

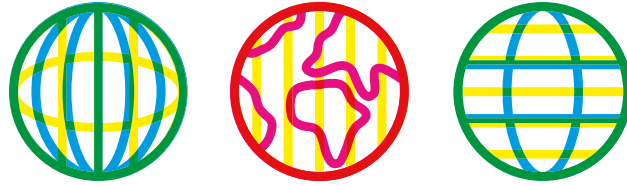
# Recommendations for journalists

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opportunities

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## Recommendations for journalists

Mass media often frame migration as a crisis. The OPPORTUNITIES project wants to shed another light on migration, seeing it rather as an opportunity.

Journalists often share this concern and want to develop alternative views on migration. They want to speak on behalf of migrants, but speaking on behalf of migrants does not come without risks. To counter the risks of “vicarious storytelling”, the OPPORTUNITIES team has developed recommendations and an alternative strategy of “allied storytelling”.

### Risks:

- ⇒ Too many formulaic patterns about “the” migrant, “the” refugee, “the” asylum seeker.
- ⇒ The use of stereotypes.
- ⇒ Too many generic frames such as victimisation.
- ⇒ The complex story of the individual migrant disappears.
- ⇒ The migrants are seen as a homogenous group.
- ⇒ The focus lies too much on aid, for which migrants should be grateful.

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An alternative strategy is developed, called “allied storytelling”. These are its steps:

- ⇒ Listen carefully.
- ⇒ Co-create stories with the migrants.
- ⇒ Take into account that “being on the move” is only one aspect of a migrants’ identity.
- ⇒ Try to put yourself in the shoes of the migrant.
- ⇒ Do not instrumentalise the story of the migrant for political, ideological or economic reasons.

The OPPORTUNITIES project team furthermore developed a “Research in Brief” paper that gives context on the circumstances in which these guidelines could be deployed. A journalist should consider four questions:

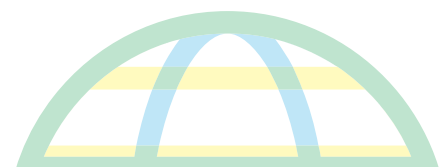
1. What is the audience one is working for?
2. What kind of medium does one work for?
3. What kind of journalist does one want to be?
4. Which country/region does one work in?

The empirical work that is presented in the research in brief paper is based on surveys of journalists of public opinion in Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Italy, but the questions that arise have a broader relevance that might transcend the context of these countries.

- ⇒ The first question a journalist should ask deals with the audience of the medium they are working for. Every journalist knows from feedback and in-house audience research which audience and medium characteristics they are dealing with.

- ⇒ The specific media can be classified into different groups. When one secondly considers to which group one's medium belongs, one can take the research results of the Research in Brief paper into account, which depicts the attitudes of audiences of different media types and the characteristics of different journalists working for different media.
- Consuming news on public service television is associated with more positive attitudes towards migrants, while consuming news on commercial television is associated with more negative attitudes. Research also shows that the audiences of commercial television think that migrants need to deserve their place in the host country. This "deservingness" is less outspokenly demanded by the audiences of public service news.
  - In the market of newspapers there is also a similar differentiation. The audiences of quality newspapers hold more positive attitudes towards migrants and are less eager of demanding the deservingness of migrants.
  - A further research result documents the differences between the professional role perceptions of journalists working for public service media and commercial media. Journalists working for commercial media tend to put more emphasis on their role as entertainers, while other roles such as analyzing and observing or educating the public are more important for public service media journalists.
  - The angle one chooses to speak on behalf of migrants or develop allied storytelling could be different if the audience of the medium is more negative towards migrants or if the audience expects more entertainment rather than analysis.
- ⇒ A third aspect to consider is the answer to the question what journalist that one wants to be? The research in brief paper distinguishes between different types of roles: analysing roles, observing roles, monitoring roles, intervention roles, government roles, entertainment roles and some other roles. Does one want to be a detached observer or is analysing reality the primordial journalistic role? Does one want to intervene in society and facilitate social change? Or does one see one's role in relation to the government to oppose or, on the contrary, support government? Or is entertainment the priority? Allied storytelling could be viewed in different light, depending on the journalist's focus.
- ⇒ On the website of the Worlds of Journalism Study (<http://www.worldsofjournalism.org>) results of country reports are provided on how journalists perceive their role in 67 countries around the world. In the Research in Brief, we compared the results for four countries in the OPPORTUNITIES project. Each country has its own journalism culture and this is the fourth element to take into account.

- In Italy there is a strong tendency for journalists to oppose government voices and this might imply an eagerness to contradict right-wing policies, but also a risk to instrumentalize discourses about migrants for political reasons.
- In Hungary, audiences tend to be more negative, and media might follow this negativity, but journalists also favour intervention to create social change, which might stimulate allied storytelling.
- In Germany standing in the shoes of the migrant might be part of analysing reality since analysing roles are most popular among journalists in Germany, although journalists are not interventionist.
- In Austria the monitoring of political elites is a popular role among journalists, and this might imply a tendency to provide alternative narratives, although this also carries a risk of political instrumentalisation.





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