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# Archiving Migration and Social Class: A Case Study of Audio and Written Letters in DOMiD

**Abstract**

Drawing on critical perspectives on archival practices, this article discusses archival practices of migration in the German-speaking world. It focuses on a case study of a family that migrated from Turkey to West Germany as »guest workers« in the 1970s, with their materials now archived at DOMiD. The article explores how personal, familial, and social class backgrounds influence the production, archiving, and accessibility of communication materials. By juxtaposing and analyzing various data materials, such as audio recordings, written correspondence, and a biographical-narrative interview with the donor of materials, the article aims to uncover the richness and complexities of migration in general and the case of »suitcase children« in particular through a critical archival lens. This approach also facilitates a discussion of representation from the practices of collecting and archiving.

**Keywords**

(audio) letters, archives of migration, »guest workers«, juxtaposing narratives, memory, social class, »suitcase children«

## Migration und soziale Klasse im Archiv: Eine Fallstudie zur Audio- und Schriftkorrespondenz im DOMiD

**Zusammenfassung**

Ausgehend von kritischen Perspektiven auf Archivierung diskutiert dieser Beitrag archivarische Praktiken der Migration im deutschsprachigen Raum. Der Beitrag konzentriert sich auf die Fallstudie einer Familie, die in den

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1970er Jahren als »Gastarbeiter« aus der Türkei nach Deutschland migrierte und deren Materialien im DOMiD archiviert werden. Der Beitrag untersucht, wie persönliche, familiäre und soziale Hintergründe die Produktion, Archivierung und Zugänglichkeit von Kommunikationsmaterialien beeinflussen. Durch die Gegenüberstellung und Analyse verschiedener Daten wie Tonaufnahmen, schriftlicher Korrespondenz und einem biografisch-narrativen Interview mit einem Familienmitglied soll der Beitrag den Reichtum und die Komplexität von Migration durch eine kritische Archivperspektive aufzeigen und die Frage von Repräsentation auch aus der Sicht der Sammlung und Archivierung von relevantem Material diskutieren.

**Schlagwörter**

(Audio-)Briefe, Archive der Migration, Erinnerung, »Gastarbeiter*innen«, Gegenüberstellung der Erzählungen, soziale Klasse, »Kofferkinder«

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*»Because my history lies in the choices not recorded*
*About which stories should be hoarded*
*And called archives.«*
Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan

## 1 Introduction: Archival Practices of Migration from Turkey to West Germany and Austria[1]

Archives play a crucial role in preserving historical records; however, their creation, management, and decision-making processes, including the selection and cataloging of materials, are complex and often controversial (Wexler et al. 2023; Azoulay 2019; Blouin and Rosenberg 2006). Laura Wexler, Karintha Lowe, and Guigui Yao summarize various theoretical perspectives on archives:

> »According to Jacques Derrida, the archive is an acknowledged institutional space, guarded by powerful figures whose authority is sovereign. Michel Foucault theorizes the archive as a technology of power, while Diana Taylor likens it to a living repertoire of gestures. For Achille Mbembe, on the other hand, the archive is a murderous procedure that attempts to turn the colonized into ghosts.« (Wexler et al. 2023, p. 292)

**1** This article is based on a paper that was presented at the conference »Laboratory for Art-based Research: Reappropriation and Re-presentation of Documentaries and (Mediated) Memories« (FWF PEEK project AR 682).

These issues become even more pronounced, as Mbembe and others already suggest, when it is a matter of archiving the histories of minority migrants and other »subaltern subjects.« According to Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci et al. 2021; Becker et al. 2017), »subaltern subjects« are afforded limited opportunities to articulate themselves publicly. As such, the history of subaltern groups is episodic, fragmented, difficult to trace, and consequently difficult to archive, as Deniz Utlu (2011) argues. How then, can their stories be told and preserved if most historical accounts prioritize the narratives and perspectives of majority society members? Gramsci argues that »reconstruction of the historical traces of the subalterns requires a precise search, a great deal of patience, and a connection to their movements. Such a history ›from below‹ can contribute to common learning processes«[2] (Gramsci 1929–1935 cited in Becker et al. 2013, p. 212). Otherwise, their stories and materials remain disconnected and cannot be combined to form a visible archive.

The history and practices of archiving migrants' experiences in the German-speaking world are relatively recent developments. Scholars in this emerging field have initiated discussions about the necessity of such archives. However, representation in a museum or archive does not ensure that these minority groups are seen and recognized in society; as Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan (2019) puts it: »Just because they give you a seat at the table doesn't mean they want you to speak at the table« (p. 81). Instead, what matters is the kinds of representation and their intended audience. Who represents whom, and who has access to these representations? It is crucial to create spaces and platforms where migrants can speak for themselves (Spivak 1988) without reproducing otherness, making migrants targets of voyeurism, exoticizing them (Sontag 2004) or causing them to become »super-visible«, i.e., reducing them to their status as »migrants« (Brighenti 2007). Therefore, alongside efforts to create migration archives, it is equally important to engage in a parallel discussion on how these archives are produced — specifically, how they are practiced.

Beginning in the early 1950s, and continuing into the 1960s and beyond, the economy in the German-speaking world was growing, and with it, the demand for labor. In 1960, Turkey was recovering from a military coup, which brought political and economic difficulties such as inflation, unemployment, and political instability. This situation led to labor recruitment agreements with West Germany in 1961 and Austria in 1964. The agreements were intended to benefit both Turkey and the receving countries. They initially provided for short and temporary stays for the migrants. The rotation principle was designed to bring in new workers and discourage long-term

**2** Translated from German by the author.

stays. Under this principle, workers would be replaced by new ones after a specified period. However, this approach proved to be economically disadvantageous for employers, as the constant need to train new employees resulted in additional costs. As a result, the principle was abandoned. The 1973 oil crisis led to a freeze on recruitment, which paradoxically resulted in an actual migration movement out of Turkey, as many migrants had to decide whether to stay and bring their families or return to Turkey (Şimşek 2017; Haas 2024, p. 13).

Since the start of the recruitment agreements, selective migration based on economic benefit has been accompanied by a policy characterized by high barriers to permanent settlement and the acquisition of citizenship. Throughout the recruitment agreements, state mechanisms were gradually developed to regulate migration (Hahn 2023; Stokes 2022; Van Wyck 2017; Reinprecht 2006). State regulations based on the migration regime of »guest work« had an effect in many aspects of the lives of migrants. Often, they were triply dependent on their employer, as their visa, work permit, and accommodation were closely linked. The loss of any one of these elements increased their dependency and vulnerability. They worked without adequate safety precautions and in physically demanding conditions. These included exposure to pollutants, noise, heat, and a high risk of accidents, particularly in sectors such as construction and the iron and steel industries. The effects of these difficult living and working conditions are still felt today, particularly in the form of long-term health problems such as musculoskeletal disorders, cancer, and depression. Women carried a particular burden, being split between shift work, household duties, and childcare, and often living in a room with no running water (Hahn and Stöger 2014).

Although there are some differences between Germany and Austria in the policy and practice of »guest worker«[3] immigration (e.g., wages were higher in West Germany), some fundamental aspects continue to impact people in both countries today. One of the most important aspects of such a regime was how family migration was regulated (Stokes 2022; Van Wyck 2017; Hahn and Stöger 2014; Reinprecht 2006). As the recruitment agreements provided only temporary stays for the labor migrants and did not allow for the reunification of family members, »guest workers« often initially left their families in Turkey. The children usually stayed with relatives and

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**3** Even though categorizations likely help facilitate fluid discussions of the phenomenon, such reductions may once again simplify—and thus gloss over—the complexity of the issues. With this in mind, I use the term »guest worker« to clarify the subject of my research; however, I necessarily use it critically, pointing out that this categorization fails to capture the inherent subtleties of the phenomenon, particularly given complex and multifaceted motives for migration (Haas et al. 2020).

only saw their parents during vacations, when the parents visited them, or when they traveled to Austria or Germany to visit. Maria Papoulias (1987, 2018) introduced the term *»Kofferkind«* (»suitcase child«) to refer to the children of migrant workers, who often lived apart from their parents for many years and were frequently sent back and forth between two countries, i.e., Austria and West Germany, and their countries of origin, such as the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey.

Over sixty years have passed since the start of labor migration from Turkey to Central Europe.[4] Since then, several attempts have been made in Austria to archive and exhibit the experiences of »guest workers«, especially because the generation of »guest workers« is aging and passing away.[5] These efforts demonstrate the importance of and interest in the search for traces of »guest workers« in Austrian society. They also raise some of the questions that arise around the historiography of migration. Still, however, media and curators provide platforms for these stories only on certain occasions, such as every ten years, when the anniversary of the agreement approaches. In my research project, which I completed at the end of 2021, I examined photographs and (audio) letters sent by »guest workers« living in Austria to family members in Turkey from the 1960s to the late 1980s (Alpagu 2021).[6] During my project, I noticed a discrepancy between the scattered materials that exist in private homes and what is available in public archives, a discrepancy that results from a lack of awareness and resources to document the experiences of migrants on a large scale. Consequently, their stories and materials, if not lost, are often preserved in family archives. In addition, migrants seem to bear sole responsibility for preserving their stories and materials.

In contrast to Austria, discussions about archiving and a museum of migration began earlier in Germany. DOMiD, the Documentation Center and Museum of Migration in Germany, based in Cologne, was founded in 1990

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**4** I deliberately use terms such as »migrants from Turkey« and »people from Turkey« instead of »Turkish« to draw attention to the multiethnic population of Turkey, which includes Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Armenians, etc. (Alpagu 2023).

**5** Recently, more and more museums, such as Haus der Geschichte, Wien Museum, and vorarlberg museum have begun to include the history of »guest work« in their permanent exhibitions. Furthermore, in Styria, the Jukus Migrationssammlung has maintained an archive of migration since 2018; see https://www.jukus.at/kultur/migrationssammlung/. As a project of the Center for Migrants in Tyrol (ZeMiT), the Dokumentationsarchiv Migration (DAM) Tirol collects material and life stories of migrants in Tyrol: https://dam.tirol/. The collective MUSMIG in Vienna is working on a migration museum in Austria: https://musmig.wordpress.com/. Accessed: 23.8.2024.

**6** This project, which is by far the first methodological study of its kind, consisted of biographical interviews, as well as photographs, written and audio letters, and official documents.

by migrants—descendants of »guest workers« and political refugees—as an association to collect and preserve the stories of their ancestors.[7] Since then, DOMiD has been the first institution to collect, preserve, research, and exhibit stories and materials about immigration to Germany. For many years, Germany lacked the political will to establish a central migration museum, but now efforts have borne fruit, and the first migration museum in Germany is set to open in 2029. The development process of DOMiD shows once again that it is primarily migrants who feel responsible for collecting and archiving their stories.[8] In the case of DOMiD, the descendants of »guest workers« were determined enough to persuade German society to establish a museum of migration. Today, DOMiD systematically collects, preserves, conducts research, and exhibits materials related to migration (Gogos 2021; Fuchs and Kolb 2017).

In this article, using the »connective approach« proposed by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer (2023)—that is, going beyond comparison and its limitations, and considering different histories as unique yet interconnected in multiple ways—I will build on my research in Austria and discuss the archival practices of »guest workers« in Germany, focusing on one family's materials preserved in DOMiD. In 2023, I conducted archival research on the materials of Sanem Güleryüz,[9] considered a »suitcase child«, and supplemented this research with a biographical interview with Sanem in 2024. In what follows, I turn further attention to the audio correspondence of migrants, an important but neglected aspect of such archives (Alpagu 2021).

In my analysis of Güleryüz's archive and interview, and in consideration of the larger issues at stake in an archive of migration, I demonstrate how the intersecting dimensions of social class, i.e., gender, educational background, economic status, and social habitus (Bourdieu 2012), partially shape how migrants have communicated. Additionally, I examine how their communications have been stored—or not stored. I further delineate how power relations determine which materials are preserved in an archive, how such materials are used, managed, and made (in)visible, and by whom. I also consider how this is a question of resources: Who has the means to produce and collect the materials in the first place and to archive them (and make them available to the public)?

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**7** See https://domid.org/en/. Accessed: 23.8.2024.

**8** There are some other ongoing efforts to document migration histories in Germany, e.g. by the City Archive in Munich https://migrations-geschichten.de/migration-bewegt-die-stadt-ein-muenchner-modell/ and by the Hanover City Archive: https://www.hannover.de/Leben-in-der-Region-Hannover/Bildung/Bibliotheken-Archive/Stadtarchiv-Hannover/Veranstaltungen-und-Projekte/Projekt-Einwanderungsarchiv. Accessed: 16.9.2024.

**9** All names are anonymized.

I will first ask—taking into consideration other contexts that are connected, if not identical—how migrants communicate with their families, how these materials are preserved, how they find their way into public archives, and how the archives manage them. I will then trace, more specifically, the phases of archiving—from the creation of material to its documentation, description, and cataloging to making it publicly accessible—using the case study of Sanem Güleryüz in DOMiD. I aim to contribute to a better understanding of archiving practices in both countries of labor migration from Turkey by showing the importance of various perspectives and materials and by viewing the perception and experiences of migration not as something frozen in time, but as a fluid process. Therefore, I do not analyze the exchanged materials as »frozen in time« (Hirsch and Spitzer 2023), but rather through the prism of my interviewee's perspective at the time of the interview, many years after the correspondence.

## 2 Creating and Storing Audio and Written Letters in Family Archives

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the significance of digital and social media as primary modes of global communication. Before 1980, long-distance communication was limited, slow, and expensive. For many migrants, making a phone call was impossible as most households did not have a phone, and long-distance calls were very expensive. Studies on the relationship between migration and social class remain limited in migration research (Van Hear 2014). However, one well-explored area is the analysis of migrants' written letters and their connection to formal educational backgrounds (Helbich and Kamphoefner 2006). In this section, I will examine how aspects of social class, such as education, financial background, and gender, influence the production of audio and written letters by migrants. Additionally, I will explore how these materials are collected within family archives and the challenges they face in being incorporated into public archives.

First, there is an asymmetry between the number of migrants and the letters written, influenced by social class factors such as formal education and financial background. Not all migrants wrote letters; widespread illiteracy, especially among women, meant that many migrants could not write letters at all. An important consideration is how a person writes and whether they have any experience with letter writing. In his oral history study of audio and written letters from migrant women who migrated from England to Australia in the 1960s, Alistair Thomson (2011a) reveals, for example, that all four women in his study attended secondary school, which was a crucial level of formal education at the time. Furthermore, before migrating to Aus-

tralia, three of them had been separated from their family of origin through marriage and had gained experience in letter writing while still in England. Therefore, they wrote numerous letters while living apart from their families in Australia, and they have kept them to this day. Another reason for the asymmetry between migrants and migrant letters was the high cost of postage. Particularly among migrants from poorer financial backgrounds, there was a tendency to write home more often during times of prosperity than in times of need (Helbich and Kamphoefner 2006).

However, there is also a discrepancy between the number of letters written and the number of letters available today. Based on their study of the letters of German migrants sent back to Germany from the United States during the 19th and early 20th centuries, Wolfgang Helbich and Walter Kamphoefner argue that individuals with educational advantages preserve letters across generations because

> »[u]nderprivileged families, rural or urban, would be less likely to develop a sense of family tradition, might have less interest in written remnants of the past, tend to have less space for storing memorabilia, and probably move more frequently, a situation almost proverbial as an occasion for clearing out the attic.« (Helbich and Kamphoefner 2006, p. 38)

This aligns with the findings of my research with migrants from Turkey living in Austria (Alpagu 2021). The participants in my study predominantly came from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, which meant that some of them were illiterate, while others had the highest educational qualification in the group, which was five years of elementary school.[10] Those of them who had completed high school or attended university wrote letters and have kept them to this day. In addition, due to a lack of literacy, most of my research participants did not write the letters themselves, but had letters written on their behalf. I argue that this could be one of the reasons why they did not keep many letters. The fact that they did not write the letters them-

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**10** Compulsory education in Turkey consisted of five years of primary school from 1961 to 1997. From 1997 to 2012, it was extended to eight years, encompassing primary school plus three years of secondary school. Since 2012 compulsory education has been twelve years: four years of primary school, four years of secondary school, and four years of high school education, culminating in a general qualification for university entrance (Göksoy 2013). Before the 2000s, the Kurdish language was strictly forbidden as part of assimilationist state policies that denied the existence of Kurds and their language. In the early 2000s, Kurdish was offered as an elective subject in some schools as part of a so-called democratization package. However, Kurdish people have rejected it due to concerns for their children's safety, as they could be openly targeted. Until today, Kurdish is not officially recognized. The use of the letters w, x, q, ê, û, and î has remained forbidden because they are not part of the Turkish alphabet (see e.g., Skutnabb-Kangas and Bucak 1994; Zeydanlıoğlu 2012).

selves and could not read them might have hindered an emotional connection and attachment to the materials. This aspect is supported by my field observations: people kept their photographs regardless of their level of education. In conversations with my interviewees, it appeared that, in most families, the letters functioned more as a means of instant communication. People would enclose money and photos with the letters. After taking the money and photos out of the envelope and reading the letters, their function was fulfilled, and the letters were not necessarily kept. Furthermore, due to the assimilationist language policy of the state, it was not possible to write letters in the languages of other ethnic groups (particularly in Kurdish) for various reasons (Zeydanlıoğlu 2012; Skutnabb-Kangas and Bucak 1994).

When it comes to audio letters, not only is the discrepancy in the available letters even greater, but so is the research on them. Although analog audio letters—ranging from tapes to compact cassettes—have been used for private communication since the late 19th century, little scholarly attention has been paid to this form of communication (Alpagu 2021; Thomson 2011b). So far, studies of private correspondence have usually focused on letters in written form. This gives the false impression that private correspondence was exclusively conducted in writing.

Alistair Thomson (2011b) differentiates between written and audio letters and states that »communication through voice was powerful and affecting« (p. 218). The participants in his study enjoyed »the aurality and immediacy of the tape, which could capture and preserve the sound of people and places« (p. 215). For example, some of them recorded the sound of rain in Australia. Most importantly, audio letters enable migrant individuals to hear the voices of family members. This possibility allows families to feel closer and to alleviate the feeling of alienation that can arise due to geographical distance. Moreover, audio letters are conversational and allow for detailed communication about life in the new country. However, my study also revealed that audio letters heightened the sense of longing by underscoring the distance between correspondents. For example, in an audio letter from the 1980s, the mother of one of my interviewees speaks in a way that suggests she knows her son cannot hear her immediately, yet she still calls out frequently and loudly, as if trying to bridge the gap. She sounds overwhelmed, struggling to find the right words to express her emotions. As a result, she repeatedly calls out the names of family members living in Austria. Eventually, her longing and frustration intensify, leading her to tears (Alpagu 2021, p. 195).

Furthermore, audio letters allowed more family members to become involved. The recording sessions were typically quasi-public and sociable gatherings where both friends and family often participated in lively conversations (Thomson 2011b). When it comes to letters from people in Turkey,

current literature shows that both written and audio letters were shared publicly (Alpagu 2021; Duman 2018). There are many reasons for this. Often, one person wrote a letter on behalf of the whole family. During migration, the shared experience of moving to a new place created a sense of community, making the letters important to the entire community. Additionally, writing, recording, and sending letters was expensive, so these rare moments of communication were used to reach as many people as possible. This occurred both during the creation of the communication materials and when the letters were read or listened to. As such, in many cases, letters written and recorded by people from Turkey were considered to be a public event, both during the recording and writing, as well as when listening and reading. This publicity, however, could affect romantic relationships, as Gökhan Duman (2018) argues. People often felt embarrassed to show or hear affection between couples in front of other family members. Still, they wanted to show their affection to their partners and found some ways to do so, as illustrated by the case of a migrant laborer:

> »I used to record my voice on cassette, but I couldn't say anything private to my wife because the tape player was at my parents' house. Eventually, I sang a song for her. She understood it.« (Duman 2018, p. 100)

A common assumption about audio letters is that they were typically used by those who were educationally disadvantaged and illiterate. However, as Alistair Thomson (2011b) shows, their use was also a matter of individual choice and preference. For instance, the family of one of Thomson's interviewees, Gwen Good, did not enjoy writing letters; however, they still wanted to keep in touch with family members in England. As a result, they used audio letters as a form of communication. Another interviewee, Joan Pickett, who enjoyed writing letters, used audio letters to comment on the photographic slides she sent to her family (Thomson 2011b).

In the case of audio letters sent between Turkey and Austria, we encounter another function: how they were used to circumvent the ban on the Kurdish language. One of my interviewees described how they used analog audio cassettes of Turkish musicians, letting them play for a while before they started dubbing the cassettes and speaking in Kurdish—as a form of camouflage and protection in case the cassette was inspected at the border or elsewhere (Alpagu 2021, p. 195). Furthermore, because Kurdish was primarily an oral language for many people, my interviewee's mother was able to use it as a means of communication.

As most migrants are also in a mode of mobility in the country of arrival, which means they move (frequently), the risk of losing or discarding the

materials increases. Tragically, many materials were either lost in the mail or discarded because of migration or a move into a new apartment or house (Alpagu 2021; Helbich and Kamphoefner 2006), and ended up in the garbage. My interviewees often told me that I was too late, that they did not know the significance of such materials, and that they had thrown away many materials after various moves.

This highlights a critical issue: the lack of awareness about the historical value of such documents. Many materials are discarded or left to deteriorate in family attics because their significance is not recognized. Additionally, some participants in my study in Austria mentioned sharing their materials with researchers, resulting in their storage in various private archives that often lack public accessibility. The archiving of materials—from their creation to their storage in public or institutional settings—depends on various factors, including the institutions involved, their approach to the legacy of migrants, and the prevailing political situation (Levy 2019). This context underscores the need for a systematic, transparent, and critical approach to archiving migration history. While DOMiD was established in Germany in 1990 as an institution for archiving and exhibiting migration, systematic institutional archiving practices in Austria are relatively recent and seem fragmented, with power dynamics influencing who collects, controls, excludes, and preserves such materials and stories (Alpagu 2024).

## 3 A Case Study on (Audio) Correspondence: An Audio Log from the 1980s

In this section, I discuss the archival process using the example of materials from a family collection archived in DOMiD, which I examined in January 2023. The journey of these materials is a compelling example of the overlapping stages involved, from the creation and preservation in a family archive to their transition to a public archive and eventual use for research purposes. I will trace the history of these materials from the most recent use of the archive in 2023 to their creation in the late 1970s and 1980s. This analysis aims to further explore audio and written letters, building on my previous reflection. I will use an interpretive approach to demonstrate the significance and uniqueness of these materials, which are often overlooked in migration studies.

The materials in question belong to the collection of Sanem Güleryüz, who was born in the late 1970s in a western city in Turkey. Her father, Okan Güleryüz, left the college in Turkey after a few semesters, while her mother, Müzeyyen, completed five years of elementary school. Both parents immigrated to West Germany in the 1970s and worked as laborers in various in-

dustries, often in shifts. When Sanem was about one year old, her parents realized that they could not care for her and took her back to Turkey to live with her grandparents. Sanem stayed with her grandparents until she reunited with her parents in Germany in the late 1980s after graduating from high school in Turkey. During this period, she saw her parents only during holidays, either by visiting them in Germany or when they visited Turkey. Sanem's younger sister, who was born in Germany, stayed with their parents and was never separated from them.

Her archived materials consist of three audio recordings, several written letters, the tape recorder used to record and play the audio letters, as well as several photographs, toys, and children's books. There is also a broadcast about Sanem's donation to DOMiD from a German television program in the early 2000s. The audio recordings of the Güleryüz family are the only audio correspondence stored at DOMiD, and they attest to the importance of audio letters in understanding the experiences of migrants, highlighting the need for more systematic collection. The materials date back to when Sanem was around eight to nine years old, living in Turkey with her grandparents, and when she visited her family in Germany during school vacations. We actually owe the existence of these materials to this separation of the family, as they are communication materials as well as gifts sent to Sanem by her parents and extended family. Additionally, in 2024, I conducted a biographical-narrative interview with Sanem to juxtapose and incorporate her perspective on the materials (Rosenthal 2018; Schütze 1983). In the next step, I will analyze one of the audio letters to demonstrate the insights that can be gained from these materials. I will juxtapose my analysis of these materials with my interview with Sanem.

The audio letters I have listened to and analyzed so far are recorded in the manner of a letter: they are primarily addressed to a specific audience, namely the family, discuss certain topics, and expect a response (Alpagu 2021). When I listened to these recordings, however, I felt as though I was watching a vlog on YouTube, where children engage in various activities and the parents—mostly influencers—record these moments: an audio snapshot of the family, recorded both for themselves and for a wider audience. One could call this audio recording an audio log. For the purpose of this analysis, I will therefore use the terms »audio letters«, »audio correspondence«, »audio recordings«, »audio cassette«, as well as »audio log« interchangeably throughout to highlight the fluid functions of this material.

Returning to the question of what it takes for materials to be created, used, and stored, Sanem told me that her father was very fond of collecting and even had a storehouse for his collections (conversation with Sanem Güleryüz, January 2024). This again shows that the preservation of these materi-

als depends primarily on the interest of the person and the possibilities they had to pursue that interest. According to my interviewees, in the 1980s, creating and shipping materials such as analog audio cassettes was expensive, and not everyone could afford these costs (Alpagu 2021). Another resource, for example, is having enough space to collect the materials. As mentioned earlier, many of my interviewees in Austria told me that they discarded numerous items because they had no place to store them. Thanks to her father's keen sense of collecting, Sanem Güleryüz's materials are (well) documented, collected, and stored. Through her involvement in migration-related work, these materials found their way to DOMiD.

In the DOMiD database, all materials from Sanem are clearly and carefully listed and described. Each item is accompanied by a remark, and references to other materials from the same donor are provided. This is a note about audio cassettes in her collection:

> »The donor commuted between 1972 and 1978 as a so-called ›suitcase child‹ [see below for a critical discussion of the term, F.A.] between Turkey and Germany. She continued to do so during her school years, which she spent in Turkey. After her enrollment in school in 1978, she saw her parents only in the vacations. There are other audio cassettes available, including the cassette recorder with which this cassette was played. There are photos of the trip described in the cassette.«[11]

The materials themselves were already well documented at the time of their creation. They are marked with exact dates and relevant information so one can immediately identify what, for example, the letters contain. On one of the audio cassettes, one side is labeled in Turkish as »Journey to Germany—Sanem 1980«, while the other side is marked as »Empty.«

Almost all written letters are kept in the envelope, and all of them have the exact date they were written. In the case of the audio correspondence, the father provides information at the beginning of each recording, including the names of the people involved and the date, time, place, and occasion of the recording. In studies of the gendered roles in photography, it has been argued that men were mainly responsible for technology and taking photographs (Rose 2016). This meant that the men usually framed the visual representation of the family through the lens of the camera. In this case, too, we can tell that Sanem's materials are organized according to her father's perspective, and consequently, he frames the narrative.

In the following, I will analyze one audio log recorded by the father in Germany in 1980. The analysis is conducted sequentially, which means that the recording cuts, topic changes, and shifts between speakers are regarded

**11** DOMiD database on Sanem Güleryüz's materials.

as distinct sequences (Alpagu 2021; Oevermann et al. 1979). The recording, which lasts 43 minutes and 22 seconds, was made at various times and locations, such as at home and at the airport. It begins at home, where Sanem's father, Okan Güleryüz, provides information about the occasion—specifically that they (the parents and a befriended couple) are picking up Sanem from the airport in Germany. This sequence lasts 48 seconds and ends with a cut, marked by the sound of the recording device's button being pressed:

> »Today is a joyful and happy day for us. Our dear daughter Sanem Güleryüz is coming to Germany. We sent her the ticket, she received a letter, we sent a telegram, and her grandfather said that he would definitely send her and asked us to meet her on the 30th [takes a breath]. Now we are getting ready for the arrival of Mr. Semih [a friend of the parents, who will accompany them with his wife; F.A.]. [Calls to his wife:] ›Come on, Müzeyen, get dressed quickly.‹ We are waiting, the car will arrive and then we will go and meet our dear daughter Sanem. We are all excited. We are curious; we are waiting to see if everything will be all right and what will happen.«[12]

At the beginning of the recording, Okan Güleryüz sounds very formal, with a monotonous and almost emotionless voice, as though he is reading from a script. He reports on various details, but it is unclear for whom he is providing this information. He includes precise details about the day, his daughter's full name, and how they arranged Sanem's flight to Germany. The few photos from that day depict the parents, their friends, and Sanem.[13] They are all very well dressed, giving the impression of a special occasion. The photos capture the moment of arrival, when Sanem's parents hand her a bouquet of flowers. In the photos, Sanem is the center of attention, with all eyes on her, while her parents and their friends appear visibly nervous.

From the moment Okan Güleryüz calls to his wife, his voice begins to change, and we hear more emotions, specifically that he is getting nervous. After a five-second pause, he continues speaking and mentions that his friend, Mr. Semih, and his wife have also joined them:

> »It is five o'clock, Mr. Semih arrived. We are going to Mr. Semih's, we will sit with them for a while. From there we will go to meet our daughter Sanem. She will arrive around 20:10, and we will meet her.«[14]

He goes on to report that they reached the airport:

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**12** DOMiD, audio recording Güleryüz family, 1980. All quotes are translated from Turkish by the author.
**13** Due to anonymization reasons, I will not show the photos.
**14** DOMiD, audio recording Güleryüz family, 1980.

> »We arrived at the airport. Airplanes arrive and depart. We asked the information desk; the plane will arrive on time. It's coming with my lovely daughter. The excitement has reached its limit; we are waiting. The plane is landing. The plane has landed, everyone is running in that direction. They're landing at number 73. Her mum ran [laughs]. Of course, we can't see anyone. They are getting off. While we were waiting there, a group came out, they came out. I wonder if she is among them. Come on, Mr. Semih is also looking; Mr. Semih is taking our picture.«[15]

He continuously gives accurate information about nearly every moment until they meet Sanem at the airport. The father's voice and description are reminiscent of a sports commentator speaking about a game, beginning with the monotony of the game and culminating with the excitement of a goal. The excitement in the father's voice peaks at the moment of reunion with Sanem at the airport. After this, the recording continues without interruption: we hear them laughing and kissing. This is followed by a conversation between Sanem and her parents. This is the first time we hear her mother, Müzeyyen, speak as well. Her father starts the conversation:

> Okan: »How was the flight, my daughter?«
>
> Sanem: »It was very good [laughs].«
>
> […]
>
> Müzeyyen: »Who put you on the plane, my daughter? After you left your aunties?«
>
> Okan: »So tell us, the stewardess?«
>
> Sanem: »The stewardesses […] Then the stewardesses sat us down. They gave us toys to entertain us. They put our food on a tray and gave it to us. […] When we arrived in Munich, we waited in the waiting room for 45 minutes. They gave us a food package. I didn't eat it. I brought it here.«[16]

Sanem explains that she was sitting with another girl whose parents also live in Germany. In this conversation, it is evident that the father dominates the discussion, repeating the questions asked by the mother and sometimes answering them before Sanem has a chance to respond. The recordings reveal a significant discrepancy between gender roles in the family. If we examine who speaks to whom and the spaces available to each parent, it becomes clear that Müzeyyen Güleryüz has limited opportunity to speak and, consequently, is less audible. However, the recording shows that Sanem is encouraged to talk about her day, what she did, and how she felt. Like her father,

**15** DOMiD, audio recording Güleryüz family, 1980.
**16** DOMiD, audio recording Güleryüz family, 1980.

she describes exactly who she was with, how the journey went, and how long they waited in Munich ahead of the next flight.
The recording then starts the next day while they are at home:

> Okan: »Today is Tuesday, 1 July 1980, the second day of Sanem's arrival in Germany. We got up in the morning, had breakfast, then we went together and bought our newspaper. [To Sanem:] Right, my daughter?‹
>
> Sanem: »Yes.«
>
> Okan: »What did you do? Didn't you talk to the woman over there? What did you say to her?«
>
> Sanem: »Guten Morgen.«
>
> Okan: »You said ›Guten Morgen‹. Now you have learnt. What did you say when you left? [no answer comes for a while] Auf Wieder...«
>
> Sanem: »Aufwide [she tries to say the word for goodbye in German].«
>
> Okan: »You said ›Auf Wiedersehen‹. [He speaks as though addressing an audience:] Now Sanem sat down and wrote a letter to her grandfather, grandmother, and aunt. She wrote about her experiences and memories. What did you write, my daughter? Tell us, tell us. Let's read it aloud. What did you write?«[17]

Sanem then begins to read the letter she wrote to her grandparents, describing in detail everything she has experienced since she arrived in Germany. She also speaks in German, she has already learned, and her accent is very clear. Her parents listen to her patiently. They help her when she struggles with reading something and encourage her by saying things like »well done.« These passages show that Sanem's parents encouraged her to express herself both in Turkish and German.

While listening to this particular audio cassette, I found myself questioning its intended audience and purpose. Unlike the audio letters I have analyzed previously (Alpagu 2021), this recording does not seem to be directed at specific individuals or a particular recipient. From the interview with Sanem, I learned that the letter was sent to her grandparents in Turkey, but its content is more of a status update. Who, then, is the intended audience? Is it meant for the daughter, the family, or someone else? Why do the parents have their child read and record the letter? What kind of (re)presentation is this? Are the parents showcasing their educational achievements and pride in their child? My goal here is not to find the »correct« answer but rather to highlight the complexity of these materials. This tape gives the impression

**17** DOMiD, audio recording Güleryüz family, 1980.

that the recording aims to be informative, capturing the moment and creating memories for their children and the future.

In the next section, I will elaborate on the possible reasons for these ambivalences and ambiguities, using Sanem's narratives from the interview. While the socio-economic status and formal education of Sanem's parents played a significant role in her successful career, the early childhood separation due to migration (Usak 2024), without institutional support, led to a degree of overprotectiveness and competition between her parents and grandparents, which ultimately caused Sanem to suffer.

The analysis shows that Sanem's parents made efforts to provide the best possible education for their child—through school, in sports, and by actively engaging with her, such as encouraging her to read, reading for her, and having discussions. This underscores that the resources parents have play a crucial role in supporting their children's life path. This interpretation is supported by other materials, such as an audio letter sent from Turkey by her grandparents, in which they describe how well they cared for her in all aspects of her life, including her school and leisure activities. The analysis of audio letters from the Güleryüz family and Sanem suggests that the educational level and the degree of involvement of parents and caregivers may influence an individual's career. The interview with Sanem also highlights the impact of early childhood separations on individuals, particularly in their relationships with parents, siblings, and partners (Barry 2024; Usak 2024). In the following, I will analyze letters written by Sanem's father to show the effects of early childhood separation on migrant children and how rigid classifications that define these migrants may affect migration research.

## 4 Transfer to Public Archives: Definitions and Their Significance for Migration Research

Because Sanem was referred to in the archive as a so-called »suitcase child« *(Kofferkind)*, this section of the article will explore the implications of this term for migration research. By juxtaposing the letters written by her father and my recent interview with Sanem, I aim to highlight the complexities of such biographies and encourage critical reflection on archival practices. This involves viewing current methodologies as works in progress and considering alternative approaches to archival practices and storage. Engaging with these materials uncritically can perpetuate a homogeneous and reductionist perspective on migration. While definitions are necessary to discuss issues and categorize biographies and phenomena, there is a risk of oversimplification and reducing individuals to restrictive labels, depriving them of their voices and agency (Spivak 1988). In this context, Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G.

Rosenberg highlight the role of archives in the creation and formation of social or collective memories:

> »The very notion of an archive can thus affect not only how the past itself is shaped and represented but how it is linked to the future; how, in other words, the process of assembling archives and the process of providing access to those archives help to structure (or ›write‹) what the future will be like. The administration of archives is integral to their essence.« (Blouin and Rosenberg 2006, p. 2)

The term »suitcase children«, introduced by Maria Papoulias (1987), itself raises significant issues. Suitcases are typically filled and carried in various modes of transportation, such as airplanes or cars, either under the seat or above the seat—but not on the seat. Why define a living, breathing human being as a »suitcase«, using such words to victimize them from the start and deny them the full range of human agency, namely— their capacity to resist, cry, scream, or run away? On the one hand, it is crucial to highlight the inequalities, discrimination, and racism that migrants face. On the other hand, focusing exclusively on their suffering or dramatizing them does not necessarily improve their living conditions and risks fostering victimization and voyeurism (Sontag 2004). Furthermore, such terms can lead to supervisibility (Brighenti 2007) so that the only thing visible is the label »suitcase child«—with all its reductionist connotations. In response to my question about the term, Sanem acknowledges this risk and states that she does not »identify with it completely:«

> »Uhm, I think certain phenomena are easier to classify and categorize that way. It's okay from that perspective. But, uhm, I wouldn't just want to be called uhm a suitcase child uhm uhm. So that you're now only reduced to one phenomenon—I don't know if you can call it a phenomenon, but somehow reduced to one thing, because you've achieved a lot of other things over the years or become a lot of other things, apart from being a suitcase child.« (interview with Sanem Güleryüz, June 2024)

Studies on »suitcase children« (e.g., Papoulias 1987, 2018; Wilhelm 2018) provide valuable insights into the phenomenon. However, the common perception of »suitcase children« is from a deficit-oriented perspective, defining and victimizing them as people who have had limited opportunities to achieve education or a profession from the beginning. This perspective risks overlooking structural issues, such as the lack of institutional support for families, and reducing the difficulties faced by such children to a personal shortcoming such as a failure of the parents. In her book *Fear of the Family*, Laura Stokes reveals how West German perspectives on »guest worker« families influenced adverse policies. Stokes states that »the actual migratory behavior of foreign families intersected with changing ideas about ›family‹

and ›labor‹ to shape increasingly restrictive policies toward family migration« (2022, p. 3). The intervention of the receiving country to regulate the family systems of migrants is a phenomenon identified in both Germany and Austria (Hahn and Stöger 2014; Reinprecht 2006), as well as in the United States, particularly in the case of Bracero families, laborers from Mexico (Rosas 2014). The consequences of early childhood separation due to migration are profound and far-reaching (Usak 2024). Rather than focusing on the notion that these children are »doomed from the start« due to their family background, it is more important to recognize the challenges these families faced due to a lack of institutional support and to explore ways to compensate and support them.

Another problem with the term »suitcase children« is that it groups together all children who have had this experience of commuting between parents and relatives in their country of origin. However, such a situation is not experienced homogenously, and children and families do not all experience the same outcomes. The documentary »Kofferkinder – Zurückgelassen in der Türkei« (»Suitcase Children – Left Behind in Turkey«) shows how three individuals experienced being left behind, the differences in their relationships with their parents, and how these factors contributed to their different life paths. While one has broken off contact with her family, two others achieved academic success and maintain close contact with their parents. However, all three recount the pain they experienced as children, such as the feeling of being left alone and left behind, as well as the intense longing and desire for parents who were away. What they all have in common, moreover, is that they lacked institutional support and could only rely on the support of their extended family (Kültür 2013).

In the following section, I will discuss letters written to Sanem to show the importance of a critical perspective on the materials that goes beyond reductionist classifications. The letters are mostly written by her father on behalf of her mother and sister. The correspondence reveals that the parents maintained close contact with Sanem. In one letter, the father asks her to inform them of when she will be at home so they can call her:

> »Dear Sanem, we received your letter […] only yesterday. Thank you very much. Especially Dilek [Sanem's younger sister] was very happy. We kissed her a lot on your behalf. As I said, if you let us know your schedule of lessons and courses, as well as your tennis times, we can make an accurate decision about when we can find you at home. It's very good of you to squeeze tennis into your busy and monotonous studies this year. At least in this way, you will get rid of some stress and in a different envi-

> ronment; at least you can take out your anger against the lessons with tennis balls. We believe you'll succeed in that too.«[18]

The language is sensitive and considers Sanem's schedule. Her father does not ask her to be home at a certain time but instead requests that she let them know when it would be most convenient to call her. The parents encourage her in her education and activities such as tennis. Here, on the one hand, they allow her to act as an individual, and on the other hand, they keep track of their child's life and activities while they are separated. We also see that the father is aware that school can be »busy« but also »monotonous.« At the same time, he encourages Sanem to play tennis, which suggests that he wants her to understand that they recognize the challenges she faces and will be there to help her find ways to reduce the stress. Interestingly, he hopes for stress relief and adds, »at least you can take out your anger against the lessons with tennis balls.« Given the effects of early childhood separations (Usak 2024) and the interview with Sanem, it is plausible to argue that her father is addressing stress and anger caused, at least in part, by the uncertainty around Sanem's place of residence and the conflictual relationship between her caregivers in Turkey and her parents.

The literature on »suitcase children« reveals that the crucial consequences of family separation include not only the alienation between parents and their children but also estrangement between siblings (Papoulias 1987, 2018; Usak 2024; Wilhelm 2018). The case of Sanem shows that her parents made great efforts to prevent both forms of alienation. In their correspondence, they try to strengthen the bond between the sisters:

> »Dilek is already in a hurry to make the programme for next summer. She keeps making plans, saying ›with my sister, we will do this, that, we will swim.‹ Now, she plays a slideshow whenever she can and often refreshes her memories. By the way, I'll whisper it in your ear. Dilek is very upset that she doesn't get letters very often. Every day, she follows the post office, asking, ›why didn't my sister write, or did she forget me? Why didn't she send a record? Why didn't she send a picture?‹ By the way, she gets angry when we don't write, so she writes herself. She makes envelopes out of paper.«[19]

Although we can observe a strong effort to connect the sisters, Sanem now describes her relationship with her sister as distant, as they did not spend much time together. Since the letter was written by the father on behalf of the sister and the mother, we cannot know how the sister was actually coping with this separation.

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**18** DOMiD, letter Okan Güleryüz to Sanem Güleryüz, 2.10.1988.
**19** DOMiD, letter Okan Güleryüz to Sanem Güleryüz, 30.11.1988.

Hale Usak (2024, p. 6) argues that the »early ›break‹ or ›cut‹ in the migration history as well as the inner-emotional ›fragility‹ have an effect in adulthood in the way many second-generation women describe the relationship with their old or deceased parents as not consistently trusting or as ambivalent.« This is exactly how Sanem describes her relationship with her parents:

> »Well, I'll put it this way, um, we've actually always had a respectful relationship, but not an intimate one. Uhm, the way I would have liked it or the way they would have liked it. Uhm, yes, there were always some kind of, uhm, distance or walls or something that didn't keep us together, or perhaps prevented us from trusting each other completely.« (interview with Sanem Güleryüz, June 2024)

The letters and conversations from Sanem's father and grandparents reveal their desire for the best for both Sanem and her sister. They seem aware of the potential consequences of the separation and strive to prevent the sisters from feeling alienated. They support Sanem's education and maintain close contact with her. However, they may not have fully recognized that their efforts to do what was best for Sanem inadvertently created a competitive dynamic, leaving her caught in the middle. Hale Usak (2024, p. 4) reveals how first-generation migrants »skipped« the mourning process caused by separation due to migration; they were unable to pause and reflect on their experiences, and their children's grief was similarly overlooked.

In another letter, we see that her father expects Sanem to keep track of her financial situation. He gives her accurate information about the money he has sent and gives her tasks, such as giving the money to specific individuals and reporting her expenses to him. Unlike the concept of the »suitcase child«, which implies a lack of agency, the materials portray someone who was taken very seriously, entrusted with responsibility, and encouraged to express her opinions. Years later, during the interview, when I shared my analysis with her, Sanem provided a nuanced perspective and spoke about how the tension between her parents and grandparents overwhelmed her:

> »How can I say it? [takes a long pause] I had the feeling that it was too much responsibility. So, in the letters, my father demanded certain things. I don't know if ›demanded‹ is the right word, but he also asked my grandparents or questioned certain plans for the future and so, um, also my current one; it was a bit too much responsibility. I often felt like I was caught between two fronts, and I always tried to find a balance. Certain things, I thought, if I pass them on like this, there might be trouble. There will be a bad atmosphere. I actually kept that to myself […]. But I thought they involved me far too much in both their affairs, both sides actually, and didn't see me as a child but perhaps as another adult. There were arguments, and I was usually in the middle: either as a co-responsible person or someone who tried to lighten the mood a bit, which didn't work either.« (interview with Sanem Güleryüz, June 2024)

The interview passage emphasizes the importance and complexity of materials depicting the experiences of migrant children, as well as the value of incorporating diverse perspectives from various individuals and time periods. My analysis of the letters shows the parents' efforts to encourage their child's independence. However, the recent interview highlights both the impact of such an upbringing on Sanem and the limitations of my analysis, which focused solely on the letters. Additionally, Sanem refers to the fluidity of memory over time while talking about her relationship with her (grand)parents: »That's how I judge it now.« Nonetheless, the juxtaposition of the letters and Sanem's interview illustrates the agency she was afforded, challenging the notion of passivity associated with being a »suitcase child.« Although she felt overwhelmed by the responsibilities placed on her and found herself »stuck« between her parents and grandparents, she was able to develop strategies to overcome these difficulties. In her later teens, she ultimately directly opposed her parents' decision that she should move to Germany. Instead, she stayed in Turkey until she graduated from high school. Before that, her parents made »several attempts« (interview with Sanem Güleryüz, June 2024) to bring her to Germany. However, these were unsuccessful, mainly due to migration policies, which regulated family reunification.

The feeling of being stuck between family »fronts« lasted until Sanem told her parents (and grandparents) not to »bother« her with old conflicts:

> »That was also a bit due to the fact that there were these fronts here and that they always thought I was on the other side […] that was really one of the biggest barriers, I think. Um, I think if it hadn't been for that, it might have been easier to get together. Um, exactly, this conflict stood between us for a very, very, very long time after I came [to Germany], and um [breathes a sigh of relief] and until I said at some point that they shouldn't talk to me about things like that from the past, that they shouldn't always bring up old stories as a problem or something. I don't want to hear that, or I can't do anything about it, nor could I have changed anything back then and even less now and that, um, if they have problems, they should solve them among themselves, and please keep me completely out of it. Exactly, until at some point, I was very decisive with both sides and told them not to bother me anymore.« (interview with Sanem Güleryüz, June 2024)

Today, when she speaks about it, it is clear that her separation from her parents remains an emotionally charged issue. This is evident not only in the pauses she takes and the deep breaths she exhales but also in the way she repeats what she said to »both sides.« It feels as though she is speaking to them again, in the present tense, with a conversational tone, and emphasizing her sentences with determination.

## 5 Conclusion

This article has traced the stages of migration-related archival practices, from the creation of the materials to their scholarly accessibility in a public archive. It is based on audio and written letters from the 1980s, collected and donated to the DOMiD archive by an individual whose parents migrated to West Germany as laborers in the 1970s. Due to state regulations for migrant families (Stokes 2022) and unsuitable work and living conditions for child care, the Güleryüz family's first-born, Sanem Güleryüz, was sent back and forth between her grandparents in Turkey and her parents in Germany, a form of migration often referred to as that of »suitcase children.«

I have supplemented the archival materials with a biographical narrative interview with Sanem in 2024 to highlight the importance of examining migrants' biographies within their social and familial contexts to better understand migration and challenge stereotypical images. Rigid terms such as »suitcase children« often lead to oversimplification, reducing individuals to »mere migrants«, thus making them super-visible while obscuring the complex realities of their experiences (Brighenti 2007; Sontag 2004). Sanem herself draws attention to the rigidity of the term, which is at odds with life being fluid »because you've achieved a lot of other things over the years or become a lot of other things, apart from being a suitcase child« (interview with Sanem Güleryüz, June 2024). Therefore, the scholarly discussion requires a more nuanced discussion of terminology considering the profound impact of early childhood separation (Usak 2024) and the underlying causes, such as restrictive family migration policies of states that lead to family separation, alienation, and various challenges in adulthood. Archives of migration, despite the occasional rigidity of some of their classification schemes, can add necessary nuance and complexity to such reductive accounts. In turn, such archives should take into account, when possible, the different individual perspectives of migrants and their descendants.

Therefore, this paper advocates for a critical and biographical approach to migration studies (Siouti 2013), utilizing a variety of personal materials, such as audio and written correspondence and photographs, from diverse perspectives and time periods. The history of the Güleryüz family and the journey of these materials provide a compelling case for understanding how migration-related documents emerge and are integrated into scholarly research. Furthermore, the study of various materials has revealed the complexity of migration experiences. This leads me to argue that we should not be searching for the »right« or »only perspective«, but rather should acknowledge the richness and complexities of migrant lives—complexities that are not easy to grasp and that should be acknowledged as such.

Using this case study, I aimed to show the personal, familial, and social class background that inform such a journey. Furthermore, I aimed to show the responsibility of scholarly work and archives to critically examine how they may re-create and perpetuate »otherness.« As such, the article chronicles the controversies surrounding archives and proposes a critical approach to creating migration archives that consider the backgrounds of donors, including their family, class, gender, and formal education. Building on Azoulay's (2019) criticism that viewing archives solely as institutions is limiting, the article suggests a more literal interpretation of the term archive, advocating for a more fluid (Hirsch and Spitzer 2023) and proactive approach to its establishment. DOMiD, as the first established archive and soon-to-be museum of migration, serves as an example of such a proactive establishment. It could also provide valuable insights into archival practices in Austria, which are still in the early stages of development, with power dynamics at play (Alpagu 2021, 2024). By examining DOMiD and other migration archives, we can gain a better understanding of emerging archival practices in the German-speaking world. I have discussed an example of migrant materials that found their way into a public archive, but there are many other (undiscovered) sources in the form of private archives. The question arises as to whether and how these various materials from family archives should be collected and incorporated into public archives, particularly with regard to the emerging archives of migration.

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