the male Iranian interviewees, for instance, reflects on his past experiences of cultural shock when he found out that, in Austria, people are allowed to kiss each other on the street (which is prohibited in his home country) and that boys do not have to cut their hair when going to school, which he was obliged to do in Iran (Interview 5, 46). One of the female Afghani interviewees, by contrast, recounts that she wanted to learn more about Austrian culture and has therefore been trying to have more contact with Austrian citizens through a godparenthood program (Interview 3, 27). Irrespective of how the interview partners deal with cultural differences, all interviews addressing this topic suggest a genuine interest in and openness toward Austrian culture. In this respect, the accounts of the interviewees counter-act the view purported by some politicians in the news media that the Austrian population would have to defend their cultural values against migrants from Eastern countries (Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023, 55–56).

The topic of cultural differences also raises questions about how migrants interact with Austrian citizens. These questions are mainly negotiated through the frames of 'discrimination,' 'education,' and 'integration.' As our previous study of representations of migration in Austrian newspapers shows, notions of 'othering,' and the concomitant divide between 'us' and 'them,' are frequently used in journalistic interviews to foreground cultural differences between migrants and the Austrian population (Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023, 47, 50). Such ideas also inform the CT interviews, albeit to a different degree: When the migrant interviewees reflect upon the differences between everyday life in Austria and their countries of origin and the challenges of overcoming these differences, they mostly depict these issues in a positive light, sidestepping the concept of 'othering.'

This impression changes, however, if we focus on their accounts of how members of the Austrian society respond to them. In almost all interviews, the participants state that they have already felt discriminated against by Austrians, sharing experiences from various contexts and in various settings, ranging from work to leisure activities, from situations in public institutions (e.g., at school or university, in hospital, or in social service offices) to encounters on the open street, from conflicts with neighbors to incidents within their circle of friends.¹⁶ The migrants' stories thus serve to illustrate that the frame of 'othering' that is perpetuated in Austrian newspapers clearly has a negative impact on the everyday lives of migrants from the Middle East, hindering their attempts to settle in Austrian society. This becomes even more obvious if we consider the positive coverage of Ukrainian refugees (Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023, 51) – an aspect which is also thematized by the migrants interviewed during the CT conversations: Six of the interviewees talk about the fact that Ukrainian refugees seem to have more rights in Austria than other asylum seekers, voicing their lack of understanding for this distinction between privileged and non-privileged migrants.¹⁷

Notions of discrimination and othering also shine through when the interviewees talk about their profession and educational status. '*Education*' constitutes the most dominant, yet at the same time less controversial frame of migration that the interview partners draw on in their accounts. While only one of the interviewees explains that working in Austria without having been granted asylum is almost impossible (Interview 14, 117), there are quite a number of migrants who recount that they are currently practicing a profession for which they are overqualified because their previous training and education in their home country has not been accepted in Austria (Interview 8, 72; Interview 10, 83–84; Interview 12, 101). Another factor that has impeded them from continuing to work in their field of expertise is the

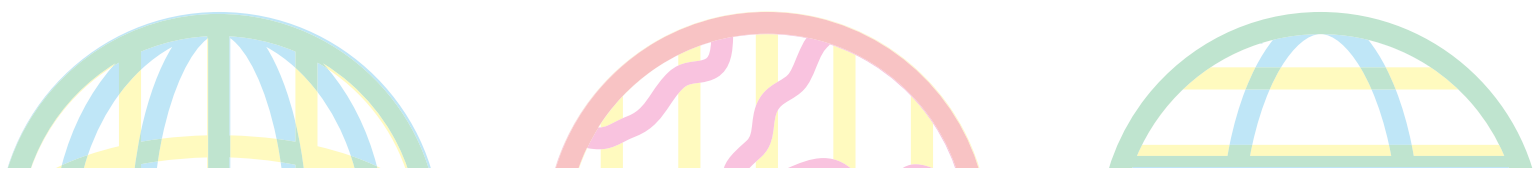


language barrier (Interview 7, 62; Interview 12, 101). Almost all of the migrants interviewed during the Austrian CT conversations attach great importance to a good education and express their hopes for being able to receive more sophisticated jobs in the future or to begin or continue pursuing their studies.¹⁸ Such aspirations not only testify to the migrants' ambition and persistence – for example, one of the migrants informs the interviewer that he took and passed his final exams only a few days after he learned about his negative asylum decision (Interview 6, 53) – but they also show that most of the interviewees possess a high degree of motivation and resilience, as they do not let forms of discrimination in the workspace discourage them (e.g., Interview 1, 11).

In diametrical opposition to discrimination is the framing of '*integration*.' While the Austrian journalistic interviews that we analyzed often tend to address integration with recourse to humanitarian or pragmatic frames which are primarily neutral or positively connoted – for example as they purport views that helping refugees integrate into Austrian society is either a moral duty or the best way of dealing with rising numbers of new arrivals to the country (Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023, 48, 55) – the stories of migration that emerge from the CT interviews present a more negative outlook on the topic. The majority of interviewees who discuss questions of integration explains that it is difficult to be accepted by society. The reasons for this are manifold, including language barriers (e.g., Interview 2, 23; Interview 5, 46; Interview 7, 62), reserved and prejudiced reactions from members of Austrian society (e.g., Interview 3, 25–26; Interview 12, 101), a pending asylum decision and residence permit (Interview 6, 54), or the lack of interest in the migrants' culture on the part of Austrian citizens (Interview 10, 83). Despite these difficulties, however, many migrant interviewees report that they have found a new community in Austria (e.g., Interview 5, 47–48; Interview 6, 58; Interview 13, 109–110) or at least express their wish to make new friends within Austrian society (Interview 8, 72), and many migrants positively highlight the support they have received from institutions and organizations that engage in refugee work in this context.¹⁹ Whereas the majority of the interview partners show their appreciation of the new bonds they have already formed in Austria, there are also quite a few interviewees who echo the call for a reciprocal integration that we can observe in some of the journalistic interviews from the 2015 corpus of our study of news coverage of migration in Austria.²⁰ This becomes most obvious in cases where the interviewees explain that it is impossible for migrants to integrate themselves into Austrian society solely on their own initiative, demanding that the Austrian society also "take a step toward [migrants]" (Interview 8, 71; my translation) and become more open and welcoming toward foreigners (Interview 11, 93, 99).²¹

The results of my frame analysis of the Austrian CT interviews show that the stories of migration that emerge from this text corpus foreground completely different frames and topics than the narratives on migration produced by Austrian news media. As we have demonstrated in our previous study of Austrian newspapers, journalistic interviews discuss the topic of migration mainly in relation to political, economic, humanitarian, and ideological questions (Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023, 49, esp. Table 4). Framing strategies that are used with marked frequency in the 2015 corpus of our study accordingly involve economic, political, and humanitarian framing, but also the frames 'deservingness,' 'othering,' and 'security' (50, esp. Figure 1). In the CT interviews, by contrast, the most frequently used frames involve completely different topics, namely 'gender,' 'cultural differences,' 'family,' 'discrimination,' 'integration,' and 'education.' Table 2 below lists all framings identified in both analyses, with overlaps indicated in the same line.

As this juxtaposition illustrates, the lived experiences of the CT participants appear to differ significantly from the realities produced by the newspapers investigated in our previous study (note that there are only two overlapping frames in both studies, namely 'politics'/political framing and 'security'). In this respect, the stories of migration emerging from the CT interviews display a high degree of tellability: By offering new perspectives on migration and thus creating multiperspectivity, they emphasize the complexity of the topic, which should be given greater consideration in public debates. As some of these stories even challenge the narratives on migration we frequently encounter in public discourse – think,



for example, of the migrants' account of their financial problems, which stand in stark contrast to voices arguing that migrants try to seek economic advantages, or the migrants' positive views on gender equality, which refute fears that especially male migrants from the Middle East could endanger Western values – they, moreover, provide important correctives to (some of) the framing strategies dominating in news coverage. The next section investigates how the stories's tellability is negotiated on a formal level and to what extent it bears on the act of narration.

Table 2: Juxtaposition of Frames Used in Austrian CT Interviews and Journalistic Interviews in Austrian Newspapers

Frames in CT Interviews	Frames in Journalistic Interviews in Newspapers
	affectedness
citizenship	
cultural differences	
	deservingness
discrimination	
	economy
education	
family	
gender	
	humanitarianism
income	
integration	
media	
mental health	
	othering
politics	political framing
	pragmatic framing
religion	
security	security
stereotypes	
	victimization



5. Narratological Close Reading: Tellability, Broken Stories, and Narrative Authority

In all CT interviews, the first narrative stimulus introduced by the interviewers invites the interviewees to engage in retrospection.²² More specifically, the interviewers ask the participants to begin to tell their stories from the moment they arrived in Austria and to recall how they have experienced their time in the country so far (see first question in the questionnaire in the appendix). In their responses to this question, the individual interviewees do not only foreground different events and circumstances, but they also take different amounts of time to remember their past experiences of mobility: While most of them elaborate at length on their previous situation in their home country (Interviews 4, 7, 8) or their journey to and arrival in Austria (Interviews 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15), others only briefly summarize these stages of their lives, quickly turning to their present situation in Austria, instead (Interviews 3). My analysis focuses on both these aspects, showing how the participants recollect experiences from their past as well as reflect upon their current situations.

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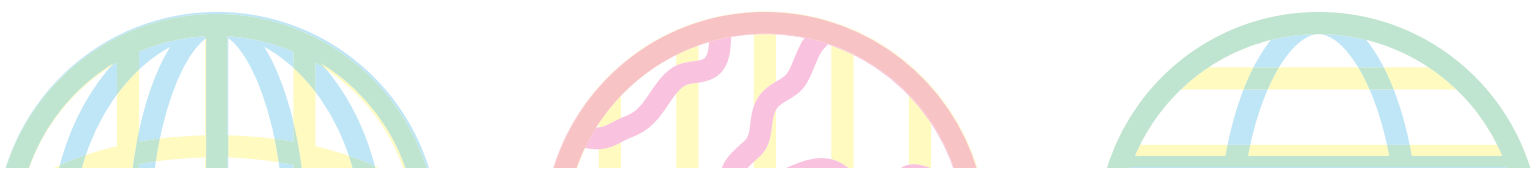
5.1 Examples of Migrants' Act of Retrospective Narration

The ways in which the interviewees look back on their experiences of migration can be best illustrated by having a closer look at the beginning of an interview with a male refugee from Iran who remembers his flight to Austria:

Okay, it all started in 2015, **when** many of, yes, what has been referred to as the refugee wave [arrived], and I was a drop of it, so to speak, and (...) exactly, I think that was at the end of the summer or, no, it was in the autumn **when** I came, and my whole journey lasted about a month and yes, almost exactly about a month and (...) exactly, I was travelling all alone with a friend. [...] Well, by all alone I mean that my family wasn't with me, but that I was travelling with a friend. And yes, we set off, as everyone knows it, with a smuggler and that's it. **Then** we were in, **then** I was in, I think I was in Salzburg in August, no, in November 2015, **that's when** I arrived. **That's when** I applied for asylum here and since then I've been living in Salzburg. (Interview 5, 44; my emphasis)

As this passage demonstrates, the stories that the migrants share in the CT interviews exhibit typical features of (solicited) oral storytelling (Fludernik 2014, 94). The interviewee often corrects himself ("I think that was at the end of the summer or, no, it was in the autumn when I came"; "I think I was in Salzburg in August, no, in November 2015"), as he tries to reconstruct the timeline of his journey to Austria. He recounts in chronological order that he traveled together with a friend, that they were brought to Austria by human traffickers, and that he has now applied for asylum; yet his account lacks causality, which becomes obvious through the exclusive use of temporal conjunctions (see my emphasis).

What is even more striking when approaching the passage from the perspective of "event modeling" (Sommer 2023, 499–501) is that, at this point of his account, the interviewee does not talk about anything that happened during his journey to Austria, nor does he reveal any details about the process of his asylum application. He offers very little insights into his experiences at the beginning of the interview,



working with a series of ellipses, instead. Nonetheless, these narrative gaps do not render his story uneventful or incomprehensible; indeed, the interviewee's account is far from being 'broken' or incoherent, given that he draws on a popular trope that his interlocutors know from media coverage of migration: By evoking the metaphor of the "refugee wave" that was often used in European media to describe the increase of refugee movements toward Europe in 2015/2016 and describing himself as a "drop" of this deluge,²³ he manages to articulate his past situation without actually saying anything about concrete events. For the notion of the refugee wave immediately brings to mind the images of refugee boats, large groups on the move, and long queues of people waiting at border checkpoints that circulated in the news at the time,²⁴ so that his interlocutors can infer that his own journey must have been similar to the depictions in these media accounts.

Only as the interview progresses does the interviewee reveal more about his individual experiences. When one of the interviewees asks him about a particularly memorable event since his arrival in Austria, he replies by sharing more details about his flight:

Yes, the thing that I (...) can't forget is that when I was still in Iran and the people smuggler said to me, because there were four of us sitting in the back, there were three, no, or there were five of us sitting in the back, no, or there were four, **I can't remember exactly** anymore. But they were all grown men and I was the youngest, so to speak, and a lady with a baby was sitting right in the front and then I was the smallest, so to speak, and the smuggler stopped briefly at a rest stop and said to me: **"Well, get out of the car, you have to get into the trunk. There's no room in the back. And it can happen during a police control that they say, well, why are there so many people and you have to go to the back."** So I got out of the car, there's nothing you can say against it, that's the way it is. I got out of the car, **there were actually people watching**, and I lay down and said yes sleep well and then the trunk was closed and everything was completely dark, like in a horror movie. (Interview 5, 44; my emphasis)

The interviewee here recalls an incident from his passage to Austria when he was forced to get into the trunk of the car that was supposed to bring him and other refugees across the border. In light of these circumstances, one could expect the narrative account to exhibit signs of broken narrative that would point to the difficulties of such experience. Interestingly, however, the interviewee's narrative displays a high degree of resilience in this context: Although the interviewee has difficulties remembering the exact number of how many refugees were sitting in the car, he explicitly addresses this memory gap in a meta-narrative comment ("I can't remember exactly anymore"),²⁵ thus keeping control over his act of storytelling. This impression is further enhanced by his vivid description of the incidence: Not only does he quote verbatim what the smuggler told him to do (see the second emphasis in the quote), but he also recalls that there were bystanders who witnessed him climbing into the trunk ("there were actually people watching"). In order to convey the feeling of fear he was experiencing in this situation, he draws on the narrative strategy of a simile, comparing the situation to a scene from a horror movie.

The passage serves to illustrate that some of the stories shared during the CT interviews feature experiences of migration that border on the "dark" or "upper-bounding" side of tellability. Since these experiences are too traumatic, they cannot be told right away. Instead, the reporting of these events – if they can be shared at all – requires some discursive preparation in that interviewee and interviewer first need to create a narrative space based on mutual trust and understanding. This entails not only that the migrants have to feel comfortable enough to share painful memories with their interlocutors, but the interviewers need to make sure that the interviewees can interrupt or even terminate the act of narration whenever necessary: At some point in his account, the interviewee implies that he would rather stop recalling the horrible experiences of his flight ("I actually don't like looking back into the past like that" [Interview 5, 45]), and one of the interviewers immediately suggests that they could also focus on the future ("You don't have to. We can talk more about the future now" [45]). In response, the interviewee



ends the difficult episode of his story on a short, but effective ellipsis – “Then we were suddenly here” – expressing his relief through laughing (45).

That respecting narrative taboos is an integral part of co-narration in the context of CT interviews becomes even more obvious if we compare the interviewee's account of his flight to another passage from his interview in which he recalls how he learned German at the Berufsförderungsinstitut (BFI), the Austrian Center for Training and Further Education. The course, he recounts, was taught by a woman who did not know how to deal with teenagers, which is why he soon lost his motivation. However, this changed when he noticed that he was falling behind the other course participants who were able to speak German fluently after a few months: “That's when it clicked for me [...] and from then on, I really started to learn [...] And then [...] I set myself the goal to improve my language. Then I could do anything. Then the world was open to be.” (Interview 5, 57) The interviewee here describes a moment of epiphany, which he presents as an important turning point that changed his situation in Austria:²⁶ After realizing that a sufficient command of German could create opportunities for him, he turned into a diligent student at school who now strives to go to university in the future. While at the beginning of the interview, he presents himself as a storyteller who tries to replace his own experiences of flight with narrative templates that evoke narratives on migration that we know from the media (think of the inundation metaphor and the comparison to a horror movie), he now assumes full authority over his life story by identifying important events that have shaped his life in Austria so far.

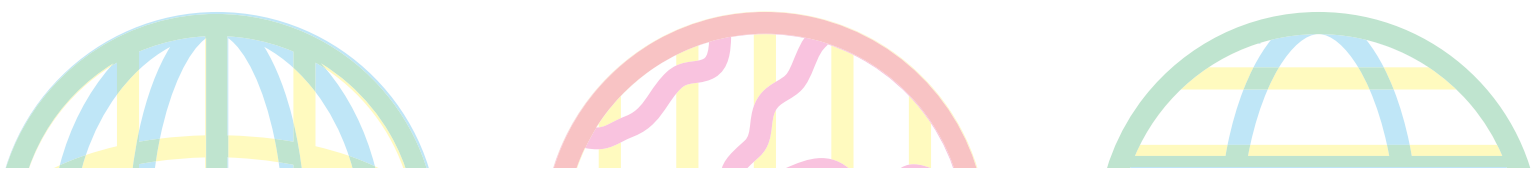
In view of this development, then, the given interview serves to illustrate that features of narrative ‘brokenness,’ such as fragmentation, the lack of causality, and narrative gaps, shouldn't automatically be taken as signs of a storyteller's inability to share or make sense of their experiences. Quite the contrary. They can also be used as an effective means to ‘save’ a story and restore the narrative agency of vulnerable storytellers. In the given example, the interview and thus the act of storytelling can only continue after the migrant's account of his experiences of flight because all conversation partners agree that they do not want to violate any narrative taboos by transgressing the upper boundary of tellability. Instead of trying to further unpack the traumatic experiences that the storyteller had to endure and press these experiences into the conventionalized schemes of a completely coherent narrative, they agree on changing the subject, which eventually allows them to continue their conversation and mutual performance of co-narration.

5.2 Examples of Migrant's Reflections on Their Current Situation

Once the challenges of talking about the past have been overcome, the interviewers invite the migrants to reflect on their current situation in the host country. What is striking in this respect is that, despite linguistic difficulties – there are some interviewees who intermittently switch to their mother tongue (e.g., Interview 1, 7; Interview 4, 37; Interview 7, 63) – the majority of these accounts are very elaborate. Consider the following excerpt from an interview with a female refugee from Iran:

I used to think that **I had no place in this society**. So, when I'm in the city or travelling on the bus or train, **I always thought I was too much** because, unfortunately, a lot of people also look at us somehow a bit uncomfortably. When my child cries, they all look like that (laughing), but when an Austrian child cries, nobody says anything. So, because of that and many bad experiences we make in the supermarket, on the bus, on the train, many people say bad things to us. [...] **That ruins your day and many other days (laughter). You know, then you don't have the nerve, the energy for it anymore.** (Interview 12, 112; my emphasis)

The interviewee here draws on both spatial and container metaphors to articulate her experiences of social exclusion (see my emphasis in the first two sentences): By explaining that she feels like there is



not enough space for her in society (spatial metaphor) and that she does not fit in (container metaphor), she gives her interlocutors a concrete idea of what it's like to be a foreigner in Austrian society.²⁷ This effect is reinforced by the shift from the use of first-person pronouns (*I* and *we*) to the use of the second-person pronoun *you* in the last two sentences of the quote (see my emphasis), which can be interpreted either as referring to a general *you* or as addressing the interlocutors.²⁸ If the latter is the case, the second-person pronoun invites the interlocutors to put themselves in the migrant storyteller's shoes and imagine what it must feel like to be discriminated against in everyday situations.

The observation that second-person narration features more than once in the CT interviews, moreover, suggests that it is a powerful strategy to address the problem of stereotyping that migrants are often confronted with in everyday life. A (male) interviewee from Afghanistan, for instance, also switches to second-person narration when he criticizes that asylum seekers are often reproached of seeking their own profit from living in Austria:

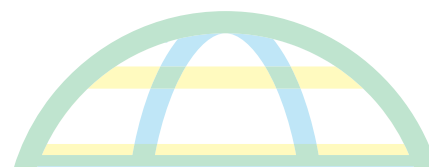
If **you** have asylum, **you're** allowed to go to work, **you** get help, ok, **you** are somehow praised. But before that **you** are someone who is probably, as I have been hearing for a long time in society, an economic migrant. **You're** here because **you** want to work, **you're** here, yes, because **you**, I don't know, (...) because **you**, because here it's like, there are such beautiful women here and **you** were never allowed to have contact with them in **your** country. [...] Nobody says, ok, **you're** here because **your** life was in danger. [...] They don't even ask the question "Why are you here?" and then **you** can explain why **you** are here and then the person can say "Ok, I understand your situation." And this prejudice, before anyone knows **you** and **your** situation, **you're** simply judged. (Interview 6, 55; my emphasis)

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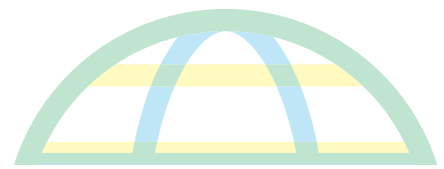
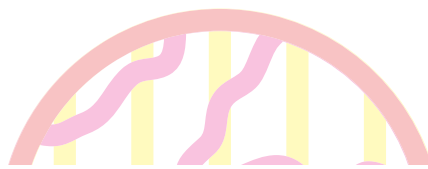
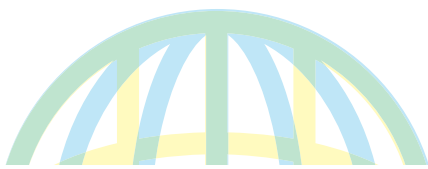
This storyteller uses the second-person pronoun in order to evoke empathy within the interlocutors, encouraging them to take his perspective.²⁹ Considering the communicative situation in which the CT interviews took place, the second-person pronoun here serves to create a bond between interviewee and interviewer, establishing a new constellation of 'us' vs. 'them' that does not fully subvert, but at least transforms, notions of 'othering': In this new constellation, 'us' incorporates the migrants and those members of society who listen to them and don't judge them solely on the basis of their status as asylum seekers and those members of society who have prejudices against migrants, approaching them with stereotypes. According to the storyteller, such stereotypes are nurtured in public debates on migration, and he considers them to be especially harsh when it comes to Afghani refugees, recalling that Herbert Kickl, party leader of Austria's right-wing populist party FPÖ, once referred to this group as "aggressive Afghani asylum seekers" (Interview 6, 55; my translation).³⁰ The verbal reaction of the interviewer ("Oh dear, that's tough!" [Interview 6, 55]) shows that she is as shocked as the interviewee when hearing this quote, which further strengthens the bond between both interlocutors by making the storyteller felt understood. The example thus demonstrates once more that narratives on migration that circulate in the media clearly have an impact on the lived experience of migration, as they not only determine the ways how the public responds to migrants and refugees, but also influence the everyday realities of this group, impeding any notions of conviviality and integration.

* * *

All in all, then, my narratological close readings of CT interviews have revealed that the stories that emerge from these conversations are far from being considered as broken narratives in the traditional sense. If these stories display any fragmentary or incoherent passages, this is either due to the oral set-up – undoubtedly, experiential narratives shared in conversations are by definition less structured than written life accounts – or because of the shared responsibility of both interviewer and interviewee to respect narrative taboos. In order to keep their stories within the acceptable range of tellability,



interviewees draw on a series of effectful narrative strategies such as the deliberate insertion of ellipsis, metanarration, and the use of tropes. Metaphors furthermore allow storytellers to express their feelings of exclusion and unbelonging in a vivid and comprehensible manner, thus fostering empathy within their interlocutors. This also holds for the strategy of second-person narration, which is primarily used to establish a bond between the conversation partners.



6. Conclusion

CT interviews are a useful method to encourage migrants to share their stories of migration, flight, or forced displacement, as well as their views on integration and inclusive societies. As my analysis of the Austrian CT interviews conducted during the OPPORTUNITIES project has shown, these semi-structured interviews empower storytellers in vulnerable positions to talk about their experiences in safe narrative environments. Although my analysis has concentrated exclusively on interviews, CTM does not stop there: By translating the interviews into stories, which are subsequently re-enacted by stakeholders in front of a public audience, CTM empowers migrants to participate in public debates on migration and integration. If CT stories are translated into art-based products such as theater performances or documentary films, they even reach an audience beyond the target group.

In this constellation, CT interviews are designed as a method that fosters narrative resilience. Granting storytellers authority over their narrative, the CT interviews respect narrative taboos in order to protect the participants and their stories. Storytellers are free to choose which parts of their life stories they want to talk about, and they can change the subject whenever they feel that the act of storytelling is becoming too stressful or challenging. Although many CT interviews bring forth what narratologists would identify as broken narratives, in this context, the notion of 'brokenness' does not imply that the stories emerging from the interviews are incoherent or incomplete. Rather, they are fragmentary out of necessity, as storytellers try to keep the conversation going by adhering to the acceptable limits of tellability.

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Indeed, from a narratological point of view, the migrant testimonies that come to the fore in the corpus of the Austrian CT interviews display a high degree of noteworthiness. By comparing the results of my frame analysis of the interview corpus with findings from a previous study of Austrian news coverage of migration, I was able to demonstrate that migrants tend to address completely different topics than politicians or journalists. As such, the stories shared during the CT interviews serve to create multiperspectivity by offering new perspectives on debates on migration. In addition, they debunk stereotypes that are fervently upheld by the public, thus producing important counter-narratives to dominant framings in migration discourses.

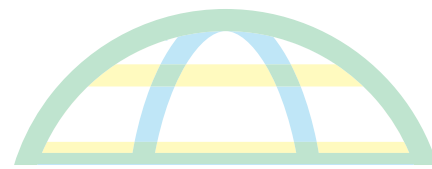
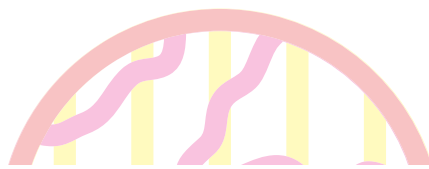
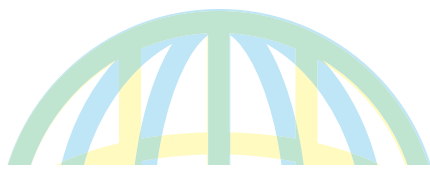
The observation that migrants have different views on migration than politicians and stakeholders may not really come as a surprise. Nevertheless, migration research often fails to highlight these differences, as case studies tend to focus on either migrants or on stakeholders as their target groups. Through an innovative combination of analytical frameworks from both qualitative social research (frame analysis) and literary studies (narratology), this article has introduced a new method that allows migration scholars to foreground the differences between migrants' perspectives and public views on migration and integration. It has moreover shown that the complex narrative dynamics of migration can only be adequately explored through the efforts of interdisciplinary collaborations that do not see disciplinary differences in approaching migration as an obstacle, but rather as a chance to develop new analytical frameworks in which the individual strengths of disciplinary approaches complement each other.

All in all, then, this contribution has once more stressed the importance of including migrants' voices in public debates as well as in research on migration. Not only do policy-makers and stakeholders need to start listening to migrants' stories, but research on migration also needs to find new and more sustainable ways to incorporate stories of migration, so that these accounts can have a more lasting impact on research findings. It is high time to stop talking about migrants and to finally start talking with them – in public discourse as well as in academia.



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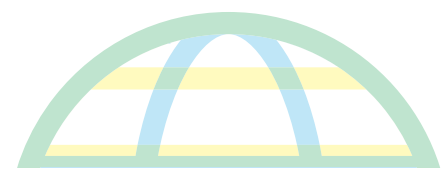
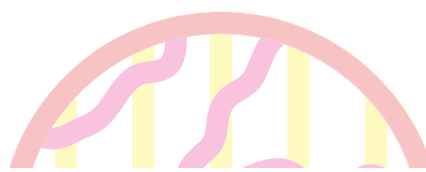
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Appendix: Guidelines for Individual Cross-Talk Interviews

1. Time in Austria

- When you think about your time in Austria, what were the most important moments for you?
- Is there any situation or an event that stands out in your memory?
- What do you think about Austria and life here?
- Do you remember any positive/negative experiences?
- What is different here from your home country?
- What did you do during the Corona lockdown? How did you feel?
- What made you laugh last week?

2. Family and Community Here in Austria

- Which people are particularly important to you here in Austria? Who do you have regular contact with?
- Do you still have family/friends in your home country? If so, how do you keep in touch with them?
- Where do you meet these people or your friends? In which places? What do you do?
- Do you have children? If so, what is your greatest wish for them?

3. Food as a Cultural Practice

- What do you think about the food here in Austria?
- What would a good meal be like for you? What is there to eat, who is there, where does it take place?
- Have you ever been invited to eat with Austrians? Have you ever invited Austrians? If so, what was it like?

4. Discrimination and Racism

- Do you often feel disadvantaged because of your origin? If so, can you give a specific example of the last time this happened?
- Which experience hurt you the most?
- How do you deal with it? What or who helps you?

5. Aspirations and Future

- What are you proud of in your life so far (in relation to your life here in Austria and in your home country)?
- When you think about the future, what is the most important thing you need so that you can be satisfied with your life?
- What would you like to see change in Austria, and why? How would that help you?
- If you won the lottery, what would you do?
- Where do you see yourself in five/ten/20 years?
- What would you like to achieve in your life?



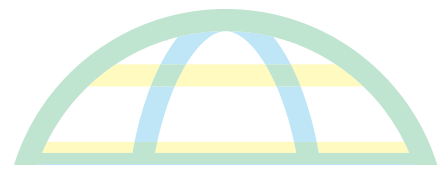
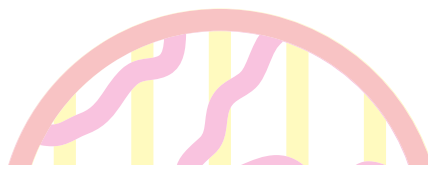
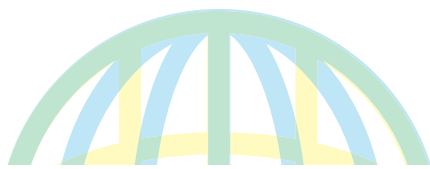
- What do you need to achieve this goal?
- Do you have the opportunities for this in Salzburg/Austria?
- What has to change for it to happen?

6. Media

- What do you think about the portrayal of migration, migrants, refugees, Islam/Muslims in the media?
- Do you see differences between different media?
- Do you see any changes?
- What changes/improvements would you suggest to media professionals/journalists?

7. With regard to Cross-Talks:

- Are you interested in talking about politics/recommendations for politicians?
- Is music/theatre/art/film/photography/other creative activity important to you?



Endnotes

¹ For a detailed description of CTM, see Debruyne et al. 2025.

² The OPPORTUNITIES project distinguishes between narratives on and stories of migration: While the former type of narrative presents migration from an outsider perspective, the latter deals with the lived experience of migration (Gebauer and Sommer 2024).

³ The CT stories from Belgium, France, Italy, and Mauritania, for example, were translated into (short) documentary films, and the CT stories from Ghana into a short film inspired by the genre of the soap opera. All films can be accessed via the OPPORTUNITIES website: <https://www.opportunitiesproject.eu/videos> (date of access: February 27, 2025).

⁴ For comprehensive overviews of the current state of the art in narrative inquiry, see, for example, Barnwell and Ravn 2024; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015; Riessmann 2008, 11–14; and Squire et al. 2013.

⁵ For a detailed discussion and critique of the coherence paradigm, see Hyvärinen et al. 2010.

⁶ One of the participants had fled from Iran, yet was of Afghan nationality.

⁷ Doris Bachmann-Medick and Jens Kugele (2018, 3) define the concept of “frames of migration” as “methodologically and epistemologically self-reflexive approaches to the complex field of migration,” which at the same time contribute to “shaping the field of socio-political experience and behavior that directly impacts the lives of migrants.”

⁸ On the notion of counter-narratives, see the contributions in Lueg and Lundholt 2021.

⁹ See, for example, Interview 8, 70–71; Interview 10, 84; Interview 12, 107; Interview 14, 119.

¹⁰ The fact that the interviews we investigated for the time frame of March 2022 that dealt primarily with Ukrainian refugees were predominantly positive does not have any relevance in this context, given that the CT interviews were conducted exclusively with migrants from Middle Eastern countries, who thus represent members of that group of migrants that were referred to in the media in 2015.

¹¹ The only exception that might stir up such anxiety is Interview 1, in which the interviewee reports that she has been violently abused by her husband (6–7).

¹² On narrative alignment, see Sommer 2023, 203.

¹³ See, e.g., Interview 1, 9; Interview 5, 45; Interview 7, 62; Interview 12, 104; Interview 14, 118; Interview 15, 131.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Interview 1, 18; Interview 4, 39–40; Interview 7, 66; and Interview 13, 109.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Interview 7, 64; Interview 11, 97; Interview 13, 112; and Interviews 14, 118.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Interview 1, 10; Interview 2, 21–22; Interview 4, 41; Interview 5, 46–47; Interview 6, 55–56; Interview 8, 69; Interview 9, 77; Interview 11, 93; Interview 12, 105; Interview 13, 108, 110, 111; Interview 14, 116–117; and Interview 15, 124–125.

¹⁷ See Interview 1, 12; Interview 3, 28–29; Interview 6, 61; Interview 10, 87; Interview 13, 114; and Interview 14, 117.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Interview 1, 9, 12–13; Interview 4, 38, 40; Interview 5, 46; Interview 8, 69–70; Interview 11, 58; Interview 13, 113; Interview 15, 126.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Interview 1, 10; Interview 5, 15; Interview 6, 52–53; Interview 7, 63; and Interview 15, 125.

²⁰ For example, we discuss an interview with Michael Landau, president of the Austrian Caritas Association, who makes a case for “double integration,” which he describes as, on the one hand, “an integration of people who are coming to Austria and who need to adapt to democratic values and the idea of gender equality, and on the other an



integration of members of Austrian society who are afraid of the foreigners who are coming to their country” (Bahtić-Kunrath and Gebauer 2023, 55).

²¹ The Austrian CT interviews were conducted in German; translations of the direct quotes are mine.

²² In his monograph *Hindsight: The Promise and Peril of Looking Backward* (2010), Mark Freeman defines retrospection or hindsight as “the process of looking back over the terrain of the past from the standpoint of the present and either seeing things anew or drawing ‘connections,’ as Birkerts had put it, that could not possibly be drawn during the course of ongoing moments but only in retrospect” (4). According to Freeman, this process entails both memory and narrative.

²³ For a discussion of dominant metaphors in public discourses on migration, see Arcimaviciene and Baglama 2018, 8–9; Fischer 2020, 39–40; Petersson and Kainz 2017, 53–55; and Schröter 2023, 46–50.

²⁴ On visual framing of migration in European media during the so-called refugee crisis, see Amores et al. 2019.

²⁵ In narratology, the term *metanarration* designates a narrator’s or storyteller’s “reflections on the act or process of narration” (Neumann and Nünning 2014, 204).

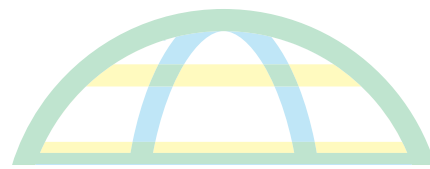
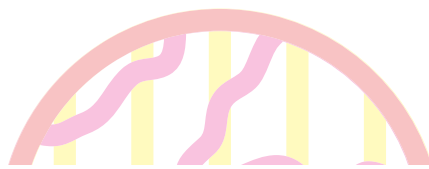
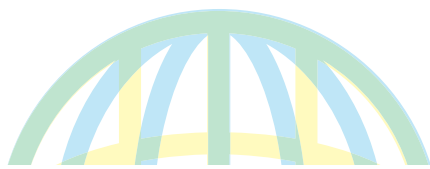
²⁶ For a discussion of turning points as a narratological category, see Nünning and Sicks 2012.

²⁷ On the various ways in which conceptual metaphors determine our perception and experience of everyday realities, see Lakoff and Johnson (2003).

²⁸ In this respect, the second-person pronoun here serves as a “doubly deictic *you* [which] ambiguates virtualized and actualized discourse referents or rather superimposes the deictic roles of nonparticipants and participants in the discourse” (Herman 1994, 392).

²⁹ See Keen 2007 and Nünning 2014, ch. 3 on the various ways in which narrative (strategies) can evoke empathy within narrative audiences.

³⁰ For Kickl’s original statement, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDuQKaHPdKE> (date of access: February 18, 2025).



An abstract graphic design featuring a white background with several overlapping geometric and organic shapes. On the left and right sides, there are two stylized globes or spheres. Each globe is composed of a grid of lines: a vertical green line, a horizontal yellow line, and a diagonal blue line. In the center, there is a red circle. Overlapping the red circle and the globes are several wavy, organic lines in pink and magenta. The text 'opportunities' is centered in a large, black, sans-serif font, and 'for a fair narrative on migration' is centered below it in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration