In our research field of CSO workers about 20 cases\(^1\) were compared. This allowed us to determine relevant features of process structures and process frames which enable Europe-sensitised CSO workers to develop successfully, take part in, and stabilise transcultural project work and its respective social arenas. Since the core of the theoretical model has been presented in the preceding chapter, this chapter will deal with the first two steps of case analysis: the structural description and analytical abstraction of the example of the German environmental activist Miriam.\(^2\)

The case of Miriam: Metamorphosis processes in early biographical development

The life history of environmental activist Miriam, 32 years old at the time of the interview, is dominated by a biographical metamorphosis process. The core feature of this metamorphosis is a fundamental change in Miriam’s world view. We will demonstrate this with a detailed analysis of two passages from her autobiographical narrative, taking into account formal as well as substantive features of the narrative, highlighted in the respective passages.

Miriam begins her autobiographical narrative with a description of how she grew up in a very small village in Hesse which was a very sheltered experience where everything was well within reach. Her parents, for example, never locked their house or car. Miriam explains that a characteristic feeling of living in this village very close to the inner-German border was a feeling of being almost locked up from three sides with only one way open to the West. Because of this specific geopolitical situation village life was, so it appears to Miriam, orderly and calm, since there were never people just

\(^1\) We also compared our findings with some cases from the cultural contact group.

\(^2\) Our translator Erika Gericke provided valuable background information about the everyday culture and artefacts of the GDR that play a role in Miriam’s life history.
passing through. The first narrative unit of her interview is already revealing for assessing the biographical experiences that shaped Miriam’s life history:

**[kernel narrative sentence]** And –ehm– well I was born in 1976 –ehm– in [city]. That –ehm– is in [region in Hesse] and I grew up in the [region] and had been quite close to the Iron Curtain

**[detailed]** –ehm– that –eh– is called [name], this small town, and I have grown up in an even smaller town, well which was really just 2 kilometres away from the border and –ehm– that was like I c// compare it always with the children from Bullerbü,3 because we had been completely enclosed by this Iron Curtain and could so-to-speak only in one direction to the west, that was for us Germany so-to-speak where we could go and there was the fence and that has influenced my my childhood or how I grew up strongly because everything was very straightforward/manageable, was, well, I grew up in a place which had 350 inhabitants, well, extremely rurally coined (I: Sure) many// many farms and –ehm– you knew each other, well that was such a world, let me say it where –ehm– my parents didn’t lock the door, the car was

**[commentary passage 1]** well that was –ehm– simply very small and easy to overlook and we had always this border right under our nose

**[argumentation]** and as a child I wasn’t so aware and reflected about it that this is somehow a border now, which separates two German states or that there are somehow people on the other side, who speak German, but for me the world simply ended there. I knew that you weren’t allowed to go there and you can leave only through one side and somehow that was –mh– well as a child I hadn’t thought about that –ehm– and the odd- ities about it were actually that we had a lot of relative// well relatives in the GDR and we had always visited them too –ehm– but as a child I wasn’t aware of it, that they so-to-speak live in this country simply a few metres further on, which –eh– follows up there because we always had to in the GD// GDR drive to a border crossing which was further away (I: Alright) and that’s why and I haven’t seen the connection. I understood this later on when the border was opened up. That is actually so-to-speak the country where I had been very often, it was beeline 2 kilometres away from my childhood home (I: Yes absurd)

**[commentary passage 2]** And that, that was somehow I have to say something which was very formative for my childhood from a retrospective point of view because it is really also very straightforward.

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3 A famous children’s book written by Astrid Lindgren.