

INTRODUCTION

At Home in European-Turkish Space



“Stay strong. You will surprise yourself with how strong you can be,” Leyla advises her neighbor Melis.¹ Melis is distraught over having found her 17-year-old daughter, Sahra, in an intimate embrace with their Qur’anic recitation instructor. “I almost killed myself after I found them together,” she tells Leyla. If word gets out, Sahra’s honor will be tainted, reflecting badly on the whole family. Even more troubling for Melis is that the fallout from this event will likely result in the exposure of additional family secrets for which Melis is wholly unprepared to deal with right now. “People tell me about the things that make them feel ashamed,” Leyla comments to me after we have left Melis. “They open up to me, because I don’t judge people; I try to help them. After you finish writing the book about my life, Susan, you have to write another book about all of the secrets that I know.”

This is the book about Leyla’s life to which she was referring. It examines how her transnational experience contributes to her ability to be nonjudgmental, as she demonstrates with Melis, and also provides her with a plurality of ethical perspectives from which she derives a sense of knowledge and strength. Migration between Germany and Turkey results in new ways of thinking about education, gender roles, and Islam for German-Turkish return migrants like Leyla. Leyla combats the social norms that produce shameful family secrets, creating a distinctive ethical life and, in so doing, forging belonging in her community.

The day we meet Melis begins as many have before: “How about a walk to the park for some fresh air?” Leyla asks. “A great idea,” I agree. It’s one of those spring days where the air smells like earth and the sun is shining brilliantly, but it’s not actually warm. Leyla, her daughter Hande, her son Mert, and I put on our coats and begin walking through the surrounding hills of Huzurköy, a district on the outskirts of Istanbul.² Actually, Huzurköy

was located on the outskirts of Istanbul in the past, but today, with Istanbul's out-of-control construction boom, the designation "outskirt" is questionable. Huzurköy has been overtaken by mega-construction projects that include showy reproductions of European cities and 50-plus-story apartment complexes with Latin-sounding names, such as "Meridian" or "Brandium."

To get to the park, we pass by Amadeus,³ a development consisting of approximately 100 three-story condominiums with exterior walls composed of blocks of sand-colored wood and white stucco. Stylistically, it reminds me more of California than Istanbul, which was perhaps the developer's intent. "The apartments are very small and very expensive," Leyla tells me. Above a large and imposing gate hangs a sign in black block letters advertising the name of the prestigious contractor. Having "a name" makes the development "a brand" and increases the value of the homes. Outside of each entryway we can glimpse luxury cars, Mercedes and BMWs. While the development screams affluence, the street outside is barely finished, with broken pavement, no sidewalks, and piles of dirt and trash through which street dogs are rummaging. Patchy grass grows along the roadside, and between the apartment complexes we can catch a very distant glimpse of a shopping mall.

The city center of Huzurköy is about a 20-minute walk away from Leyla's house. Little distinguishes Huzurköy from any other suburb of Istanbul or from many small Anatolian towns. Main street businesses include four discount supermarkets and one more expensive Carrefour supermarket, two bakeries, a gas station, a medical clinic, a jewelry store, a fabric store, a stationary store, a men's coffeehouse, an appliance dealer, a package delivery company, a fish seller, and a place selling *çiğ köfte* (spicy bulgur balls usually served in a thin flat bread). Buses and minibuses travel through the area continuously on their way between central Istanbul and more distant suburbs, and the sidewalks remain crowded with people well after dark. Huzurköy has few trees and no central monument or gathering area. People walking through its streets appear to have a definite purpose, to be on their way to and from work or visiting. It is not a place where one slowly strolls. Most women on the street are wearing headscarves and toting children by the hand, and the men that pass by have slumping shoulders and cigarettes in their mouths. The residents of Amadeus presumably drive to one of the nearby malls for shopping and dining, as their cars are rarely seen on Huzurköy's downtown streets.

After passing by several developments similar to Amadeus and one small supermarket, we arrive at our destination: a large grassy area with a substantial playground for children and a small café doing a brisk business of mostly tea and ice cream. The park abuts a middle-class neighborhood and is ringed by 30-story green and pink apartment buildings and a medium-sized cream-colored mosque. We sit down at the café and are immediately joined

by Melis and Sahra, who saw us arrive from where they were sitting on a nearby bench. In contrast to Leyla who is dressed in a yellow knit shirt and brown pants with no headscarf, mother and daughter are both dressed in the *tesettür* style (conservative Islamic dress) with plain dark coats that button from neck to foot and tightly fastened, colorful headscarves. Where Melis is so rounded that her arms and waist are stretching her jacket, Sahra is so wispy that her jacket looks like a thick curtain draped around her body.

We exchange pleasantries. It is clear from her facial expressions that Melis wants to talk to Leyla about something but isn't certain if she should speak openly in front of me. Leyla tells her that she should speak her mind, and Melis sends Sahra home to begin cooking dinner. "Sahra will be getting married in a month," Melis relates in a tremulous voice. The circumstances of the engagement are complicated because they emerge from the tryst that Melis barely interrupted in time. In Melis and Leyla's social milieu, an unmarried girl should not be alone in the presence of an unrelated man. Kissing one is a scandal unless the couple marries. "Luckily, he has agreed to marry Sahra," Melis tells us. Pausing and looking away, she adds, "I had to tell him about my husband." Tears fill her eyes. What does she mean by "tell him about my husband," I thought, and why is she so sad? Leyla later explains to me that Melis is not legally married to Sahra's father. In fact, her husband has another family—another wife and children—who do not know about his relationship with Melis and their children together. Polygamy is illegal in Turkey, and although it is officially allowed under Islamic law, it is quite rare and not socially acceptable in most regions. Being a single mother or having children out of wedlock is also unusual and not widely accepted. None of Melis's neighbors know that her marriage is not "real," and if they did learn the truth, Leyla explains that they would surely shun Melis. But, Sahra's fiancé had to be told the truth, Leyla relates, as he would certainly find out when none of her father's relatives came to the marriage ceremony. Now, Melis is worried that her neighbors will learn the truth about her own marital status as well. While she must have anticipated such a possibility, the current situation has left her emotionally wrought to the point of considering suicide.

Leyla is quick to tell Melis that because she is a mother, suicide is not an option. She must remain strong. "You have to be strong for your daughter no matter what. Yes, people will talk if they find out, and you have to just not care about what people say." As we walk back to her house, Leyla explains that if the truth ever gets out, the gossip could destroy Melis. "Everyone cares so much about what others think! They always say, 'What will people say?' But who cares about the decisions that Melis made in her relationship? That is her choice." She relates that she feels glad that neighbors like Melis see her as someone who can be trusted to accept them and their secrets no matter what, even when no one else will.

This incident illustrates the significance people place on the acceptance of their neighbors in certain communities in Turkey, such as this one. People depend upon their neighbors for emotional support, help with daily tasks, and practical assistance during crises. At the same time, the social pressure of neighbors' judgment—the fear of what people will say—is a real and potent force that affects actions. There is even a well-known phrase for this in Turkish: *mahalle baskısı* (neighborhood pressure). Neighbors evaluate and sanction each other's actions as a way of maintaining what they perceive to be an honorable community.

In advising Melis to disregard what others may think, Leyla modeled some of the key principles by which she lives her own life: she seeks to overcome sources of women's shame with personal strength, to openly discuss taboo topics with the aim of helping others, and to fight against or at least to disregard neighbors' judgments when she feels they are incorrect. Why is Leyla so willing to befriend Melis, potentially exposing herself to community scorn in doing so? Why does she insist that Melis disregard her neighbors' disapproval? Leyla understands Melis's feelings. She herself has been subject to neighborly disapproval many times. In her case, a major cause of condemnation is her background as a return migrant from Germany. Her ideas and actions set her apart from neighbors who are not returnees. She has been accused of being "Germanized," a bad Muslim and a neglectful mother. "In Germany you live for yourself, but in Turkey you live for society," she often laments. Leyla struggles to forge a path between living for herself *and* for societal acceptance. As the interaction with Melis shows, she remains nonjudgmental about sexual indiscretions and stresses instead the overriding importance of being a caring parent, strong-willed and self-sufficient. She is committed to helping others, particularly her female neighbors, and rarely refrains from speaking her mind. With her suggestion that a book should be written about "all of the secrets" she knows, she intends to convey that there is no cause for anyone to feel alone or ashamed.

PURSUING BELONGING AND AN ETHICAL LIFE

Belonging is not a state that we achieve, but a struggle that we wage. This book examines how migration affects belonging for Turkish migrants returning to Turkey from Germany. It is premised on the idea that the struggle to belong is the lifelong struggle to be a good person and to be accepted by others—in other words, to be ethical and to be recognized as ethical.⁴ Belonging emerges through concerted efforts of nurturing, guiding, or shaping oneself or others in particular areas, for instance, as a worker, a parent, a community member, or a citizen. This book describes these efforts ethnographically,

through the eyes of a second-generation return migrant woman—through Leyla’s eyes.⁵ The coming chapters follow Leyla as she travels from Germany to Turkey, marries, raises five children, works in illegal German-Turkish call centers, and triumphs over personal traumas and neighbors’ condemnation to become a community leader. Living abroad and returning home are not periods of time that migrants like Leyla overcome. The experience of migration infuses Leyla’s life as she forges belonging not once, but again and again.

Like all lives, we can view Leyla’s life as a series of ethical projects or actions undertaken with the purpose of doing what is good and right. The book examines these ethical projects by drawing on Leyla’s own reflections on her life and beliefs, and my observations of her interactions over the course of several years. I also juxtapose her life story with other ethnographic materials at key junctures—interviews with and observations of other return migrants—so that readers grasp what is unique to Leyla’s story and what she shares with other German-Turks who have returned to Turkey.

Three central ethical projects are important to Leyla and many other return migrants: the effort to educate oneself and others; the aim of being a good woman, mother, and wife; and the goal of shaping a respectable Muslim life. Each of these projects is multidimensional. Education is a form of self-work and a means of improving one’s community, a way of establishing friendships, and a defense mechanism against gossip. Leyla stresses the importance of her children’s formal education as well as their religious education, she tries to educate her husband and fellow citizens, and she views her own self-education as central to being a good person. In terms of gender, Leyla is struggling to be an honorable working woman, a caring mother, and a respected wife. Women like Leyla are negotiating overlapping, but occasionally contradictory, German and Turkish gender norms and discourses of honor, rights, respect, equality, duty, and care. Women’s (not men’s) experiences and relationships are the primary focus of this book because women face significant burdens as familial caretakers and representatives of community and national honor.⁶ Where religiosity is concerned, Islam provides comfort and guidance to migrants, and they constantly underline the importance of practicing Islam correctly. Muslim ethical projects are part of Leyla’s negotiation of call center work, childrearing, and neighborly interactions. The ethical perspectives of Islam—honesty, responsibility, religious duty, and religious education—permeate her daily conversations and actions. Yet, her ideas about Islam change continuously over time as a result of migration and ongoing transnational experiences.

I refer to Leyla as a “German-Turk” because she is associated with Turkish guest worker migration to Germany, which began in 1961 as part of efforts to rebuild the German economy after World War II. Leyla, who turned 49 years old in 2019, is the child of a first-generation worker, and she attended ele-

mentary school and high school in Germany. The nearly 3 million Turks in Germany are that country's largest minority group and face significant discrimination. Turks are frequently the subject of heated debates about Muslim migration to Europe, EU expansion, and a multicultural Germany. After three generations in Germany, increasing numbers of migrants are choosing to return to Turkey. Yet, return migrants like Leyla are not readily accepted in Turkey. Neighbors are concerned that migrants change ethical norms in Turkish communities, even as their return also signifies the impossibility of Turks' attaining a longed-for "European modernity." For neighbors, return migrants are both too European and also not European enough. They are stigmatized as uneducated, dishonorable, culturally corrupted *Almançis* (German-ers). Recently, Turkish and European media outlets have speculated that Turkey is turning away from Europe ideologically and materially and seeking greater social connections to the Middle East. However, observing German-Turkish return migrants' experiences to date suggests that Turkish leaders' historical project of making Turkey "European" remains a source of deep longing but also deep apprehension for citizens.

What does the struggle for belonging look like when one is a foreigner in Germany and a "German-er" in Turkey? Transnational migration pushes migrants into challenging social positions as community outsiders who must confront shame and stigma. Shame and stigma are personal and community struggles for many people in Turkey, not only for migrants.⁷ But, migrants are particularly stigmatized because they are perceived as ethically altered by migration and thus as potentially harmful to the respectability of their communities. Migrants need to work on belonging, to work on ethical relationships. Marginalized in Germany and in Turkey, return migrants wrestle with ideals—with what is right and good—for themselves, their neighbors, and their nation.

Migration actually does alter migrants' ethics, expanding their range of ethical choices. For example, Leyla wonders: Is it acceptable to lie to and cheat Germans to support one's family? How should one respond to community censure, gossip, and shame stemming from being a migrant, from being German-ized? Can a working woman raise hardworking, self-reliant children? Can a "European girl" change the ideas of a "Turkish villager" about women's roles? What should citizens demand from political leaders and each other? After transnational experience, how should a Muslim choose among conflicting ideas about religious practice? This book is the story of how Leyla answers these questions—not once, but over and over again, how she struggles to transform negative ethical positions (lack of belonging) into positive ethical positions (belonging).

Ultimately, Leyla's broader ethical worldview is positive. Being transnational creates ethical dilemmas, but also provides a way out of these di-

lemmas because it provides a variety of perspectives that can be used to (re-)shape selves and communities, to transform belonging. For example, Leyla transforms shame into pride by actively teaching her children about Islam through unusually open mixed-gender discussions. She transforms stigmatization as a “bad migrant mother” and “bad Muslim” into ethical motherhood and a new way to be Muslim. Some neighbors reject her for these efforts, which they see as evidence of her German-ization, but many others embrace her ideas. Migration opens up ethical pluralities—an awareness of multiple ways of being educated, honorable, and religious—that unsettles, but also facilitates belonging. German-Turks negotiate acceptance in spite of and also *because of* their novel ethical ideas.

ETHICAL PROJECTS IN MIGRATION

We live in an era of movement; an era famously called “The Age of Migration” (Castles and Miller 2009). There are more and more international migrants every day—49 percent more today than there were in 2000 (258 million versus 175 million people).⁸ Not only are more people moving, but transportation and communication technologies also mean that people are creating and maintaining social connections across vast distances like never before. Whereas the first Turks who went to Germany corresponded with postal letters and drove back and forth in three-day trips, today’s German-Turks can e-mail and call Turkey any time they wish and fly there in several hours. With so much movement globally, more and more people are concerned about the threats to security and cultural integrity that they think migrants might pose to their countries. Migrants are prompting moral panics in Europe and the United States, where some worry that their presence disrupts ethno-national identities and strains social welfare systems. For example, Muslim migrants in Germany are believed by some Germans to endanger values of women’s rights, freedom of religion, and even democracy (Ewing 2008; Özyürek 2009; Weber 2013). As I explore in this book, German-Turkish return migrants also prompt heated debates about community and national identity in Turkey (see also Rottmann 2013). Many people do not fear migration, but they do wonder how to nurture a sense of community in the midst of increasing diversity. What is the best way to create a caring, inclusive, and accepting multicultural society? It is more essential than ever to understand the relationship between migration and ethics, to understand how migration creates ethical dilemmas, and how ethical pluralities stemming from migration are involved in pursuits of belonging during and after periods of migration.

In its sustained and personal attention to migration and ethics, this book enters into conversation with a growing subfield of anthropology: the an-

thropology of ethics (Fassin and Leze 2014; Lambek 2010; Zigon 2008). Existing research on ethics has examined religion, development, law, sexuality, medicine, and globalization in depth.⁹ Despite today's large numbers of migrants and intense fears about migration and multiculturalism, just a few works explore ethics in relation to migration.¹⁰ Existing studies in the anthropology of ethics tend to focus on the cultivation of ethical virtues, such as the techniques through which people become model religious practitioners or citizens (e.g. Hirschkind 2006; Mahmood 2005; Zigon 2011). In contrast, this book highlights ethical change, even the fragility of ethical positions. For migrants, ethical aims for work, motherhood, marriage, community, and religiosity are not clearly defined or standardized; rather they are unstable, emergent, and multiple.

Transnational migration creates a "double consciousness" (Gilroy 1993) or "plurality of vision" (Said 1984 [2001]: 172). Leyla draws on an awareness of German *and* Turkish lifeworlds when making choices. For example, she draws on an understanding of citizens' rights in Germany and on knowledge of the importance of hospitality and honor in her Turkish neighborhood. Leyla often creatively combines contradictory discourses; for example, simultaneously mobilizing ideas of Muslim education and Christian honesty or women's honor and women's rights. Instead of certainty and stability, we see her "improvisation, experimentation, opportunism, and existential mobility" (Jackson 2013: 202) as she acts with a unique consciousness regarding personal, gendered, and religious ways of being and relating.

We can think of the ethical pluralities that migrants are able to access as a novel freedom stemming from migration. Michel Foucault (1997) suggests that ethics can even be conceived of as "the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection" (284). Foucault means that we are ethical when we have the freedom to reflect on what we are and, if we so desire, to change our thoughts and actions so that they align with our ideals. We thereby create better—more ethical—selves. Anyone can freely reflect on his or her life whenever he or she wishes. But transnational mobility fosters significant ethical reflection because of the removal of preexisting social structures, like familial and community ties. Migrants like Leyla see possibilities for action that others around them might not. For example, instead of accepting the given norms for married women's roles in Turkey and instead of acquiescing to neighbors' views regarding parenting, Leyla meets her needs in creative ways. By drawing on her observations of Germans and the German state, as well as her sense of herself as an independent, self-educated woman, she fulfills her ideals for herself in ways that surprise and occasionally disturb those around her.

Of course, freedom is never limitless. Leyla's experiences are still circumscribed by her social and political context, gender norms, class position,

demands of family and friends, and her own particular life experiences. Her freedom is not the freedom of endless possibility, but the freedom and the challenge of choosing from among more options than her non-migrant neighbors in Germany or Turkey imagine. Her story ultimately shows us the tenuous, situated, and unstable complexity of ethics and the tension to be found between suffering and acting to change (Arendt 1958: 190). Leyla does not face clear, obvious choices but murky, complex ones. She must trade one ideal for another or figure out how to make a third possibility work for her. This ethnography shows the emergent and conflictual sides of ethical work (cf. Osella and Osella 2009; Schielke 2009).

Leyla's story also offers a window onto the temporality of ethical situations and striving. We see how right and wrong and good and bad shift for Leyla over time. Anthropologists have tended to maintain a synchronic focus on ordinary ethical practice (Lambek 2010) or on ephemeral cultural crises and personal breakdowns (e.g. Robbins 2007; Zigon 2008). This research, instead, illuminates the gradual, incremental process of ethical change by placing the effects of exposure to cultural difference, confrontations with family and friends, and life experiences at its center. For example, readers see how experiences in German schools, a child's death, and financial hardship may affect religious practice and how love in a marriage deepens as people struggle for autonomy, understanding, and companionship through decades.

In struggling to craft a good life, Leyla is not different from anyone else. Everyone strives to be ethical, meaning that everyone seeks to lead a life that makes him or her proud, a life worth living. I follow Michael Lambek and the contributors to *Ordinary Ethics* (2010b) in using the term "ethics" rather than "morality" because of its "possibly greater association with action than propriety and with 'the good' than 'the right'" (9). Ethics concerns our ideals for ourselves—the way we try to improve ourselves, to act the way we think is right, kind, caring, fair, or appropriate. By reflecting on "the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself," you constitute yourself as the "moral subject of your own actions" (Foucault 1997: 263).¹¹ Ethics are also embodied in our relationships with others. We *make* ethics as we interact with people who we please or disappoint, approve or reject, embrace or evade. Paul Ricoeur explains this eloquently as the way we esteem the "other as a oneself" and "oneself as another" (1992: 194). In other words, we construct ourselves through ethical interaction. But Ricoeur's discussion of ethics overlooks the missed cues, arguments, and hurts that are also part of relationships. All ethical negotiations do not end happily. Leyla's story and other migrants' stories show us both the rosy and also less rosy sides of ethical negotiations. For example, Leyla is deeply satisfied when encouraging her neighbors like Melis, and deeply frustrated with neighbors' accusations that she is *Almanci*.

MOBILITY AND BELONGING

I use the term “return migrant” to describe Leyla and others in order to emphasize their experiences in Turkey during the time I knew them—in a sense, while I studied them, they were return migrants, regardless of how they might self-identify or be perceived by others (as Turks, Turkish-Germans, *Almancis*, transnational migrants, etc.). I found that most migrants expressed a desire to establish a home in Turkey, and their concerns seemed more similar to those of return migrants cross-culturally than to those of first-generation labor migrants. Thus, the term “return migrant” is appropriate. But “return migrant” is also problematic, as it implies that migration has ended in a permanent return. In fact, “return migrants” may continually travel between Germany and Turkey without any intention of permanently returning to Turkey. Even those who permanently return do not sever all transnational ties to Germany. “Transnational activities do not remain constant across the life cycle. Instead, they ebb and flow at different stages, varying with the demands of work, school, and family” (Levitt 2002: 139). Further, many second-generation migrants like Leyla discover Turkey for the first time when they are in their late teens and twenties and, thus, are not “returning” in the traditional sense. Ultimately, individuals often change their mind about moving between countries, and the meanings of being at home and being transnational can change throughout their lifetime. As Karen Fog Olwig (2003) points out, “It is difficult to capture such changeability with terms such as ‘emigrant,’ ‘immigrant,’ or ‘transmigrant,’ that have movement between places, rather than movement through life as a frame of reference” (800). Tim Ingold (2011) captures this changeability nicely when he describes how human life “unfolds not in places, but along paths” (148).

It is most appropriate to think of Leyla and others not simply as return migrants, but as mobile subjects with a transnational perspective. Mobility refers not only to physical movement, but also to the multiple ways in which “economic and social life is performed and organized through time and across spaces” (Urry 2007: 6). As the paths of their lives unfold, people experience and seek out “mobilities,” which wax and wane in importance. Mobility can refer to changes in ideas and practices over time; adjustments as one moves between public and private spaces and between social groups; social mobility in the form of changing class statuses and values, the cultivation of social and cultural capital, and the formation of new community relationships; and the flights of imagination and reflection that move us to different beliefs and worldviews. Importantly, mobility is not only literal physical experiences, but also an aspiration, a way of being in the world. For instance, Julie Chu (2010) has studied rural Fuzhounese people in China for whom mobility is

“less about either place of origin or physical travel than about inhabiting the world in a particular cosmopolitan and future-oriented way—that is, as a valorized subject of a modernizing and globalizing China” (12).

Likewise, mobility for German-Turks encompasses physical movement, but cannot be reduced to just that. People returning from Germany to Turkey do not only move between point A (Germany) and point B (Turkey), they move through life. Leyla’s mobility encompasses her birth in Turkey in 1970 and migration to Germany at age 4, her return to Turkey in 1978 for a brief visit, and her permanent return in 1988. Her mobility continues via ongoing connections to her stepmother and half-sister still in Germany who call and visit frequently, her husband’s extended traveling in Europe as a long-distance truck driver since the 1990s, her work for a German-Turkish call center between 2009–2011, and her ongoing friendships with German-Turks. Leyla is also living in a transnational social field that connects Germany and Turkey, which I discuss further below. Leyla’s mobility also includes the mobility of becoming a wife and mother, of working and not working, of moving from the lower to the lower-middle class, of moving in and out of family and community relationships, and of moving in and out of religious groups. Being mobile is not just a practical reality. It is also a strategy for Leyla, a way that she becomes modern, cosmopolitan, and a good Turk and European.

Real and aspirational mobility is a key element in her ethical projects. This book is the story of how mobility infuses struggles over what makes someone a good person and a life a good life. Leyla’s ethical projects are projects of belonging—a search for intimacy, inclusion, and acceptance. But, she often strives for a belonging that she does not attain, or she achieves a measure of belonging only to feel it snatched away by changed circumstances. Much writing on return migration and migration broadly presents a simplistic account of belonging. The return home is characterized as a period of difficulty followed by eventual readjustment and integration, ultimately ending in belonging. Researchers often conceptualize belonging in relation to positive or negative extremes. They describe how return migrants gain prestige and acceptance at home through gift-giving, displaying new wealth, or utilizing social capital (Potter et al. 2005: 14; Stefansson 2004: 3), or they describe tensions, ruptures, and discontinuities that are part of returnee homecomings (Huseby-Darvas 2004: 86; Tsuda 2003). Explanations for returnees’ difficulties typically point to their new class positions and unusual consumption practices (Çağlar 1995; 2002; Salih 2002) or their unfamiliar ethnonational identifications (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Reynolds 2010).

My ethnography leads me to different conclusions. Rather than focusing on “reintegration” as an endpoint, I tell Leyla’s story in order to capture the turbulence and rewards of living in transnational space in which the struggle to belong is enduring. Migrants strive for an acceptance just out of reach

in some realms, while experiencing closeness and comfort in others. Leyla feels both satisfaction and frustration throughout her life as the experience of being a return migrant takes on different meanings—enabling employment in call centers, informing her fights with school officials, and prompting neighborly appreciation and criticism at different moments. Creating a happy home, finding accepting communities, and obtaining meaningful work cannot be charted according to a moment when a person is “reintegrated.” Rather, people negotiate happiness, acceptance, and meaning—an ethical life—continuously as they establish relationships of belonging. Migrants’ struggle for belonging is affected by their class and ethno-national identities, but also by the social and political context of their migration and by their own evolving ideas about how to live their lives. Belonging is not simply a class position or an ethno-national identity. To understand what belonging means, it is necessary to look at the lives that migrants shape over an extended period of time, to look at how they weave their ethical lives through the years.

Just as return migration is not about movement between two points, belonging is not about movement between two communities, but about the process of forming ethical relationships: belonging to oneself through reflecting on who one is and working on who one wants to be, belonging to others with whom one interacts in daily life, and, finally, belonging to abstract categories of culture, religion, and nation. We cannot focus just on the disjunctures of returning for Leyla and others but must look at how people engage in future-oriented projects of belonging over time.

GERMAN-TURKISH MIGRATION AND RETURN: FROM FOREIGNER TO *ALMANCI*

Escaping unemployment and poverty, Turks first travelled to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s to improve their family’s quality of life.¹² They were officially guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*), recruited by the German government after the resulting labor shortage brought on by World War II and the division of Germany into East and West Germany.¹³ Workers were recruited to literally rebuild West Germany, and their efforts have famously been said to have brought about an “economic miracle” (*Wirtschaftswunder*). Between 1955 and 1968, Germany signed recruitment agreements with Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Morocco, and Tunisia. An agreement with Turkey was signed in 1961. The earliest recruited workers were unskilled and semi-skilled men between the ages of 20–40 who did heavy or dirty work in Germany’s booming construction, metal, and mining industries. Eventually women were also recruited from Turkey and other countries,

and, by 1973, women comprised 30 percent of Germany's foreign workforce (Chin 2007: 39).

First generation migrants usually describe their jobs as difficult. For example, one returnee, Seda, related her experience working at a curtain factory during an interview. She described entering the workroom and seeing a machine that took up the entire room. It was as tall as the ceiling. "How am I going to do this?" she asked. "For the first two weeks, my fingers bled every day because I hurt them on the machine." Many Turkish workers lost hearing or sight and developed lung diseases, stomach problems, and other physical disabilities as a result of their factory jobs. When the oil embargo hit in 1973, the German economy declined, unemployment grew, and recruitment of foreign workers stopped. The German government wanted migrants to return to Turkey and even provided financial incentives to returnees in the mid-1980s that led to the return of over 200,000 Turks. However, many Turkish workers calculated that there was no financial advantage to returning to Turkey's struggling economy, and instead they brought their families to join them in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s.

Second-generation migrants differ greatly in terms of their evaluation of schooling in Germany—many describe academic difficulties, teachers' racism, and being ostracized by classmates, while others found academic success and close friendships with German classmates.¹⁴ Those who returned to Turkey in their teens, either because their parents took advantage of incentives to return in the 1980s or because their parents simply decided that their children would benefit from a Turkish education, generally discuss difficulties adjusting to the Turkish school system (Rottmann 2015). The popular perception of second-generation migrants in Turkey is that they are caught between cultures, neither fully German nor fully Turkish, in fact, completely lost. However, I found that, in large part, second-generation migrants are able to productively navigate both German and Turkish societies and ultimately to shape fulfilling lives in either country. Leyla is one example of a second-generation return migrant who draws on diverse cultural knowledges to create a satisfying life.

Today, German-Turks are deeply engaged with German society. They participate actively in German social, political, and economic life. But, German-Turks face myriad difficulties. Racial and anti-Muslim discrimination is widespread.¹⁵ Drawing from long-term fieldwork with Turks in Germany, Ruth Mandel (2008) argues that Germans see Turks as simultaneously "wrongful insiders" if they assimilate and become "too German," but also as "unintegratable outsiders." Thus, German nationalist rhetoric implies that Turks are potentially disloyal to Germany just like Jews in the past (131).

Existing citizenship laws and heated media debates about Turkish migration clearly demonstrate German discomfort with the idea of being an im-

migration country. Turks born in Germany and wishing to become German citizens must relinquish their Turkish citizenship by age 23. After age 23, dual citizenship is not allowed. New citizenship laws were passed in 2006 that added the additional requirement of 600 hours of language training and 30 hours of instruction about German culture with the goal of facilitating identification with German society and cultural values (Joppke 2007). Legislation enacted in 2007 mandated proven knowledge of German language (A1 level) before Turkish migrants could receive visas to join their spouses in Germany. Arguing that the right to family reunification is essential to integration, the European Court of Justice ruled against the suitability of this legislation in 2014, but Germany continues to make language ability a condition for obtaining a spousal visa.¹⁶

Although there is a stable Turkish community in Germany, outward migration from Germany to Turkey began increasing in the 2000s. In 2006, the number of migrants leaving Germany for Turkey exceeded the number traveling to the country (Pusch and Splitt 2013: 135), reaching approximately 4,000 migrants per year by 2014. However, a weakening Turkish economy in 2017 and 2018 are likely to have reversed these trends. Already in 2015, the number of migrants traveling to Germany was greater than those returning to Turkey by about 2,000 individuals.¹⁷ By returning to Turkey, migrants are fulfilling German leaders' historical expectations and hopes that Turks would be temporary "guests" in Germany. However, increasingly the loss of these migrants is viewed with concern, as German media outlets report that the low birthrate for ethnic Germans may soon prompt a labor crisis.

Turkey began allowing dual citizenship in the 1980s, and, after 1996, began allowing people of Turkish descent to inherit property, even if they did not possess Turkish citizenship. Additionally, the Turkish state has devised a system whereby it recognizes its former citizens by giving them an identification card that can be obtained at Turkish consulates in Germany (Çağlar 2004). It allows former Turkish citizens who are now German citizens to enter Turkey freely and to maintain residency there, without the need for a visa or residence permit. Most recently, in 2010, the Turkish government created a General Directorate of the Ministry of Labour for Services for Workers Abroad (*Çalışma Bakanlığı Yurtdışı İşçi Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü*) with the goal of facilitating German-Turks' movement within and engagement with Turkish society. In contrast to previous efforts, which focused on reintegrating migrants, the state is now focused on diaspora policies. This Directorate seeks to improve the situation of Turks abroad, strengthen German-Turks' economic ties with Turkey, support the pursuit of higher education in Turkey, and facilitate the activities of Turkish NGOs established in Turkey and abroad (Pusch and Splitt 2013: 143–144).

Today, approximately 4 million people in Turkey have German migration background (Pusch and Splitt 2013: 132) out of a total population of nearly 80 million. Returnees include first generations who retire in Turkey permanently or spend six months in Turkey and six months in Germany and second and third generations who have returned to work in cosmopolitan Istanbul. About three-quarters of returnees are between 25 and 50 years of age and one-quarter are over 50 years of age (Baykara-Krumme and Nauck 2011). The Turkish government does not maintain statistics on returnees, so, unfortunately, we lack data about the locations to which migrants return in Turkey. During field research, I discovered many first-generation returnees settled back into their natal villages and hometowns or divided their time between their natal villages, Istanbul, and luxurious coastal retirement communities. Second-generation returnees may return to their parents' villages, but they are more likely to pursue employment and other opportunities in Istanbul. Most returnees receive frequent visits from friends and relatives in Germany and often travel to Germany themselves.¹⁸

I refer to Leyla and others as German-Turks because this is the term that English language analysts use most often (Çağlar 1995; Mandel 2008: 181; White 1997). However, this term has been criticized for emphasizing German identity, and thus some feel that "Turkish-German" is a preferable label. Despite its popularity in English, the Turkish word for German-Turk, *Alman-Türk*, is not a well-known term in Turkish. Rather, most people use the Turkish words *Almanyalı*, *Alamancı*, or *Almancı* (German-like, German-ish, German-er). These words are each modifications of the Turkish word for German, *Alman*, and are only used to refer to German-Turks. However, they are considered derogatory by many. *Alamancı* and *Almancı* have particularly negative connotations as the *-cı* ending in Turkish is usually used to indicate one's profession. For example, someone who publishes or writes for a newspaper, which is called a *gazete*, is a *gazeteci*. Thus, *Alamancı* and *Almancı* connote becoming a "professional German" and thus faking or putting-on German-ness. In fact, some returnees embrace these words, despite their derogatory meanings. While conducting fieldwork, I usually told people that I was studying "Turks who returned to Turkey from Germany" (*Almanya'dan Türkiye'ye dönen Türkler*). Most of the people that scholars call German-Turks, including Leyla, would refer to themselves as Turks, though a few would claim to be European Turks or "world citizens." Their neighbors and relatives, however, most often refer to them as *Almanyalı*, *Alamancı*, or *Almancı*.

These perceptions of return migrants are far from benign. They are shaped by anxieties about cultural and national identities and social, economic, and political connections between Germany and Turkey.

GERMAN-TURKISH TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

When German President Joachim Gauck criticized Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in April 2014 for his harsh response to political protests, Erdoğan defended his actions a month later in a speech in Cologne, Germany. He told the 16,000 attendees, most of whom were of Turkish descent, not to assimilate into Germany and not to forget their language, religion, and culture. Erdoğan's sentiments contrasted starkly with those of past Turkish leaders who have encouraged migrants to integrate and even to obtain German citizenship. This exchange between Erdoğan and Gauck is just one example of the ongoing struggle over control of the Turkish diaspora and over the terms of Turkey's relationship with Europe. More recently, European leaders refused to allow Erdoğan (now Turkey's president) to visit their countries and campaign for votes in advance of the June 2018 presidential election.¹⁹ For return migrants like Leyla, the struggle to belong is deeply impacted by this antagonistic transnational context.

Debates between German and Turkish leaders are a key dimension of the transnational social field connecting Germany and Turkey.²⁰ A transnational social field is the result of a "set of multiple, interlocking networks of social relationships" between two or more places (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1,009).²¹ These interlocking networks hold particular significance for migrants, but they are also important for citizens who never travel between the involved countries. German and Turkish citizens participate in the Germany-Turkey transnational social field, even though they may never visit each other's country (Rottmann 2014). For example, Turkey is a member of NATO and the G20 with the largest standing army in Europe and the 17th largest economy. Political, military, and economic events affecting Europe directly affect Turks. Bordering Iraq, Syria, and Iran, the country is a critical partner in security and migration control. A controversial deal brokered between the EU and Turkey in 2016 is widely seen as essential for addressing Europe's "refugee crisis" and likewise contributing to Turkey's own struggles to accommodate more than 3 million Syrian migrants.²² Many goods sold in Europe, such as clothing and appliances, are manufactured in Turkey. Turkish and European cultural products are in constant circulation. Vincent Van Gogh and Pablo Picasso are exhibited in Turkish museums, while Turkish filmmakers like Nuri Bilge Ceylan win Palm D'Ors at Cannes. Turks listen to French, German, and British music. Istanbul was a European Capital of Culture in 2010, and a myriad of events celebrated the city's European-ness. Many Turks avidly follow the careers of Turkish soccer players, such as Mesut Özil who played in the 2018 World Cup for Germany.

Among all countries in Europe, Germany is particularly significant for Turks because it epitomizes their ideological and practical ties to Europe.

Germany is by far Turkey's most important political and economic partner and events in Germany are frequently highlighted in Turkish media. For example, recent German elections, Angela Merkel's statements on hosting refugees, and Germany's treatment of Greece during the financial crisis were topics of daily conversation in Turkey. Özil's announcement that he will no longer play for Germany's national soccer team due to racism was a major news story.²³ Turks actively follow developments related to dual citizenship for Turkish citizens²⁴ or anti-migrant protests²⁵ in Germany. Many Turks enroll their children in German language classes or take German lessons themselves in order to work in German companies. Many German businesses, such as Mercedes, Siemens, and Bosch, produce products in Turkey for sale both domestically and in Europe.

German-Turks are essential figures in creating the Germany-Turkey transnational social space, where they are usually portrayed negatively, either as excessively traditional and backwards or as culturally corrupted (Rottmann 2014). For instance, films usually show them to be uncultured villagers or arrogant show-offs. In the film, *Yellow Mercedes (Fikrimin İnce Gülü; Sarı Mercedes; Mercedes Mon Amour* [1987]), the famous actor Ilyas Salman plays a narcissistic returnee who values his yellow Mercedes more than his fellow Turks. He is depicted as a conceited fool whose return to Turkey is disastrous. In German-Turkish filmmaker Fatih Akin's films about German-Turks, such as *Head On* (2004) and *The Edge of Heaven* (2007), first- and second-generation returnees are shown to have lost their family ties and to be enmeshed in violence, drugs, crime, and prostitution.

Media accounts are not much better, often emphasizing migrants' backwardness and naiveté. German-Turks' inability to integrate into Germany is often discussed. For example, in an article titled, "Unsuccessful Migration Stories," appearing in the leftist Turkish newspaper *Radikal*, Kerem Çalışkan (2011) argued that "the reality" of German-Turkish migration is poverty, inadequate education and high unemployment. In January 2009, Turkish newspapers reported that a new study showed Turks to be the "least integrated immigrant group in Germany."²⁶ Such news stories are rarely critical of Turks' treatment in Germany, but rather emphasize that migrants were unable or unwilling to fit in to Germany. This affects non-migrants' views. For example, one non-migrant, Emre, offered these comments in response to my questions about his views on this study: "These results don't surprise me. My aunts lived in Germany for 20 years and did not learn a single word of German. Can you believe that? They made absolutely no effort to integrate." Occasionally positive news stories do appear. The focus tends to be on German-Turks' success as entrepreneurs and politicians in Germany. For example, one newspaper reported, "A Turk living in Germany has plans to produce small airplanes by investing 30 million euros in Turkey" (Baysal

2010). In 2013, Turkish media widely praised the election of Cemile Yusuf, a parliamentary representative for the ruling CDU (Christian Democratic Union).²⁷

The Germany-Turkey transnational social field emerges from a fraught historical relationship between Turkey and Europe extending back hundreds of years. When Turkey was founded in 1923, leaders explicitly aimed to make the country European by synthesizing Turkish nationalism with Western capitalism and what some authors refer to as “European modernity” (Irem 2004) or “modernity as Westernization” (Kahraman 2005; Keyman 2009). Their endeavor was “a total project, embracing and internalizing all the cultural dimensions that made Europe modern” (Keyder 1997: 37). The intended transformation involved far-ranging political and social transformations, everything from changing the script from Arabic to Latin to banning female state employees from wearing headscarves.

Despite Turkish leaders’ attempts to model Turkey into their vision of a European country, and despite the sense of shared political, economic, and cultural space between Turkey and Germany, Turkey’s European modernity is not and never has been “obvious” for Turks or Europeans. Nothing demonstrates Turkey’s ambiguous position in Europe more clearly than the country’s stalled European Union membership bid.²⁸ Turkey has faced innumerable rejections from European countries regarding its potential membership. For many years, Germany was strongly opposed to Turkish membership (Onis 1999). Some European leaders, such as Nicolas Sarkozy of France, called for Turkey to be offered “privileged partnership” rather than full membership. In April 2018, Turkey’s EU Affairs Minister claimed that Austria’s stance on Turkish membership has “turned from oppositional to hostile.”²⁹ According to a recent survey, more than half of Europeans oppose Turkey’s EU membership (59 percent), while only about 30 percent are in favor of membership.³⁰ Although the Turkish government has rapidly changed laws to comply with EU demands, popular support for joining Europe through EU membership has not remained stable (Çarkoğlu 2004), and currently support for Turkey’s EU membership in Turkey is hovering at around 33 percent.³¹

European skepticism about offering full EU membership to Turkey has led to a deep sense of anxiety about Turkey’s identity, with some scholars identifying a symbolic binary between modern-urban-European-Western and traditional-rural-peripheral-Oriental (Helvacıoğlu 1996; Keyman 1995). In order to become European, some leaders and citizens have argued that Turkey must shed its traditional practices. In the past, “efforts of the Turkish state to modernize have included negative depictions of the village, its inhabitants, and the backwardness of ‘traditional’ practices” (Ewing 2008: 45). For much of the twentieth century, powerful groups in Turkey ex-

pressed the view that European or German (often used interchangeably) ways of life were the ideal. Although many others contested this notion, the perceived superiority of European-ness has nevertheless retained a deep symbolic power for Turks. German-Turks are seen as European Turks and thereby become a flash point for debating Turks' European-ness, modernity, and a myriad of cultural and ethical stereotypes associated with these categories. The overwhelmingly negative images of German-Turks within German-Turkish transnational space mean that migrants are thrown into a suspicious social position when they return to Turkey. Leyla and other migrants' ethical projects are part of their efforts to prove that they are not backwards nor culturally corrupted.

Many scholars argue that the winds of change for conceptualizing Turkey's identity are here. They point to a new cultural project beginning in the 2000s, which they call "neo-Ottomanism" (cf. Walton 2010). Instead of looking towards Europe, they note that Turkish leaders are now looking towards the country's Ottoman past, which is imagined as a glorious, harmonious, multi-ethnic, Islamic empire. Celebrations of Ottoman heritage are visible in advertising, television, and film; political rhetoric; and in conversations in daily life. Despite years of leaders' intense efforts, Turks increasingly wonder if Turkey is capable of becoming a European country and if they actually want to become European, or whether or not they should instead appreciate their independence and cultural differences, which they frequently attribute to their Ottoman heritage.

My ethnography of return migrants suggests that it may be too soon to announce Turkey's turn away from Europe. While growing admiration for Turkey's Ottoman past and increasing interest in spiritual and material connections to the Middle East are clearly apparent, German-Turks' experiences show us that Europe remains a key orientation point for Turks. German-Turks often find themselves at the center of conflicts related to their background as migrants to Europe. The chapters to come describe accusations that migrants like Leyla are anti-social, arrogant, backwards, and even lost. Non-migrants are predisposed to react negatively towards migrants because of negative images of German-Turks. Migrants' conspicuous consumption and class conflicts exacerbate animosities. But, there is something more going on too: there is deep concern about how Europe affects Turks and anxiety about how changed family and religious ties will affect not only migrants, but Turkey's citizens broadly.

Images of Turks' difficulties in Europe—images of their backwardness or lack of integration—parallel Turks' own fears about maintaining and/or attaining Turkish and European modernities. Having lived in Germany, migrants like Leyla represent historical and contemporary relationships between Turkey and Germany, and they symbolize the dangers and oppor-

tunities of German-Turkish hybridity. Being a German-Turk, a European Turk, or a return migrant is not an identity or static background for migrants like Leyla, but a set of tools they work with and through to achieve their aims. Experience in Europe means simultaneously positive resources for creatively refiguring social relationships and negative baggage that must be overcome or altered.

WHY LEYLA'S LIFE STORY?

"Tell me, my friend, how have you been?" Leyla greets me. As always, her hug envelops me completely as soon as I walk in her door—she's a few inches taller and wider than me, her arms are very strong, and she smells of cigarettes and tomatoes. "Come sit down." Mert and Hande look on quietly, waiting to give and get their greeting kiss on the cheek. Through the kitchen window, I see a few children squealing noisily as they prance around a street dog and a group of lanky teenage boys furtively smoking cigarettes as they meander towards the center of town. It's March and a gentle breeze is brushing through the sparse grasses that dot the muddy lots behind Leyla's house. Tucking away strands of light brown hair that have flopped down into her eyes and straightening the blue knit shirt she's wearing, Leyla gestures to her sofa and the coffee table, which has been set with traditional pear-shaped tea glasses. We exchange news about our husbands. She pours tea. I ask about her older children—Recep, Sanem, and Ceren—who are not present. A game show on TV covers any silences.

Finally, I timidly bring up a topic that I've been thinking about for some time: I want her life story to be the central thread of my book about German-Turkish return migration; how would she feel about that? She knows that she is "in my research" about German-Turkish return migrants—I've stayed at her house frequently, observing family events and neighborhood gatherings, I've formally interviewed her multiple times, and I've asked her countless questions about being a return migrant over the course of six years. And yet, if she is "the star" of my planned book, it will involve disclosing more personal information to a larger audience than she might have anticipated.

"Of course, you should write your book about my life," Leyla says smiling. I'm relieved that she has assented but feel the need to be sure she fully understands what I plan to write. I explain how her story touches on themes that are relevant to my research, but I also note that I do not consider her to be an "ordinary" person. In addition to overcoming the stigma of being an *Auslander* (Foreigner) in Germany and an *Almançı* (German-er) in Turkey, Leyla has experienced heartrending abuse and loss. I find her story to be a

very sad one, even though I think of her enduring cheerfulness as the core of her being. I suggest that her story might inspire others, but I also ask if she is sure that she wants to tell it in this way. She insists that she is not worried; she trusts me. “You are such a special person,” I explain, “because you have overcome all of the things that happened to you, and you are so cheerful, such a responsible mother, and a truly kind person. How did you do it?” She smiles and tears fill her eyes. “Sometimes I don’t know how I did it, but . . . I never got anything from being sad.” This is the story of how Leyla “did it”—how she overcame sadness as she pursued belonging, as she forged an ethical life.

Life story collection is a qualitative research methodology in which the researcher obtains information about a person’s subjective experiences (Atkinson 2002). The method evolved from oral history and life history writing and emerged alongside an explosion of interest in personal narratives in the humanities and social sciences in the 1980s and 1990s.³² When I began studying anthropology, I was immediately drawn to the idea of writing people’s lives, which is a well-established tradition in the discipline (Behar 1993; Frank 1995; George 2010). Early anthropologists recounted the lives of Native Americans (Langness and Frank 1981: 14), and feminist anthropologists in the 1980s showed that life histories provided a much-needed emphasis on women’s points of view (e.g. Shostak 1981; Kendall 1988; Cruikshank 1990). Yet, I had not originally planned that my intended book about German-Turkish return migration would be built around a life story.

I studied German-Turkish return migration between 2008–2015 through ethnographic research in three sites in northwestern Turkey: İlçe,³³ a town of about 15,000; Tekirdağ, a small city with a population of about 100,000; and Istanbul, the largest city in Turkey, estimated to have a population of between 15 and 20 million. Although I collected partial life stories, my primary goal was to observe daily life and to conduct ethnographic interviews. I lived with four families for weeks or months at a time, and made observations of daily conversations and activities, including the use of household objects when relevant. I attended weddings, circumcision ceremonies, a funeral, *güns* (women’s reception days), *sohbets* (religious discussion groups), *kermes* (yard sales to benefit the poor), political party meetings, mosque services, meetings of a return migrants’ group (the *Rückkehrer Stammtisch*), and spent the Ramadan, Sacrifice Feast, and Republican Day holidays with German-Turkish families. I also accompanied people to workplaces and on shopping trips and neighborhood and family visits. I conducted in-depth, formal interviews with 57 German-Turks and more than 100 informal interviews.³⁴ Because I was interested in the process of people moving between Germany and Turkey, I asked many questions about migrants’ memories of Germany and the early days of their return to Turkey, as well as questions

about family and community relationships, religious practice, and German, European, and Turkish politics.

German-Turks are a diverse group, and I did not conduct research with every demographic category of migrant. All those I met self-identified as ethnically Turkish, not Kurdish, and as having a Muslim background. I met several *Alevis* (members of a minority Muslim community), but focused chiefly on Sunni Muslim return migrants, who are the largest group of returnees. Though this book is about Leyla, a second-generation migrant, it also examines the experiences of first generations. When discussing return migrants' experiences, it is occasionally worthwhile to differentiate between first and second generations, but more often than not, these distinctions are irrelevant. Divisions into generations are often guided by researcher's ideologies about national identity and assimilation, rather than empirical evidence (Soysal 2002). For example, second generations abroad may be just as involved with their home-countries as first generations, and a person's age or life stage may be more analytically relevant than generation (Levitt 2002). Critically, whether they are first-generation retirees or second-generation migrants in the prime of life (like Leyla), German-Turks share the experience of being immersed in a factious social and political milieu that often results in their experiencing very similar dilemmas.

After getting to know Leyla well between 2009 and 2013, I discussed with her the possibility of writing her life story as a biography aimed at a popular (not academic) Turkish reading audience after I finished my book on German-Turkish return migration. I found her story interesting and inspiring and thought that it would be meaningful for her to have it published, as Leyla often expressed interest in educating people in her community. The idea that Leyla's life story would be a perfect focus for an academic book on return migration came to me in 2014 when Leyla told me that she had written about her life for her 16-year-old daughter Ceren's Turkish class project. Would I like to read it? Of course! She handed me an 11-page typewritten account of her migration to Germany and return to Turkey, her courtship and mothering experiences. She titled her story, "Suffering Transformed into Happiness." I was completely bowled over by the poetic, poignant, first-person account she had written. Immediately, I encouraged her to expand the memoir so she could publish it and offered to help her do so. (This is an on-going project).³⁵ Reading her words inspired me to write her story myself. I realized that I could combine my extensive observations and interviews with other return migrants with my deep, personal knowledge of Leyla's life into the account of German-Turkish migration that I imagined.

At several points throughout the book, I include passages from Leyla's memoir.³⁶ At the end of this book, I've included Leyla's entire short memoir of her life as well as some study questions in the hope that readers gain a

greater understanding of Leyla's perspective on her story as well as on the anthropological process of life writing. I invite you to consider some key ideas regarding both texts: how do my story and her story confirm and challenge each other? How do they play against one another? How does access to both stories provide insight into the genres and methods of ethnography and memoir? How does each text enhance your understanding of ethics, belonging, and Leyla's truth?

We all experience the world through stories. We are all constantly creating narratives about who we are, where we have been, and where we are going. As we tell these narratives to ourselves and others, we reveal, conceal, expand, embellish, and edit. Therefore, writing an effective life story requires being present "when stories are narrated as part of on-going social life," in order "to overhear spontaneously evoked commentaries, debates, revisions, and retellings" (Narayan and George 2001: 819). This is the approach I take to writing Leyla's life. I do not only focus on information that she related to me during interviews or her own writings, but also use stories she told to me and others in daily life over our ten years of friendship.

Relating a life story like Leyla's is an ideal means of capturing return migrants' multidimensional ethical projects. A life story methodology shifts analytic focus away from abstract ethical principles towards concrete ethical dilemmas in the complexity of real-life situations. Leyla struggles not with lofty ideals, but with everyday ethical needs: what is the best way to teach her children about Islam? How can she maintain her honor while working with criminals? How can she get along with her neighbors, but fight for her rights as a citizen? Can she please her husband and satisfy herself? A life story approach is attuned to emotional resonances, memory, the interplay between personal and community histories, and the process of constructing a self. Relating a person's "ethnographic biography" (Herzfeld 1998) in vivid detail brings the scope and the sequence of an individual's striving for belonging into relief while highlighting the various interconnections and disjunctures that animate social spaces.

Anthropologists have shown that life stories can effectively capture the relationship between individuals and societies, between micro- and macro-level forces. Leyla's story is a story that links her to other migrants globally—a story of someone who "sought a lifeworld beyond the one they were born into, which so many around them accepted as inevitable, destined, or right" (Jackson 2013: 219). It is a story that links her to other German-Turkish return migrants, particularly those who share her social, economic, and political conditions (childhood poverty, divorce, and neglect in many cases), outsider status in Germany and Turkey, and similar views and ethical projects. Leyla's personal characteristics—as a middle-aged, religious woman and working mother—provide a focus for the book, enabling an exploration

of the interplay between migration and Muslim religiosity, class, and gender roles, and, more specifically, of the responsibilities women bear for familial reproduction and honor in Turkey. Beyond this, Leyla's story is completely singular because everyone's story is unique. Her story is the story of everyday acts of courage and commitment, of forgiveness, trust, and risk. Leyla is an ordinary person lacking even a high school diploma, but she is bright, courageous, and strong-willed, a woman who has overcome many personal difficulties, including childhood abuse and the loss of a child, to create a stable family life and to garner the respect of many of her neighbors. Even more than this, however, Leyla is unique because she wanted to tell her story to me and to the world. She wanted you to know her, her family, and her life. By comparing her story with those of other migrants, I highlight what is shared among migrants in general, while also showing how one individual uniquely incorporated various ideas and experiences into her individual life projects.

THE UNFOLDING OF LEYLA'S STORY

In the next chapter, we meet Leyla as I did, as "Claudia Schmidt," a worker at one of four illegal German-Turkish call centers where she was employed between 2009–2012. Facing desperate financial straits, Leyla/Claudia sold enrollments in a lottery scam that did not offer enrollees opportunities to win or, more significantly, to withdraw. She could find work at illegal call centers because she had the necessary transnational experience—German linguistic and cultural knowledge—and she gained further transnational experience daily through constant interactions with return migrant co-workers and bosses and German customers. The chapter investigates how working at call centers exposed Leyla to a number of ethical predicaments and spurred her to draw on a variety of ethical discourses about work and womanhood to justify her actions. We see that ethical projects and relationships within transnational social fields are neither constant nor straightforward, because what is ethical is negotiated dynamically through diverse interactions and changes over time.

Chapter 2 describes a circumcision celebration, which Leyla arranged almost single-handedly for her youngest son, and elaborates on her other parenting efforts to examine how migrants negotiate ethical motherhood and community belonging. It goes on to explore how German-Turkish family relationships are transformed by transnational experiences and focuses on a widespread migrant ethical aim of education, which involves the self-education of parents and parents' education of children. Beyond characterizing migrant efforts in this area, a major goal of this chapter is to investigate how a plurality of ethical perspectives becomes a resource that migrants use

in distinct, unique circumstances. To do so, I look at two very personal family experiences for Leyla: her experience of sexual abuse and her mothering of a disabled child, both of which can be significant sources of shame for women in Turkey. I explore how Leyla draws on her knowledge of parenting, gender norms, and education in Germany to challenge commonly accepted ideas about motherhood and women's sexuality in Turkey, as well as to escape the stigma of being labeled a "bad" migrant mother. She thus crafts a novel strategy for coping with community censure—literally turning her shame into pride, her dishonor into honor.

Marriage is the focus of Chapter 3. I explore how migration and return affect gender roles and marriage relationships, leading to what scholars refer to as companionate marriages—marriages based on mutual respect and equality. Ultimately, contrary to popular discourses in Germany and Turkey, the chapter shows that transnational migration does not simply lead migrants to adopt the relationship models and gender norms of one country or another. Rather, it fosters a degree of openness to alternatives—an expanded field of awareness—which enables migrants like Leyla to creatively renegotiate commonly accepted ideals for women and to forge novel, fulfilling relationships.

Leyla's neighborly relations are the focus of Chapter 4, which opens with descriptions of Leyla's monthly gatherings for neighborhood women—her *gün* as it is called in Turkish—and her innovation in arranging for a psychologist to visit the group. I explore how Leyla becomes a leader among neighbors by stressing the importance of education and fighting for one's rights. This example becomes a jumping-off point to examine how return migrants draw on their experience in Germany to argue for the importance of demanding citizenship rights and to make claims of support for political positions across the left/right spectrum. Migrants combine notions of liberal citizenship—rights and equality—with notions of ethical care between citizens and states to re-imagine Turkish citizenship. With the goal of highlighting the tenuous, partial nature of belonging, the chapter moves from examining migrants' positive neighborly relationships to exploring the stigma that Leyla and other return migrants face in neighborhoods when neighbors perceive Europeanized Turks as disruptive to local social relationships.

Chapter 5 shows how Leyla struggles with competing religious ethical principles (such as, reading the Qur'an in Arabic or Turkish) and explores the role of transnational experience in leading to original notions of religious ideas and belonging. The chapter ultimately stresses that while Leyla's feeling of being a religious Muslim permeates her story, the very meaning of "religious" has changed over time for her. For instance, relative ignorance about Muslim practice in Germany gives way to learning about Islam 12 years after she returns to Turkey and is shaped by the experience of her young daugh-

ter's death and by confrontations with members of the Islamic revival movement. While emphasizing ethical change, this chapter challenges crude understandings of migrant religiosity as either reactively "traditional" or attenuated by exposure to cultural difference, and it also problematizes simplistic depictions of Islamic and secular identities in Turkey.

The last chapter of the book relates the central theme about the pursuit of belonging amidst a plurality of ethical perspectives to Leyla's key ethical projects: being and becoming educated and educating others, being and becoming a good woman—a working woman, a mother, and a wife—and being and becoming a good Muslim. The conclusion ultimately asks us to consider what Leyla's experiences tell us about Turkey and its future. Further, it asks: why should Leyla's life matter to those of us who are neither German-Turks nor return migrants? I hope to show that Leyla's life provides insights into processes of negotiating ethical conflict and sheds light on how we all might find comfort and hope as we negotiate our own quandaries of ethics, belonging, and mobility.

NOTES

1. To protect the privacy of research participants, I use pseudonyms, change non-essential identifying personal details, and do not identify the names of some research locations.
2. Huzurköy is a pseudonym.
3. Amadeus is a pseudonym.
4. Below, I discuss precisely what "ethics" means and my reasons for choosing to use the term "ethics," rather than the term "morality."
5. "First generation" typically refers to adult migrants leaving a home country for a host country, while "second generation" typically refers to the children of initial migrants born abroad. Leyla's migration trajectory demonstrates the imprecision of these labels. She was born in Turkey but traveled to Germany with her father at age four. Due to her young age at the time of her migration, her story closely resembles that of most second-generation migrants.
6. Also, I was able to establish closer, more open relationships with women during my research.
7. The concept of belonging can be expressed directly with the phrase "*ait olmak*" in Turkish, but people rarely use this in daily life. More commonly, people discuss feeling comfortable (*rahat*), at peace (*huzurlu*), happy (*mutlu*), and having closeness and trust (*samimiyet*) and understanding (*anlaşmak*).
8. These figures are from the United Nations website and can be reached here: www.un.org/development/desa/publications/international-migration-report-2017.html. Accessed 19 June 2018.
9. See the following: ethics and religion (George 2010; Hirschkind 2006), ethics and development (Pandian 2009), ethics and law (Richland 2010), ethics and sexuality (Day 2010), ethics and medicine (Zigon 2011), and ethics and globalization (Ong and Collier 2004).

10. See for example: Jackson (2013), Gowricharn (2004), Fassin (2005), Carling (2008), Olwig (2011).
11. Most Turks do not know the precise meaning of the direct translation of ethics (*etik*) in Turkish. In daily life, the word for morality, *ahlak*, comes closer to describing morality in the same sense we use it in English, but it has a narrower meaning, typically referring to religious or gender matters. While returnees only sometimes use the Turkish word *ahlak*, they do talk about “the right and good” using concepts such as manners (*terbiyeli*), honor (*şeref*, *namus*) discipline (*disiplin*), order (*düzen*; *düzgün*), respect (*saygı*), rights (*haklar*), honesty (*dürüstlük*), sharing (*paylaşmak*), helpful (*yardım sever*), and friendly (*canı yakın*, *dostça*), among others. These concepts are explored at many points throughout this book.
12. Recent studies of Turks in Germany include: Çağlar (2006), Mandel (2008), Ewing (2008), Özyürek (2009).
13. For more information on the guest worker program, see Chin (2007).
14. For more information on Turks’ performance in German schools, see Kristen and Granato (2007) and Sohn and Özcan (2006).
15. For more information, see Ewing (2008) and Fetzer and Soper (2005).
16. For more information about the European court ruling, see: www.euractiv.com/sections/global-europe/european-court-justice-bans-german-language-requirement-turkish-spouse-visas. The German response can be found here: www.ankara.diplo.de/Vertretung/ankara/tr/06__Visa/eugh-entscheidung-spracherwerbsnachweis.html.
17. Migrationsbericht 2016. *Migrationsbericht des Bundesamtes für Migration und Flüchtlinge im Auftrag der Bundesregierung*. Migrationsbericht 2015, p. 34–35. Available at: www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Migrationsberichte/migrationsbericht-2015.pdf?__blob=publicationFile. Accessed 22 June 2017. Figures for 2016 and 2017 will be available when the next Migration Report is published at the end of 2018. (For more information, see: www.bamf.de/EN/DasBAMF/Forschung/Ergebnisse/Migrationsberichte/migrationsberichte-node.html)
18. Studies of German-Turkish return migrants include Çağlar (1995, 2002, 2006), Dişbudak (2004), Gerdes et al. (2012), Güven (1994), Hesaçoğlu (1991), Razum et al. (2005), Wolbert (1991, 1995, 1996).
19. For example, see: “Turkey President Recep Tayyip Erdogan plans election rally in Europe.” *DW*. 24 April 2018. www.dw.com/en/turkey-president-recep-tayyip-erdogan-plans-election-rally-in-europe/a-43511756.
20. An earlier version of this discussion of the Germany-Turkey Transnational Social Field appears in Rottmann (2014).
21. A transnational social field is “a set of multiple, interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed” (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1009). For more information about transnational social fields, see: Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994) and Faist (2004).
22. For more information, see: Elizabeth Collett, “The Paradox of the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal.” MPI. March 2016. www.migrationpolicy.org/news/paradox-eu-turkey-refugee-deal.
23. See: “Özil quits German national team after racial abuse.” *Daily Sabah*. 22 July 2018. www.dailysabah.com/football/2018/07/22/ozil-quits-german-national-team-after-racial-abuse.

24. For example, "Milenyum kuşağına çifte vatandaşlık." *Milliyet*. 28 November 2013. Accessed online 27 February 2014.
25. For example, "Almanya'nın Pegida ile imtihanı." *Haber Turk*. 18 January 2015. www.haberturk.com/yasam/haber/1031962-almanyanin-pegida-ile-imtihanı. Accessed online 21 January 2015.
26. See: "Turks least integrated immigrant group in Germany." *Hürriyet Daily News*. 26 January 2009. www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/world/10853018.asp?scr=1. Accessed 17 April 2012.
27. See, for example: "Almanya'da 10 Türk asıllı mecliste." *Ntvmsnbc*. 23 September 2013. Accessed online 27 February 2014.
28. Turkey was officially recognized as a candidate country on 10 December 1999 at the Helsinki summit of the European Council. In November 2016, the European Parliament voted to suspend Turkey's accession negotiations due to rule of law and humans rights concerns.
29. See: "Austrian stance 'more hostile than oppositional,' says Turkey's EU minister." *Hürriyet Daily News*. 4 April 2018. www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/austrian-stance-more-hostile-than-oppositional-says-turkeys-eu-minister-129788.
30. *Eurobarometer 74 Public Opinion in the European Union*. 2011. Brussels: European Commission. This document can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb74/eb74_en.htm. Accessed 17 April 2012.
31. *Eurobarometer 83 Public Opinion in the European Union*. 2015. Brussels: European Commission.
32. For more on academic approaches to narrative, see Ochs and Capps (1996).
33. İlçe (a Turkish word that literally means "township" or "district") is a pseudonym.
34. I conducted 32 formal interviews with German-Turks in Istanbul, 4 formal interviews with German-Turks in Tekirdağ, and 21 formal interviews with German-Turks in İlçe. Given that I was a foreigner, I was able to get access to men as interviewees without straining the bounds of what would normally be appropriate for interactions between men and women, however, it is safe to say that I formed more and closer relationships with returnee women than men. I was able to formally interview slightly more women than men—I interviewed 33 women and 24 men. As a fluent speaker of German and Turkish, I allowed interviewees to choose the language of our interviews. Ultimately, I conducted 90 percent of the interviews and conversations in Turkish, but some interviewees mixed in a bit of German, and others used our interviews or time together as an opportunity for them to practice their English.
35. Leyla is currently expanding the memoir. I have contacted a friend who is in touch with a local publisher, and when Leyla finishes writing, we will submit her manuscript.
36. These passages are denoted by a different font applied to the text.