1. **A Narrative Interview with Hülya, a Turkish Woman Living in a German City**

4. Hülya, who is 31 at the time of the interview, was 17 when she migrated to Germany in 1972.

5. She is a worker in a metal factory. On February 6, 1986, she was interviewed in her apartment by two students, Heike Kahlert and Christa Noack, who took part in Professor Christa Hoffmann-Riem's empirical seminar on "the situation of Turkish women and girls" at the Institute of Sociology of the University of Hamburg. The interview lasted for two hours.

10. Christa Hoffmann-Riem died in 1990. Those parts of her study on Turkish immigrant women which she had finished at the time of her death were published posthumously in a volume which contains several papers which she had written since 1980 (Christa Hoffmann-Riem, *Elementare Phänomene der Lebenssituation. Ausschnitte aus einem Jahrzehnt soziologischen Arbeiten*. Edited by Wolfgang Hoffmann-Riem, Marianne Pieper and Gerhard Riemann. Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1994).

17. **Fieldnotes of the interviewers (Heike Kahlert and Christa Noack):**

19. "We got access to Hülya via another student. She has contacts with a female Turkish teacher.

20. This teacher invited us to a meeting of foreign women who wanted to cook and eat together in (a center in this particular district of the city).

22. We felt very comfortable at this meeting right from the beginning. The Turkish teacher who had been interviewed herself introduced us to Hülya. We explained to her what we planned. At first she reacted very distrustful, then she agreed: If it wouldn't create problems for her with regard to not being allowed to travel to Turkey, then she would give an interview.

26. We exchanged phone numbers since Hülya had to do a lot during this time and couldn't give us a date.
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

28. She called about three weeks after our meeting to arrange a date. She was very open and
cordial and invited us to her home. She said that when German people visit a Turkish woman
she wanted to prepare a Turkish meal in any case.
31. Our meeting was very beautiful and harmonious. Her friendliness shamed us. Hülya had
prepared a voluminous meal. We ate together in her living room and talked about general
things.
34. After the meal we explained again what we planned. Hülya agreed and found it important to
tell us about her problems.
36. At the beginning of the interview it was a little difficult for her to find a start, after that she
narrated very openly and fluently.
38. After the interview we went on talking a little. It was too bad that time was short, since we
depended on public transportation and Hülya lives in the distant outskirts of the city.
40. There was no language problem. Hülya speaks a very good German and has a very good
vocabulary. She had learned the language via TV, an adult education course "didn't give me
anything any more."
44. Gerhard Riemann: A few remarks on the translation and editing of the
interview with
47. The translation of the interview which was conducted in German and was transcribed in a quite
detailed way by the interviewers appears to be quite exact since Hülya can express herself in
German in a very clear manner. (I know other interviews with German speaking Turkish
women which are more ambiguous. I didn't translate one of these interviews since an analysis
of these (German) data would have to constantly spell out "what could have been meant"; and
to catch the vagueness of the text in an adequate English translation would be a very difficult
49. © 2003 FQS http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

54. I have referred to the experience and process of translation in my introduction to this volume.
55. Hülya makes some syntactical "mistakes" which are no impediment to understanding her -
56. mistakes which I did not try to reproduce in the translation most of the time in order to
57. ensure the readability of the text. I also didn't correct Hülya's mixing of tenses (where she
58. "should" have stayed with one tense), and I did not get rid of self-interruptions, new starts,
59. hesitation markers ("eh") in order to convey the qualities of spoken language and off-
60. the-cuff story telling. Such phenomena are typical in off-the-cuff story telling, regardless whether the
61. narrator is a native speaker or not. Of course, the placement of the hesitation
62. markers cannot be exactly like in the German text because of the syntactical differences between
63. German and English, but I paid attention to them nevertheless. In some respects my translation
64. simplified Heike Kahlert's German transcription: I left out the interviewers' permanent "uh"s and
65. similar sounds. If an interviewer asks a question, makes a comment or joins in laughter, I
66. italicized this (in a simple bracket). So a reader can distinguish between the narrator's and the
67. interviewer's statements quite easily.
68. Sometimes I use a simple bracket because I added a word or a few words in order to
69. make sure that the meaning gets communicated; a simple literal translation wouldn't make
70. enough sense in such a context. Sometimes simple brackets indicate that I am not totally
71. sure of the translation. I wrote it down in a short commentary where I think that the translation is
72. really problematic. This occurs very seldom. I use double brackets for indicating
73. paralinguistic phenomena in the narrator's speech (mostly laughter in her case) and for adding a
74. short commentary on my translation once in a while. Short pauses are indicated by "..", somewhat
75. longer ones by "..." or ".....".

© 2003 FQS http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

78. I translated the whole transcription of the interview: the main narrative and the part consisting of questions and answers. The speaker continues by herself after the coda of her main narrative ("Well, that's my story...") at line 843. Her post-coda reflections get interrupted because the tape has to be changed. Then one of the interviewers starts asking.

83. In editing the transcription I made paragraphs for the sake of its readability. They are narrative segments most of the time, but not always so in a strict sense of the term. Later on, when Hülya is arguing with herself, I tried to do justice to the dynamics of her argumentation by constructing paragraphs.

88. All names of individuals and places have been changed, so that no identification of persons is possible.


94. I wish to thank Heike Kahlert and Christa Noack for giving me the permission to share this interview with social scientists who are interested to work on it and to make it accessible to a wider public.

© 2003 FQS http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/
Hülya’s Narrative

It would be great if you could tell us something about your life in Turkey and also about your life here. And it would be great if you could also tell us something about your childhood or youth in this connection - how you came to the Federal Republic. Maybe you can remember certain things from your childhood. ..... ehm .....)

Could you turn it off now? I don’t know /eh/ how/

((One of the interviewers turns off the tape recorder. Hülya thinks for a moment. Then she asks us to switch on the tape recorder again.))

I was born in a small village. A thousand inhabitants .. I still have four siblings besides me,

/ehm/ we are five siblings. And I am the youngest one. /Ehm/ my Grandmother also lived with us in the beginning, I cannot remember her well, I was eight when she died.

And after a few years we moved into our suburb. My father had found a job with a /eh/ rich man there as ... /eh/ .. not secretary, but a man for everything so to speak. I also went to school there ...

And ... my eldest brother got married I was nine years old .. And then ... /ehm/ ... in the beginning of 1964 my sister got married, too, then we were just three at home.

I was just eleven years old when my father became very ill. And then /eh/ our life /ehm/

changed very much. My mother was still very young, but she was always a housewife. And my father had only /eh/ worked privately, here and there, and then he also didn’t receive any sick-
benefit and any pension. During that time we also didn't have any money, my mother had to
/eh/ accept money from other people to take care of my father. /Ehm/ well, and then we always
went to my sister during summer time, they /eh/ have a big farm. I and my mother helped there
at my sister's place a little, and that's when I started to work a little, to earn /eh/ some money. I
might have been not older than twelve... My father could not work again even though he was
rather healthy, he couldn't do hard physical work at all. I always imagined those people in the
village... poor people who had become old. Dependent on their children and not much to eat
and just few clothes and not being able at all to see a doctor and so on...
Then /eh/ in the beginning of the sixties or middle of the sixties I got to know people or saw
them who came from Germany with beautiful cars and they had everything. Well, I was just
thirteen maybe and I always thought: Oh, you will also go to Germany some time, but I did not
want to /eh/ drive big cars or /ehm/ buy an apartment and real estate. My /eh/ dream was /eh/
that my parents would be better off later on than most older people. And my brother could
have /ehm/ he was quite good in school/ he could have gone on to College, but /eh/ we didn't
have money. My dream was that my brother could go on to school and could assist my parents
financially. /Ehm/ my /eh/ for my mother it was very difficult to be dependent on children, she
practically didn't have her own money and not a household of her own when my father became
ill.
And then I was fourteen when I told my father, "I also want to go to Germany.".. He was /eh/
((she laughs)) against it, he always grumbled, "No, you won't go to Germany, you will stay
here and one day you will get married and / and your husband has /eh/ to take care of you."
But I didn’t want to, I wanted to be independent somehow, but I didn’t know: how, you know, but I also didn’t think about what would await me in Germany or so. I simply wanted to get away, it was a calamity well practically I didn’t receive a pocket money from my brother and nothing at all. I always envied my girl friends who had money or could afford to buy something for themselves. I couldn’t afford anything for myself. My mother continued to get worse and she always cried and that was very difficult and even though I was so young I caught everything what was going on, took part in it ... My brother could go to school well, until the end of grammar-school. And afterwards he couldn’t continue because of financial reasons ...

/Ehm/ I was still too young. That’s with us also like in Germany: You reach full age when you are eighteen. And since I could go Germany if I were eighteen I told my father that I would let it get arranged to get older. That’s possible you can let it get arranged to get older, but not younger. I said, “I now want to go to court, and then I wish to become eighteen.” By way of a court decision that’s no fraud, you can do that. You take two witnesses along and a medical certificate and then, when you get married, if I had said that I would get married, even if I were thirteen years old, he would have declared that I was eighteen. But my father was so proud, he didn’t want to admit, he couldn’t say, “I want to send my daughter to Germany.” .. He didn’t say so. And the doctor asked again and again, “Why do you want to have your daughter made older?” Well, my father didn’t want to reveal it. And then the doctor said, “I can deceive the court, but I cannot deceive God”, he said, "she is still almost a child, after all." It was very difficult for my father, but afterwards he told (him) so, you know, that he is so ill and that
182. he cannot work, that he will send me to Germany. And then he said, yes, that I am still almost a child, that he cannot /eh/ give a medical certificate.

184. And then it took two years /ehm/ .. For two years we tried it in my town and then afterwards at the place where my sister is living. *(And how old were you at the first time, at the first attempt?)* Fourteen. I was fourteen then. ((She and the interviewers laugh.)) And then we thought, it doesn't work so well in a big city, and then we chose still another town, and there I was for over a year .. Went to court a few times and it still didn't work. Then three, four years had passed and / three years. I had /eh/ applied at /eh/ the labour office that I would go to Germany. One cannot simply /eh/ go to Germany, I didn't come illegally, I came to Germany via the labour office. But I had to wait: He said that even if I get called I am not allowed to go to Germany, since I am still too young. I may get a passport when I am eighteen... And, well, I waited for two years, I /ehm/ had myself made one, only one year .. older .. And .. afterwards I waited for another year.

197. And then one day ... such a letter arrived .. And then someone said, "You will go to Germany."

198. Mail arrived today, for *you.* I had been on the field with my sister. When we returned in the evening, /eh/ a young man called from the coffee house. Of course I couldn't believe it, you know, and /eh/ I was not glad, in that moment I didn't know what I felt. When we arrived at home on the tractor with my sister, my mother already cried aloud that I /eh/ she also grumbled that I wanted to do that and .. that I have to be content and so on, you know, and she didn't want to, but .. they didn't have another way out, see. I am sure /eh/ my mother wouldn't have sent me to Germany if she .. had had alternatives ...

© 2003 FQS http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/
Then they gave me a fixed date .. it was .. 1972, I had to go to the labor office, I went there ...

They checked everything first of all, whether I could write and read, and then they also /eh/

asked if I had finished school. /Eh/ I could show everything, I also finished school. And then I ...

had to read the newspaper, I also read it and ((she laughs)) ... And then I started with /eh/ my passport. It's not so easy to get it. That always takes some time, you know. You have to .. go everywhere.

When the passport was finished, we still got another date at the/eh/ that was in the end of 1972, end of 1972 .. I had to /eh/ go to Istanbul then. And then ... of course farewell from home was very hard .. then .. well, but I still didn't know how hard and since my brother went with me to Istanbul... And there .. in Istanbul there is /eh/ a huge building, if it was the labor office I don't know or the health department. I hadn't been to /eh/ such a big city before, you know.. And then we /eh/ went there. It took three, four days for the examination, the whole examination ... In Istanbul we were just a number, not a personality any more. No name, we were given numbers over the P.A., a huge hall, they always /eh/ called numbers. Men and women were separated /eh/ separated of course, but you /eh/ had to go with several people into a room for getting X-rayed. And somehow that was quite terrible that people always / the women from the countryside felt ashamed to stand there totally naked. Many people were together and then, well, there was also staff, male staff. And then they once grumbled when the women covered their breasts with their hands: "Why are you ashamed after all, are you a beauty or what? Let go or", somehow treated in an inhuman way, already in Istanbul, you know. The urine was analyzed, blood examination, when someone's blood pressure was
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

somewhat too high, the person had lost already, you know. They were so sad, because they ..

had already spent all their .. /eh/ money for Istanbul, the whole passport and the trip cost a lot

of money already, you know ... Teeth were also looked at, you had to bow, bones were

counted, too, spine had to be straight, and one must /eh/ not have a gap between teeth, also no

rotten teeth, the blood sedimentation had to be all right, everything. Also if one happened to be

somewhat small .. one must not have a scar from an operation and one has to stretch hands

straight ahead, one has to be quite calm, no nervous illness ... Of course we were all totally

healthy /ehm/ ehm/ the people who had passed. Many had to return home, well, maybe they

were lucky ((she laughs)) but many /eh/ cried. Perhaps that was the only way out out or the

only hope for them, I don't know. When /eh/ someone told me that when she was upset during

the examination that her blood sedimentation or her blood pressure was too high - that's why

she didn't /eh/ pass first. I /eh/ was always so afraid of injections because I had never been to a

doctor before. And then my brother grumbled, "Did you have to be /eh/ so nervous or upset?

What happens if you lose and the whole thing has been in vain?" I said, "What can I do? I am afraid of injections after all." Because it was such a big /eh/ needle, and then it was not very careful. And somehow everything, the whole examination was inhuman ... It took four days,

the whole examination .. I was lucky or unlucky that I passed after all ..

And ... after the examination .. you still get another date, you have to /eh/ be there again very

eyearly. And then the work gets distributed, who goes where. We were a few /eh/ well, I would

say/ (we were) called in (by a) young girl, we went into a room. She was Turkish, she had a

catalogue in her hands. People were all beautiful with white clothes, white scarfs and white
250. clothes. She said, "You need not work, only press the button. You won't see chicken." That
251. was a slaughter-house for chicken. "That's only an assembly line here, and you won't see the
252. chicken, you will only press the button and the whole work gets done by itself." You know, I
253. don't have much in mind with slaughtering, but I thought, if I don't have to see it and if it's as
254. clean as a nurse it will be all right, you know. But that was not everything, it doesn't /
255. (proceed) as you wish. There was still /eh/ another person and /eh/ he spoke a
256. language that differed from ours, we had to stand up, turn around, he looked at us from the bottom
to the
257. top and the other way around, too, well, ((she laughs)) he had to /eh/ take a look, a close look
258. /eh/ what he is paying for...
259.
260. I came to Germany on the fifth of July 1972. We were picked up ... at the central
station ..
261. were taken to the factory first, we got a meal there, everyone a chicken leg ((she
and the
262. interviewers laugh)). And the foreman said to us we should eat as much /eh/ .. (As possible?)
263. Yes .. the / we didn't know a word of German. No one of us had a Pfennig in her
pocket! And
264. .. nobody had said anything that we could have /eh/ taken a few Marks from the
bank, we
265. could have changed money. But neither knowledge of the language nor money.
Well, he
266. explained to us that it /eh/ is a .. special day, therefore we got the chicken leg and did not have
267. to pay for it. We were allowed to eat and could eat as much /eh/ ((she laughs)) as we could.
268. And afterwards, (he) didn't say anything afterwards, you know, and not gratis, afterwards with
269. money. So, but .. we hadn't really arrived yet after the trip and the farewell ... you know.
270.
271. We were taken, after the meal /eh/ a bus took us to the dormitory where we were supposed to
272. live in / in the future. Well, I don't know why, we certainly were not stupid, but we we also
273. didn't talk among ourselves. It was the first time /eh/ that we saw each other when we arrived.
274. We had spent the whole time, had taken the whole trip together and didn't speak a word, not even with fellow country-men. We were .... /eh/ five girls and a family together, seven people arrived on the same day.
276. 
277. We had spent the whole time, had taken the whole trip together and didn't speak a word, not even with fellow country-men. We were .... /eh/ five girls and a family together, seven people arrived on the same day.
278. Well, we were supposed to get /ehm/ money right away, a .. part-payment, so that we can buy anything for ourselves and so on, but ... after the evening /eh/ when he had taken us to the dormitory we didn't see anyone for four days ((she laughs aloud and the interviewers laugh, too)), whereupon /eh/ one, afterwards on the fifth day, thanks God, everyone had taken something /eh/ along from home: noodles or mush or something like that, you know, and .. I found that strange! Even other people, fellow-countrymen, didn't knock at our door and/ whether or not we needed something and so on. Well, we were all so sad, but we also didn't talk .. among each other ...
282. And then we had just prepared /eh/ noodles and /eh/ one (girl) had cooked mush. There were not enough plates, and one had /eh/ taken /eh/ the lid of the pot and one had taken the pot. We were just eating when there was a knock at the door and the generous gentleman returned. ((she and the interviewers laugh)) As it turned out afterwards he was the first foreman, he gave fifty Marks to everyone of us. We should ... buy something for ourselves and so on ... Well, that was the start of our/ .. So we started after five days. ( ) I think we arrived /eh/ on a Wednesday or something like that.
293. 
294. And in the beginning we only worked for four days in a week, four days, but of course maybe eighty hours, you know, within four days ... We didn't count it, we didn't know that one works
297. forty hours per week in Germany. /Eh/ we worked so long from six till nine, till ten, in the
evening until eight. We were dependent, too, /eh/ we were always picked up /eh/ by the bus of
the firm. And we also could never /eh/ go back, even if we had quitting time /hm/ at eight
o'clock. And we even had to sit outside until nine o'clock and wait for the bus. Yes, we weren't
paid for overtime hours either, nothing.

298. And ... I think /eh/ I had been there for only one or two weeks .... that I had to /eh/
clean the firm, the whole firm after work, when people had gone home. Together with /eh/
three other women .. or were we three alltogether? I am not sure. Three women, we had to
scrub and clean the whole firm, with a tube, with cold, ice-cold water. We wore rubber boots, a
rubber apron, and this beautiful /eh/ snow white overall was always bloody. The whole dirt
of the chicken, too, and then I had to take garbage /eh/ bags outside. Then I always told
myself ..

299. imagine someone from your village or of your acquaintances would see you here!
You'd rather hang yourself! You see that/ We were too proud somehow to do .. something like
that at home, you know. Well, here /eh/ actually no pride was left afterwards. In the
beginning they /eh/ took /eh/ the passport away from us because of .. the permit of residence or
something like that. I don't know - because of the permit of residence ... /Eh/ then someone
became ill .. after a few days. She had /eh/ gotten /eh/ water in her ears or something like that. I had
to step in for her .. for cleaning. I went along, but because I thought that I only had to do it /eh/ for
a few days. And then when she returned they said that I am better and that I had to stay. I
said, "No!"

300. /eh/- you see, big huge iron cars filled with soap water, I had to wash whole /eh/ box
with a brush and so on. I said, "No." He said, "Yes." And, yes, except "yes" and "no" I didn't
know a
319. word. Or he said/ he tried it for a long time, he always said, "You have to, you have to do it,
320. clean." If not, they wanted to send me back to Turkey, you know, I didn't have a passport yet.
321. And they also did this with other women who had refused. Simply sent them back home. I did
322. not want this under any circumstances. Well, I already wanted to give up in the beginning, to
323. run away. I said, "I don't care if I have money or not. I don't want to stay here." But I / eh/ also
324. didn't have money. When I came to Germany we had to take money from other people. First, I
325. had debts, that was an affair of honor, I had to pay this back. And, second, I always thought,
326. no one will believe me when I tell them what /ehm/ has happened in Germany. And they will
327. think that I might have stolen something. Or .. and therefore the police has sent me home and
328. so on. I say, "No." and: I was also too proud to return again. To stay here was also / eh/ hell
329. somehow. But I worked in the firm for the whole year and .. I did cleaning work for the whole
330. time. Additionally. I always had /eh/ quitting time at ten or eleven o'clock and on the next day I
331. started together with other people at six o'clock. (That means, you did the normal work first
332. and did the cleaning afterwards?) Yes. (Every day?) Every day. And I didn't get any extra
333. pay. (And for how long did you do that?) For one year. Since I had /eh/ I had a contract. There
334. was also a translator, she was a fellow country woman .. of mine, but .. I preferred the head
335. foreman. She was even worse than the employer. I had this /eh/ even though I didn't understand so much, but she never translated correctly when we complained and so on.
336. Normally I was supposed to get ten Marks additionally for every evening. Yes, but I got /eh/
337. the whole /eh/ monthly salary of only four hundred Marks, that means my salary was actually
338. /eh/ hundred and fifty Marks if I got this for cleaning... /Eh/ when there was a month in which
339. we got five hundred or four hundred and fifty Marks, we were happy.. That was like a gift, you
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

know. Of course we didn't think of how many hours we worked. Every day thirty three, thirty
five, forty thousand chicken were slaughtered. Everything had to be packaged, including the
bones, the hours didn't count, the work had to be finished. And the next day it starts anew, you
know. Everything had to be /eh/ cleaned, everything had to be /eh/ packaged ...

So .. there .. was /eh/ and there were also /eh/ assembly no /eh/ assembly line, but there was
such an iron (thing) at the line and ... I think I had just been there for two or three weeks /eh/ ..
Actually I always had bad luck ((she starts laughing and the interviewers laugh, too)) in my life.
Someone had /eh/ put a knife on the assembly line /ehm/ on the edge. And it just slipped over,
it fell down in front of me and fell on my foot. That was a very narrow knife. The cut was quite
small of course, but the pain was immense, because it went thru to the bone. And .. well, they -
we also didn't get any first aid and so on, nothing, you know. Waiting for so long until the
janitor came. We always said "janitor", but there was someone who took us to the doctor and
took care of everything. And he came, took (me) somewhere, but I don't know if it was a
hospital or at a doctor. And they laughed at me, because the cut was so small, you know. I
couldn't tell them anything, I don't know what he told. And - yes, and three days / I also didn't
have slips or something like that that there had been an accident, or being put on the sick-list
and something like that - we didn't know about this, see. /Eh/ practically I just lived /eh/ at
home, I didn't have anything to do with /eh/ the world of work or with the outside when I was
home. And, yes, I was at home for three days. I don't know who had told me that I can stay
home for three days. And on the fourth day /eh/ that's how I limped /eh/ that's how I went to
work. I couldn't really walk, I still had a very swollen foot .. Somehow this .. guy had pity on
363. me and sent me back home again, the janitor drove me back home again. And I went sick for
364. **seven days** ... I didn't know / I was just sick, I didn't know, that you /eh/ report /eh/ sick or
365. **(use) a medical certificate. We never saw a medical certificate. And .. / even when we had**
366. **strong spasms in the stomach or let's say a colic of the kidney and so on .. we had to go to**
367. **work first and had to put in a request that we /eh/ we had to write it in the morning,**
368. **immediately in the cafeteria, the woman in the cafeteria took care of that. And .. afterwards ..**
369. **if he has time, the janitor, they said, "Come on - hurry up, hurry up, undress** - to the doctor!"
370. **And there was someone, you know, a very /eh/ a very old man, was supposed to be the doctor**
371. **of our firm or who knows what. We went there, we didn't know German .. And, I don't know,**
372. **what he asked. (He) gave .. something to us, back to work. It was with pain ....**
373.
374. **There was also a /eh/ a fellow country-woman of mine .. /eh/ she was also pregnant,**
375. **a very small woman, I wanted to help her with the cart, we had to push it to /eh/ the cooling chamber.**
376. **And there was another cart behind me, I didn't know that she would push it from /eh/ behind.**
377. **She pushed the cart so hard /eh/ and my hand had come between it. I showed (it) to the chief**
378. **operator that I cannot work, and then he said, "doesn't matter", you know, and "not tragic" ((in**
379. **German: "nix schleim" which is part of a simplified German which native speakers often use**
380. **when communicating with migrant workers and members of ethnic minorities; it is much below**
381. **the present linguistic competence of the narrator)). But shortly before quitting time my hand**
382. **had become quite swollen and red and blue. I showed it /eh/ to him that I cannot /eh/ work, but**
383. **I had worked like that for the whole day, you know. And then, in the evening, they drove me**
384. **to the doctor. I got such a splint, and I also got a bandage. It was broken somehow or**
385. **something like that. And I said that I had shown it to him. He said, "No", that I hadn't shown**
386. it, that he didn't see it. I said that he had said to me, "Doesn't matter. Not tragic." ((in German:
387. "nix schlimm")), you know, but he said afterwards that he had not said it, that he also had not
388. seen it ....
389.
390. I don't know /eh/ if it was (during this thing) with my hand, at one time I was also sick at home
391. /eh/ and .. In every year /eh/ this firm used too much personnel, no one stayed there after a
392. contract of one year. And in Turkey they worried why people didn't stay. Then they sent
393. someone. He was supposed to control the conditions. ... And the janitor came very early and
394. he said to me, "Doctor!" You know, I thought then he wants to take me to the doctor. /Eh/ I
395. liked this /eh/ being taken to the doctor right away. I thought ((she laughs)) I had no complaints, you know, no big pain that I have to go to the emergency doctor /eh/ somehow or
396. something like that. And then I had to sit in the cafeteria, sitting there for the whole day. I
397. waited. I thought he'd take me to the doctor. Till the /eh/ evening when other people had
398. quitting time. They had always come down again and again, when they had a pause, for
399. breakfast, for lunch and in the afternoon. And then they always asked me what I was doing
400. there. I said, "I am waiting for the janitor, he will /eh/ probably take me to the doctor."
401. Afterwards I heard that the man had arrived from Turkey, and therefore /eh/ they didn't want
402. /eh/ to present me that I might tell him something. Therefore he had picked me up at home ..,
403. but ... /eh/ the ... man .. had .. /eh/ enjoyed his chicken and had drunk some whisky or brandy,
404. you know, ((she and the interviewers laugh)) and returned to Turkey with a good report. And
405. that had not been necessary that I had to sit there for the whole day, you know. I am sure he
406. didn't take a look at the dormitories and so on, you know. (He was) not interested in that, they
407. took ... good care of him, sent him back home again.. I thus didn't see .. officials from Turkey,
408. too....
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

410.
411. So /eh/ three weeks before the end of my contract /eh/ /here in Hamburg I had .. not so close,
412. but I had relatives of my mother's side. My parents didn't want me to live in Germany totally on
413. my own. And when they were /eh/ home on vacation my mother had .. asked them to get me ..
414. here. To Hamburg. They lived in Bergedorf ((a district of Hamburg)). They visited me, they
415. said /eh/, "We'll just take you along. We will talk to your employer." But he didn't waive of one
day. He didn't .. send his people away, rather to Turkey, but not to a different firm ( ).
416. And after /eh/ ... (then) the contract had ended .. You know, (when the) contract (was) made
417. /eh/ since we had started five days later we had to finish up for the five days that we had stayed
418. at home. The contract ended, see, we didn't carry this through ourselves, the firm did
419. everything. Right away I was, you know/ I also didn't have pleasant experienc(es) with the
420. union. No one told us that now we had /eh/ to get a permit to work/ a permit of residence for
421. ourselves. The brother of a friend in the dormitory /eh/ came to/eh/ pick her up there. And then
422. he said, "Show me your passport!" Or he came from Berlin, I don't know. And then he said,
423. "What?!! You have no permit of residence? How am I supposed to / how am I supposed to take
424. you with me?" He said, "What do you think if there is a passport inspection on our way
425. afterwards? That could happen", he said, "that the police /eh/ stops us and says, 'Passport'!
426. And then they would send you home!' .. We looked like (that)/ you see, we didn't know what a
427. permit of residence is. He said, "Don't you all have a permit of residence?" We said, "What's
428. that supposed to be?" He said, "What do you think how you will /eh/ stay here without a
429. permit of residence? (They would) not (wait) a second", he said, "and they'd send you home!"
430. He asked us for the first /eh/ next aliens department. We also didn't know that. And .. well, he
said that he would find that, that was twenty minutes to twelve. He put all of us in his car. We were four, four or five, yes, five girls, actually, it was overload. He speeded with his car, it was ten minutes to twelve when got to the next town. That was close to another town close by. Small, was a small place ... And the official stared with his eyes open when he saw all of us, six, seven persons, I don't know, even after one year we didn't know German because we had always been among ourselves and didn't have any contact with German colleagues whatsoever. They also didn't treat us as humans. We just worked side by side, but not with each other... And then the man asked why we hadn't come earlier since (the permit of residence) had already been invalid for five days. And my friend's brother explained: we said that we had worked until the previous day. He didn't want to believe it why the firm hadn't registered us. Of course he didn't believe us. And he called in the firm if we had really worked until the end. Then they were so kind to admit it, but he was angry, the official. Why and for what? That one cannot do this as a human. And why (they) had not given a permit to work and so on. Well, everyone of us got a permit of residence for three months, we were glad and happy that someone had done this for us.

Then we went back. And this was the second great farewell: For one year we had lived in a narrow room, five girls like sisters like siblings. You know, even when we quarreled and so on we were never mad at each other. We stuck together in our difficult situation, you know. And we also didn't have a kitchen, this was a small, two small rooms (in which) we lived. Five, yes, five girls lived, we also cooked there. We had a shower downstairs for the whole.
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

455. house. It looked /eh/ like the gas /eh/ chambers in concentration camps, this shower. From
456. above. /Eh/ All three/ four /eh/ of us went in there right away, because the water always turned
cold so fast. We couldn't take turns when taking a shower. We put shampoo on all the hair and
stood under the water. Took the shower very fast before the /eh/ water turned cold. This used
to be /eh/ not a dwelling house, that was an old school which the firm had /eh/
rented for
460. foreign workers. But actually there were no apartments, also no kitchen. We also couldn't
461. (buy) groceries because the shops were always closed. When we came from work it was dark
already, all closed. And therefore /eh/ we /I don`t know who did it/ subscribed to a bakery,
someone came by with a car and delivered bread twice a week because we didn't have anything
to eat at home .... To be sure I couldn't eat the bread ((she laughs)) because this man came
twice a week. And eating the same bread for the whole week - that was too hard, too, and I
always threw away half of it. But in /eh/ a small place, that was almost a village, it was possible
sometimes if need be to knock at the backdoor and then she opened (the door) and then we
bought something ... But somehow I did not /eh/ even though the work was so ..
dirty and ..
hard and .. not worthy of a human being /eh/ it was not so painful because we always stuck
together. When the first friend /eh/ was picked up all four of us weeped like small children.
471. They were all picked up by turns, and then one (of us) stayed back.. And then my relatives
picked me up and I went to .. Bergedorf, to Bergedorf for the first time .. He was always sad
that /eh/ a friend had stayed there all by herself. He said, "She has no family and nobody. What
will she do there?" But she didn't want to come, maybe she didn't trust people whom she didn't
know.
475.
I was with my relatives for ten days, they tried to find work for me in a hospital. They didn't want (to hire me).

We asked a few people, and afterwards I got a job in a metal processing firm ((she gives the name)) in Reinbek ((a small town close to Hamburg)). I also lived in a dormitory there. In the beginning we were three, four persons in one room. That has the same length as the firm: fourteen rooms side by side and a kitchen in the end of the corridor. Actually the kitchen is at the entrance, but when you go upstairs you have to go back the whole way. Also a shower and so on, just the same, only one big room. We took showers there and we only had two hot plates for all the people who lived down there ....

My work there was also not easy. For two years without interruptions I rubberized, punched lids of sausage cans. I always had to operate two, three machines .... For afterwards I couldn't do it. My arm swelled all the time, I also had such a low blood pressure, (I) fell over at my work. And then I had inflammations of tendon or nervous pain in my left arm. I was not allowed to work, always got half plaster. I was still new, but ... When I was there in the first time they dropped a lot of people. And even though I was new they didn't drop me ....

I worked .... there, and then afterwards I had to change my division because I couldn't the hard work ((not quite understandable because the first side of the tape ends here))

( ) Actually I was supposed to do quite easy work because of my arm, but ... I always had to that was always called "transport" I always had to lift cardboards on the pallet. That was at least seven hundred, eight hundred, nine hundred full cardboards a day...
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

501. /Eh/ It wasn’t so nice in the dormitory either. We lived under the /eh/ printing office. And
502. /eh/ they also worked in three shifts, and all the machines, loud ones and so on, we heard
503. everything. We also couldn’t sleep so well. When you lived with three persons, four persons
504. in one room, two shifts, when I had the early shift and the other one had /eh/ the late shift. We
505. had just fallen asleep when she returned from work. Even when you worked in the same /eh/
506. shift, well, it’s even hard to get along with siblings, it’s still something different with unknown
507. people. And sometimes a big /eh/ age difference: I was just eighteen years old then and some
508. of them were over forty or already fifty. They were either /eh/ sitting there for a long time or
509. went to bed too early. Then I was also supposed to turn off the light or to stay up (sitting) with
510. them as long as they wished, you know. And /eh/ you know, I was quite different. They had
511. already been /eh/ in Germany for some more years, they had already become somewhat /eh/
512. different. /Eh/ And that was a hard blow for me and - even though the work had been so hard
513. at the chicken slaughter house, if you look at it from /eh/ the human side, from home /eh/
514. this sticking together and the love of /eh/ .. colleagues and friends, that’s what I simply missed.
515. You know, I .. looked at all of it somehow actually I am /eh/ so /eh/ I act more emotionally
516. and and I just cannot simply pass people either. And /eh/ that .. made me very sad because ..
517. material things were always more important for people and they grumbled because of
518. bagatelles all the time. I always cried. I didn’t want to hurt anybody. I was .. /eh/ totally
519. different /eh/ from how I am today. I am still sentimental, sensible today and I tend to act
520. emotionally. I am not able to not look straight at someone sitting across from me /eh/ /eh/ neither
521. do I - I also don’t like superficial people. I don’t like them either. But in former days I was even
522. ... even more sensible / I have (it) from home. Human things and and love and comfort were
523. important for us and only machines were important here. The humans were not important. And
524. then we were just /eh/ ... people practically who did the work, we didn't count as something
525. else. But that made me so sad because our people had also become like that. Those who had
526. already been here for a couple of years, just money, nothing else, you know. They just wanted
527. to have money. And I cried all the time, the janitor said if I go on with my crying that I was
528. gonna .. die soon. I had the weight of seventy kilograms when I came to Germany. I lost
529. twenty kilograms within a few months.. That means I did ... not /eh/ go on a diet or something
530. like that. Every time I read a letter I sometimes couldn't read my letter because it had /eh/
531. become so wet from my tears and ... I also don't /eh/ have anybody here in Germany. My
532. relatives, they are not really ... members of the family....
533.
534. Well .. afterwards we also moved, we were/ there were only Greeks and one Spaniard among
535. us. The two Greeks prefered to /eh/ live with us instead of living with their fellow country /eh/
536. woman. We were just women. Men were not allowed to visit ... and also no relatives and so on
537. were allowed to come in. /Eh/ I liked that: Everyone could go outside when she wanted to do
538. so and so on, but .. that we were among ourselves and since these were narrow rooms, and if
539. someone would have come to visit, too, where should we have gone? Imagine a friend had
540. been visited by .. (her) family and so on, that wouldn't have been so .. nice .. We moved .. and
541. .. into .. a different building. That was .. /eh/ better than downstairs in the basement, but ..
542. much narrower ... /Eh/ we .. / the Greeks were living downstairs on the first floor /eh/ and
543. upstairs we lived among ourselves ((she laughs)) again, but .. I (stayed) there ... for four years
544. .. I was /eh/ in Germany for four years.
545.
546. In 1976 .. (it was) during vacation /eh/ ... (that) I also got married .. I didn't want to return to
547. Germany. I wanted to .. go back to Turkey. I could not imagine that I /eh/ would
endure this
548. here for fourteen years. And my mother also said /eh/ and she said all the time that I
should
549. return, every time / that means I could not go on a vacation in 1972 /eh/ 1973. (I had to wait
550. till) .. March 1974 when I went on my first vacation. And they couldn't recognize me again
551. because I had become so .. thin. And ... she had cried so much /eh/ all the time
and .. it was
552. very hard for her because I was the youngest one. I was together with my mother all
the time.
553. And when I came to Germany she was very sick for three months. She couldn't bear this,
554. because one week / after one week my brother went to the army, you know. Two
children /eh/
555. who left home at the same /eh/ time, you know, that was a very hard blow for my
mother ...
556. And, yeah, in 1976 I got married /eh/ well, that was .. no .. marriage with great love,
but I
557. didn't love anybody so much either or something. I had left home too early. In
Germany /eh/ I
558. didn't dare .. get to know anybody. You see, I was .. /eh/ like in a prison so to speak. Work
559. and and accomodation are at the same .. /eh/ place, the same place. I rarely got out from
560. behind the (iron) bars. And that was only a few steps, dormitory and work place. I
just went
561. out for shopping and .. nothing more. Even though I was so young (if you think of)
discos and
562. /eh/ the movies or a pub and so on.. Yeah, at home, from home /eh/ .. I had already been
563. (accustomed) somehow ... (to the fact) all the time that a woman doesn't go into a pub (when
564. she is) alone. Or into a discotheque and so on. We were not used to that, that
means, I did not
565. miss it... Then I /eh/ told (them) that I would like to go back to Germany again, for a
while ..
566. /eh/ after I had gotten married. I wanted to take a few things with me from
Germany /eh/. I
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

said, "I have nothing, no money, didn’t buy anything either," I say. At any rate I had been in Germany for four, five years. /Eh/ "When I have children later on and so that I .. can tell (them) at least that I had been to Germany and that I had bought this or that and so on, memories and some electric things and household goods and so on." .... I had /eh/ already talked about this before my marriage that I would like to go to Germany for one year. I preferred two years, but my parents in law and also my mother said that a .. newly wed young woman should not live apart .. /eh/ for so long.

But when I returned to Germany in 1976 /eh/ after vacation .... I was /eh/ sick. I had a stiff neck, I was at home for three weeks. I had just started to work when I got something with my stomach. I thought it was the stomach. And then I went to the doctor. Without /eh/ having examined me, he gave me .. /eh/ tablets. I was supposed to take /eh/ the tablets until Tuesday. If it didn’t become better I was supposed to get X-rayed. But .. on Sunday night .. on midnight .. I had to (go) to the hospital. Appendicitis... I only got drops for one and a half weeks, because everything was inflamed... And .. that was, yeah, in the end of 1976 ...

And one and a half weeks after the appendectomy I had to start working again because he said that I am "able to work" again, but I didn’t feel like it at all. After the operation I always felt pain on my left side. I went back again and again. I said, "It hurts so much. I cannot stand (erect) any more." He said .... that it derives from / eh/ the operation, from the scar somehow, it radiates. He didn’t even take a look at it! ..

And that /eh/ after Christmas it became /eh/ totally nasty: I could hardly stand (erect) any more ...

In the beginning of 1977 /eh/ it was the first or second day of work / I /eh/ couldn’t do ...
anything any more. And I was quite pale, and they all said what's the matter and so on. Then I

/eh/ told the foreman that I'd go home. A colleague gave me a different .. /eh/ address, another

name - of her family doctor. I went there. And then she got mad (and asked) where I had been

for so long, where, where do I live. And I told her that the doctor hadn't taken a look at it and

had just said ( ) it derives from the appendectomy, that I should go on working. She said,

"Don't lose time, not a second, you must not lose one second!", she said. She couldn't ..

determine what it was, but she says, "It can become lethal," she says. That was as / ehm/ thick

as a fist.

Well, I /eh/ .. grabbed my bag, also bought some things for myself on my way since I

had had

my first experience with a hospital when I had my appendectomy ((she and the interviewers are

amused)). I didn't have anything, no morning gown and no .. shoes and so on, didn't have

anything with me at all /eh/ .. Well I had .. /eh/ some clothes, but it wasn't like what you need

in a hospital. And I bought a bag full of towels and a night gown and everything /eh/ and went

to Bergedorf, the hospital of Bergedorf. They didn't examine me carefully, just superficially,

and then she said .. that it might /eh/ be a /eh/ .. cyst at the ovary. And whether I like to have

children. She said, "You can make a hundred children with one ovary." And in that moment my

life was more important for me, I /eh/ gave my signature. ( ) She said, "It might be ..that

/eh/ one ovary has to be removed." And she said that I should give (her) notice if it was very

painful. They still wanted to operate on me in the night. But I said, "I can still bear it."

On the next morning they took me to the surgery room. In Bergedorf /eh/ the surgery room is

quite downstairs. They take you into the .. basement. ((literally: "below the .. ground")) When I
woke up I was on a different ward, /eh/ not on the gynecological ward where I had undergone

the operation, but on the surgical ward because it wasn't /eh/ a woman's illness.. I kept asking

/eh/ for four weeks what they had done ((literally: "what had been done there").

Every German can expect that a doctor comes to her, even if it's a bagatelle. The doctor who operated (on you) or his assistant explains in a very detailed way, but no one came by to see me.

I kept asking what had been done there. And on the surgical ward they said, "We didn't operate on you." And on the gynecological ward they said /eh/, "We don't know." ... I was in /eh/ the hospital for five weeks. My blood sedimentation was too high all the time, therefore they didn't want to discharge me since something wasn't all right, even after the operation.

Well, I think there had been /eh/ something wrong with the /eh/ appendectomy. They hadn't, somehow they hadn't got it clean. And in the end I (saw) a report /eh/ he showed a report to me. There it said, "inflammable tumor of the bowles." They had crossed this out with red ink, he said, "No tumor!" Chronic inflammation of the duct! Inflammation of the colon!" That's an inflammable swelling or /eh/ what you call it. He said, "Not malignant!" But at first they had really written it on the typewriter and then had crossed .. "tumor" out with the hand. That was /eh/ the whole report which my family doctor had received: this small note which she had gotten from the hospital. It's still puzzling today what had really been done..

Well ... in /eh/ February of 1977 I was discharged. I still couldn't stand, I still couldn't go shopping, I still couldn't really provide /eh/ for myself. I had to do everything on my own. Even though I was together with my fellow country men, no one said, "But you are ill, don't do that!" We all had to take turns /eh/ to clean the dormitory. I was so ill when I cleaned the
636. dormitory. I went shopping, I did everything for myself. But .. I wasn't healthy nevertheless, I
637. had complaints all the time, the blood sedimentation was always too high, I kept going to the
638. doctor..
639.
640. In the beginning of April or the middle of March my scar was always swollen. /Eh/ ..
641. thick as a hazel nut. (First of all seven pieces came out), and then she always made an
642. injection right at (the) /eh/ scar and tried everything. I couldn't work, I was still on the sick list...
643. And .. /eh/ in the end /eh/ it is / in the beginning it got smaller again and in the end not any more, it had
644. turned totally red. Then she sent me /eh/ to the hospital again. And the head physician
645. examined me and .. I was supposed to go back to the hospital right away, but they didn't have a
646. free bed. And then I was supposed to go home again. They wanted to notify me when they had
647. a free bed.. But I didn't want this in any case. Somehow that was too much: two operations
648. within three months, the third /eh/ one still ahead of me . I say, "Rather die, but not this any
649. more!" And ... I said / when I /eh/ was home /eh/ the doorman said /eh/, "A call for you. You
650. have to go to the hospital!" And then I said /eh/ that I won't go. I said, "I will go after Easter.
651. Now I want to celebrate Easter!" Actually we don't have Easter, but that was just a lame
652. excuse. I just didn't want to. I said, "After Easter. Then I'll call (them) again." But in the
653. meantime it had already turned quite blue, my belly. I couldn't stand, and then I called (them)
654. on my own. I called and the head physician said, " She won't get a date, she has to come right
655. away." I packed my bag again, I always had to do everything on my own ((she
656. laughs)),
657. bought too much all the time because I am alone and no one comes by. It's true, many people,
658. colleagues and acquaintances came by, but /eh/ I couldn't give my underwear and my clothes to
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

658. anyone. It's bad if you don't have a family. You always have to .. calculate thirty, forty pieces
659. of) underwear. And then I /eh/ well, in /eh/ April, the middle of April I had to undergo an
660. operation again ... But I cried so much, somehow I had .. the feeling that I won't wake up
661. again. And then a nurse said that this is not serious, that it has already been operated on seven
662. times, you know, and that it will pass again and so on.. Well, /eh/ in the middle of April there
663. was the third operation, 1977 .. And that wasn't really explained (to me) either, but they told
664. me it's the /eh/ inner suture what they had sutured. That was /eh/ foreign to my body. But
665. somehow I had / maybe it was said for other people / I had heard something of "malignant",
666. that it had been done in time, but then they said, "No! For heaven's sake! Don't think that! This
667. wasn't malignant!" But the first operation after the appendectomy/ the colon operation is still
668. puzzling! My family doctor /eh/ tried to get an exact report and she said that she will bring an
669. action against the hospital and so on, but ...
670.
671. Yeah, in the summer of 1977 / I had been discharged /eh/ in the end of April or beginning of
672. May, I had been .. in the hospital for three weeks or four weeks, I am not quite sure any more.
673. Then I urgently wanted to go home. Then I was at home for a few weeks, I didn't really
674. recover, but I started to work again.. /Eh/ in the summer, in July or June, I don't know /eh/ I
675. went home even though I /eh/ was not allowed to take such a long trip. I always .. thought of
676. my .. family, my .. husband, what he would think of me even though he had agreed with one or
677. two years. They had /eh/ written all the time that I should return right away. I simply couldn't
678. do it. Because of my health, because of my financial situation anyhow and: they just cannot
679. imagine what it is like here. You cannot throw down everything and run away! You have to
680. settle (things with) the documents, have to run around from one department to the next one,
681. go to the consulate and everything .. And .. well, I wanted to go on a vacation first of all, and
682. even though I had always written afterwards how I was and what had been done I had always
683. embellished this a little so to speak so that my mother, my husband should (please) not be sad.
684. I said,"It wasn't serious, I have undergone an operation and I feel excellent again and so on."
685. Nevertheless my mother worried a lot, she would have almost gone mad, she just cried without
686. interruption. I was at home, but right away / I didn't go to my husband right away,
687. didn't know where he is living. / Eh/ he had / eh/ he had been transfered. He worked at the post
688. (office)/ Eh/ When we got married we got married in our village and I didn't accompany him
689. ((she laughs)) to his working place, I didn't know (where it was). / Eh/ first of all, it was not
690. possible for me to take the trip on my own because of my health .. I went to my mother and
691. she was with my brother. I could / because I had also become very sick after the long trip I had
692. to stay there at first for a little while. And then together with my mother, they took - we took a
693. cab. It was a long way of three, four hours, but she said, "No way! You can't take the bus!"
694. When we were there / well, they had heard though that I am there already, but / ehm/ my
695. husband and his family felt insulted because I had visited my parents first. And therefore they
696. didn't come even though I was sick. Yeah .. Well, we didn't quarrel and so on, but I had .. right
697. away at the .. we .. / After the wedding we had just been together for / eh/ one week, too. He is
698. / eh/ my relative, / eh/ the son of my uncle of my maternal side. A nice person, (he) is a good
699. person, but .. Well, you just expect something different from relatives and / eh/ something
700. different from your husband and .. He was .. / eh/ not like I had .. imagined ... I also had / eh/
701. had the choice in that year when I /eh/ .. / He had not /eh/ worried at all. He didn't ask me
702. either what had been done there ((referring to the operations)) and what it was like and nothing
703. at all. It was important for him /eh/ his pride when I would return and why, that I didn't return
704. right away when he had written. And he just blamed me. I couldn't even listen. I was so ill. I
705. was so miserable, nevertheless I had to play the young daughter in law for the visitors and
706. guests and so on. My mother cried all the time because she had to see this .. But I knew this
707. /eh/ right away /eh/ that we didn't .. harmonize. That it wouldn't end well, even if I would
708. return for good. Well, (it became like that) in 1977 and 1978 .. You know, with the letter and
709. things like that, there was already some quarreling. Not personally, but just in written form.
710.
711. And in 1978 I didn't /eh/ I didn't want to go to him. I wanted to - I went to my parents right
712. away. I stayed there for three weeks and my parents in law came all the time that we should
713. reconcile and so on. And my mother wished so badly that we should reconcile again. Then
714. I went there until .. the end of .. my .. vacation. And that was my whole - marriage. And
715. afterwards I didn't go back to my husband. I said, "We are too different." I read life (in) small
716. letters, he reads capital letters. /Eh/ for him everything was so superficial and different, totally
717. different and .. we were as different as day and night. Of course, older people don't understand
718. it. Our mothers, my mother and my mother in law, have experienced life quite differently. They
719. only accept one reason for divorce, my mother or /eh/ Turkish women: only if she is /eh/
720. unfaithful or very bad things happen, or if the parents in law don't want to have her. If a man is
721. /eh/ unfaithful it is even an honor for him because he can still get .. enough women and so on.
722. But for /eh/ if a woman does it, it's a disaster. She either gets killed or, if (he) has still gotten
723. some common sense left, the man gets a divorce, but a woman .. Even when the
man /eh/ is
guilty (they) don't ask nevertheless. It's always women who are guilty when they get
divorced...
725.
726. In 1980 we got divorced ... Well, I / he wasn't in Germany, I was alone all the time. It
didn't
matter to me, but I was just sad.. /ehm/ that I was (left over) as a divorced woman,
you know,
728. and that's not so nice. If I had derived something out of my marriage I wouldn't have
been so
sad. Had just married in vain - just to be married, to be a housewife. Only my mother
and my
parents/well, actually I was a victim. (Hadn't been constrained), but by my mother or
my
parents. Always, I always sacrificed myself for other people ...
732.
733. Well, in 1978 ... /eh/ I was given notice by my firm. It said: /eh/ reason: because I
was ill for a
longer time period. I had been ill some years ago. 1977, all of 1977 until the middle
of 1977, I
had been ill from the end of 1976 until the middle of 1977. Within half a year I had
undergone
three operations. I wasn’t at home (because of) small complaints. I could perfectly
manage all
the work even though I am unskilled. From men's work till inspection, control. And
there it
said that I was ill over a longer time period because I had worked for one year
without
interruptions after I had been issued a certificate of good health again.
739.
740. Well, I had to learn how to go the way, how to go to a labor court, how you (get) a
lawyer.
742. /Eh/ I said, "I have to do all of this by myself. I have to get my experiences." /Eh/ by
the way
743. /eh/ I also had TV then. I also had a little contact with the outside, you know. But I
took the
initiative. I always read something. I still had no contact with German people. Also
(not yet) in
eh/
German since .. 1979/80, not since 1972. I didn't speak German from 1972 to 1980.
I only (got
it) from hearing television, when I heard a word /eh/ then I always asked people what it means.

And then I wrote it down and that's how it went. I didn't learn German in the right way. Just from hearing, from the mouth, from TV. Therefore ((she laughs)) I have a very good opinion about TV. Because of the German language ((she and the interviewers laugh)).

Well, in any case I found a lawyer /eh/ and .. you see, I wasn't a member of the union because I .. /eh/ was not as optimistic as in the beginning. I said, "What did they ever /eh/ do for me when I was distressed? Nothing!" I say, "This amount of money which I am supposed to pay for /eh/ the union, I'd rather pay it for a poor person. He will even thank me. (Even though I don't ask for it) maybe he will pray for me. But in that moment I ((she laughs)) needed the union ((she and the interviewers laugh)) because I /eh/ would have to pay for the attorney fees all by myself if I'd lose before the court. I was told, "If you were in the union you wouldn't have to take care /eh/ of the lawyer and everything and the law costs and so on." But I /eh/ also learned that if you have no money you can get a poor/certificate from city hall ((she means: that you can sue in forma pauperis)). And I also /eh/ they didn't want to give it to me at first, they gave me a hard time. But in the end I also succeeded.

/Eh/ on court day, yeah, well, a Greek woman had her hearing before me. We went in there together. /Ehm/ She had been in the firm for eight years. She was agreeable to 3000 Marks..

For eight years! (As compensation?) As compensation! They didn't give it to her voluntarily.

Of course we /eh/ accused her. But .. she wanted to return to Greece. She wanted to get /eh/ fired. She had always worked for two weeks and went on the sick list for six weeks. She welcomed it to get 3000 Marks for nothing. But for me it was different. I wanted to stay here,
I wanted to work. But actually there was no work for me. Normally you get a thousand, over thousand Marks for every year. As a net amount in the metal branch. But 3000 Marks? And the lawyer didn't ask me at all, was also agreeable to it. I had to stand there like this and he didn't ask me. And afterwards I heard that I hadn't taken the right lawyer. *(That means you also got 3000?)* Yes, I got 3000, too, because she had been agreeable to 3000 Marks for eight years. Since I had been there for five years. But my only gain was, if you can call it a gain, I was allowed to go on living in the dormitory. To live there till it was sold or rented (as an) apartment. I lived there for one year, and afterwards there weren't so many people there and then it was very nice. Of course, a room for myself for thirty Marks was *(she laughs)* cheap. Therefore I almost saved almost 2000 Marks so to speak. Afterwards I moved and then I had to pay 300 Marks for a very small room where there was just enough place for a couch and a small table. If you look at it like this, if you take the apartment into account, it was still convenient. I mean a compensation of 3000 Marks after five years, that's nothing, but .... I wasn't out of work for such a long time. I think I was out of work for half a year. I also didn't try very hard. Somehow I found it so strange. I had never thought that I'd get out of work. Well ... and I went on a vacation. Didn't get so much unemployment benefit either. I was here for a short time and went on a vacation afterwards. Since I was on vacation for six weeks, I also didn't get paid for this time.

And in 1979 I found a job on my own. A kind of work which I had never liked. In the gastronomy, in the kitchen. At that time I didn't want to be out of work any
longer. I said, "If you want to, you can do everything." And later on when I find
something
better I'd get another job.

I could stand it for five months. I always started around five (p.m.) (and worked) till
one
o'clock (a.m.), in the week-ends till two o'clock. I had to /eh/ walk for one hour in the
night.

And I always got home around two, around three o'clock in the morning. And at that
time I
still lived in the dormitory. And /eh/ there were always people there in the morning
and in the
afternoon, I couldn't really sleep my fill. I couldn't eat anything, I couldn't sleep, not at
all.

Actually I had no day and no evening. And after five months I said, "No, I can't do
that." For
that / somehow for gastronomy, if someone wants to work in gastronomy he must
really enjoy
it. He has to be born for it. Otherwise you can't do it. All the time I was so terribly
mad on
holidays and week-ends when other people celebrated and I had to work all the
time.

And my friend, a Turkish woman, worked in a firm - where I am working now - it's
also
precision mechanics, actually also metal branch, but it's precision mechanics. It's
still something
different from metal packaging. /Eh/ she had been there for a few weeks, and then I
had asked
her if they hire anyone. /Eh/ she said, "Yeah, I can just ask." ... After two, three
weeks she
asked and then they told her that I should come by. Then I came by. I changed for
worse for -
almost .. two Marks (per hour) ((she laughs)) ... In 1979 I lost two Marks (per hour)!
So I
said, "I don't care. I .. cannot (bear) it any more. On Sunday I still /eh/ worked in
gastronomy,
on Monday I started in the precision mechanics firm. It was the 28th of May 1979...
We
right now we are about 79 or maybe 80 persons. We still don't have a shop
committee
or something like that... Of course, our German colleagues get what they want. And
they also

© 2003 FQS http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

816. know what they are entitled to in precision mechanics, a precision mechanic, what a precision
817. mechanic earns. They know that. And then they go to the boss (who is sitting) upstairs and
818. also get it. /Eh/ Even unskilled Germans, well, I wouldn't say that I am sure, but I guess that
819. they earn much more than we. I am not a skilled /eh/ worker though, but .. I can .. work quite
820. well and independently and one doesn't have to control permanently /eh/ what I do. I take over
821. the whole responsibility. I can (screw on, adjust, shift, but I cannot change the static
822. frequency). ((translation problematic because of the technical terms)) That's the only thing, and
823. I just don't have a journeyman's certificate in my pocket. And therefore I have to lose almost
824. half of the wage of my German colleagues. And that makes me quite sick right now. I feel
825. exploited ... Like many /eh/ other colleagues, Turkish colleagues. I get special work all the
826. time, quite precise work, I / he always says: He cannot take on the responsibility, he cannot
827. give it to other people. I / I tell (him) then, "I cannot get a full stomach from your praise! I
828. want to have something for that!", you know, but no way. If you have complaints, where can
829. you turn? To the employer! And the employer creates /eh/eh/ the law in the firm as he wishes.
830. But normally we don't have a written law. He does it as he wishes. Well, I always say, "If it's
831. that way, if he doesn't do it all according to law, I should also get the right pay for my work!"
832.
833. I /eh/ also have (problems) with my kidneys, with the bladder, I have a bursitis, (problems)
834. with my stomach, additionally I also have problems with my /eh/ spine now. It gets stiff again
835. and again .. I was /eh/ at home for three weeks shortly before my vacation, after vacation I
836. couldn't move again. Then I was at home for five weeks. You cannot do anything. You can't
837. help it by way of an operation. /Ehm/ I am resigned .. to it. I have belly-ache, go to the
838. gynecologist. There is nothing. Everything, everything is all right. Nothing is wrong
organically. And next /eh/ I am /eh/ I have to go to (the hospital of) Eppendorf, because all
doctors believe that I am mentally ill. I / but I don’t believe them that I am mentally ill, I don’t
know ....

Well, that’s my story. That’s the whole life. Actually that’s not everything, but you
cannot ((she laughs)) (You cannot tell everything anyhow.) You cannot tell it.

Well, I have, I would ... I cannot express it what it is like, what it was like, how
terrible it /ehm/ is: to be frowned upon by people in the streets all the time. When /eh/ two /eh/
people who have black hair talk to each other in the street, they feel oppressed that they
can’t go past
them, so they complain. But when ten Germans stand in the street and talk to each
other, they
still find a way how to pass them, you know.

When I came to Germany I was just seventeen. Now I am thirty-one .. Under
German conditions / for Germans it is still, I am still pretty young, you know. So I am still in
the /eh/
beginning of my life, but I feel like ... ninety or empty, nothing, no ideals and no aim.
Sometimes /eh/ I don’t see any meaning in living like that.

But thanks to God there are not just bad people. I also have / I haven’t had very /eh/
bad and
terrible experiences myself. I have a very nice German circle of acquaintances and
friends. I
would say, well, I would say so. If I don’t feel well, that they even call twice a day and
ask how
I am. And if everything gets too heavy, that I can simply walk there and ring the bell -
there are
such Germans, too. ((in a low voice)) People are not all bad .. But if one generalizes, if one
says more generally, "All Turks bad," that’s what makes me angry. But if on talks about
individual bad Germans or individual bad Turks, that’s only for people who are bad. I
don’t get
Angry at that at all, but more generally you can't talk badly about the whole people. It cannot be that 60 to 70,000 Germans are bad, 60 to 70,000 Turks cannot be bad either. There are good and bad people everywhere. (I really looked at it personally from the beginning, as I did not have a bad experience with the employer.) ([translation problematic])

I also live here. I have a very small apartment though, but .. I live here quite well, I am satisfied, I get accepted and I am loved by my neighbors. And that makes me happy. And they are not / ((end of the cassette; a small pause))

(When we met recently you said /ehm/ ( ) or indicated that your relationship with your family had changed a little since you have been here in Germany. Or didn't I understand you correctly? .. I don't know if / )

No, I wouldn't say so. Not at all. (Or did it stay like that?) /Eh/ ((she laughs)) Stayed like that or changed, that .. I when I am at home, I am just a guest there. And I have my sister and a brother live far away from home. And two brothers live at home. In the village where I grew up. I am a few days here and a few days there, well, I cannot really get on their nerves. ((She and the interviewers laugh.)) And, of course, I don't know if I return for good and everyday life starts, how they would treat me then. And I am always a welcome sister and aunt who .. comes with a lot of presents and has money, too, can take care of herself financially. Of course, I don't know if I had to live with my brother and would be dependent on him.

Well, maybe I could have imagined that .. fifteen years ago. But this was difficult. Even though I was at home, not .. away from home for many years. That was already a reason for
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

889. me to go to Germany /eh/ .. because I was dependent on my brother. Just because of a few /eh/
890. Lira. Well, I would have done it - earlier, fifteen years ago, but today where I've taken care of
891. myself for so long and have been my own boss, well ((she laughs)) I'd rather take my life /eh/
892. instead of living dependently /eh/, that means: I cannot do it any more. No, not just to have a
893. full stomach, to live with someone or with my brother. That's not possible any more.
894. 895. I don't have a home either even though I say, "at our home." My father doesn't live ...
896. /eh/ at home any more. He is living with / close by my sister. Also not with my sister. All by himself..
897. Where my parents .. / one brother lives in my parental home and next door /eh/ we still have
898. another .. house. My brother built it himself. And that's where my eldest brother is living, too..
899. In fact I am just a guest there, you know. I don't know if I'd return for good, if it /eh/ will be
900. like it was. I don't believe so that it will be like that, like .. fifteen years ago. Of course, I still
901. have this beautiful picture of my childhood in my mind, you know, and I dream of former days.
902. I am living of my past, but when / I once went on an eight weeks vacation in /eh/ .. 1981 or
903. 1982, that was too much. That was not a vacation any more. (A real) vacation is just for four
904. weeks.
905.
906. Well, I .. think that returning for good will also be very difficult for me. I cannot live there like
907. here. So securely and independently. Single women, that is .. he says, my brother says: yeah, I
908. have to forget how I am living in Germany. You can't do it with us (in Turkey). You either
909. have to get married to the first man around who crosses your path .. or .. live with .. your
910. brother or someone or with your father (as) a guard so to speak. He says, "When you are born
911. as a woman in Turkey, you will get a lifelong sentence, and as a single, divorced woman you
will /eh/ get the death penalty, and they don't let you live," he says. He is right. You can't live
all by yourself in Turkey.

Well, if I had the chance to live like here ... with regard to social security, financial security,
working place - not much, a room, /eh/ affording a room and a pleasant life, well, if I knew that
I would get it over there I would give it up here right away. But I don't have anything. From
what I earn I cannot live a life here which is worthy of a human being and set up for myself
over there at the same time. But a new beginning isn't possible over there either. You see, we
also have a certain /eh/ age limit /eh/. When you have passed it, you won't get work any more.
How should I start there now? I don't see a way out.

And here I'm not at home, you .. notice it again and again. You feel it that we don't belong
here. And I'm neither at home in Turkey. That's easy to say: fourteen years. I am not a hundred
percent ... / not Turk, I wouldn't say so, you know, but .. (with regard to how) I was before.
You still become someone else. I fully, I've had contact with the outer world, I've had contact
with people, I know more about the world. I am not this .. good .. little mother of the family or
the little daughter of the family who has been influenced from infancy: "When you are big, you
will get married and will have children and will take care of your husband and your children."
That's gone, that's not everything. That's what I know now. That won't be like (it was) before.
I know that a woman can /eh/ do more things than just cook and stand behind the kitchen
stove.

And when I think like I'm thinking today, I cannot live with /eh/ at least not with a Turkish man
or .. or a typical Turkish man. Well, I / looking at it from this perspective I don't .. think or
have ideas about it either that some time I will / you should never .. say no, but .. founding a

family and getting married and getting children isn't possible at this moment, I don't think about

it. Since I know that I am different anyhow .. If I'd get married to anyone in Turkey I will break

.. even more than here.

I say when I have to work there and far away from home, I'd rather work here. Somehow it has

also become my home, a second home. I always notice it/eh/ when I return from vacation. It's

painful for me, it's very hard to bid farewell to my family, not to Turkey. Turkey is totally

strange to me. I don't know at all what's happening in Turkey. I'm more interested what's happening here in Germany, politically and .. humanly and .. economically. I can tell you all

about it, but I don't know what's happening in Turkey. I am /eh/ just as ignorant as many and..

let's say, somehow, for example as Germans who don't know (anything) about Turkey. It's

not different with me. I only long for /eh/ my family, but not for Turkey. When I am here after

vacation, I am looking forward to my home. That's my home, I don't have a home there any

more. I am there just for a /eh/ visit, just as /eh/ many Germans go on a vacation somewhere,

enjoy /eh/ themselves, but look forward to being home again nevertheless. It's the same with

me. That's very hard, well, I'd rather return not at all. Just because of my family, not because

it's more beautiful in Turkey than here ...

If I had happened to have my family here in Germany, it might have looked different for me.

But we .. /eh/ still .. stick together. And that is /eh/, you know, we are different in terms of

family relationship and .. neighborhood, humaneness, society, and sociability and what else is

lacking here. You know, that you .. can't make friends so easily, it's very hard here in Germany.

... home is home. That means I cannot imagine to live here in Germany for ever.

© 2003 FQS http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/
(But do you think that there would be the chance ... /ehm/ hm, when you want to maintain this independence that you could do something like that in a big Turkish city, that it would be easier there? .. Hasn't there been some change, so that it might be possible for a woman?) ..

Independence?

(I mean independent of father or brother, that you don't .. live with them together, but maybe alone ( ).)

Well, you can achieve your independence /eh/ only on the basis of social security, financial security, if you can afford an apartment, if you have work. There are also many young people in Germany who don't have work. They would also like to have their own apartment, a room.

Many are still /eh/ twenty-four, twenty-five. Even though it's not as nice at home any more as (it had been when they were) sixteen, they still live there. Why? Because they are dependent financially? It's the same in Turkey. There is a head in the family. When someone has money, (when) a family member works for a few days somewhere, then they buy something to eat and then they get by. No one can /eh/ afford anything. If /eh/ the economic and .. /eh/ social security and everything ... would be like Germany, maybe it would also become different in Turkey.

(Well, I was actually thinking of the other aspect which you had also mentioned before when you said .. that as a single and even divorced woman, that this social aspect/ Is that possible at all?)

Of course that's /eh/ worse with us than in Germany, but in Germany it's not different either.
Women get also blamed here when they get divorced. /Ehm/ but, well, thanks God / eh/ there

are more women or maybe men, too, who don't always approach divorced women with great

prejudices, (who don't exclude them from society,) but in Turkey it's still worse. You
don't /eh/

get accepted .. as a decent human being. If someone is living alone, they always say / .. our

religion is different, too, and our /eh/ whole customs are different. For example, the boys do

what they want, but girls have to stay virgins until the wedding/ wedding night. And if
it stays

like this, then (nothing) will change. You know, and if a girl is not a virgin any more,
she won't

get a husband, well, that's not really the case, (but) she cannot /eh/ choose him. She
has to get

married to anyone who wants to have her. And that's /eh/ still something different,
but .. that

also makes a big difference in the political, social, economic condition in Turkey.

See, the women have no chances either. I always think /eh/ these chances and
social chances

which German women have / if /eh/ Turkish women /eh/ would get them, then
straight seventy

percent would get divorced, but they don't have another way out. No other choice.
Where

should they turn? All back to their parental home? With children? That's even
worse (than

staying) with their husbands. Therefore they say, "I got married, I have children
now, now I'll

stay here." They don't know the difference. They don't have an alternative, you
see. Where

should they go? To the street? She doesn't get work. What should their children
do? At least

she has a husband who can .. bring some bread, so that she has enough to eat. That's how they

think. That's all their plight. That's not / many don't stay voluntarily. Many get
beaten, and the

husband drinks and gambles. But they endure all of this, because they don't have another way

out. But I think many, over seventy percent would get divorced if they had an
alternative.
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

When living so freely and being able to afford an apartment they would quite naturally become independent, too. They don't know the difference because they don't have an alternative.

It's also a matter of education. You always hear at home that it's not so bad and that it will smooth down and that you should not give up right away. But everything has to be /eh/ /eh/

A woman is always generous ((literally: "a woman always gives of herself"). With her personality, with her notions. A woman has studied for years. What happens /eh/? In the end she has to give up her occupation because /eh/ she has gotten a child. Or because her husband wants it like that. Why doesn't a man /eh/ give up his hobby? Even though he earns over two thousand Marks, he gives thousand Marks for the household in Germany, for four persons, and he spends the rest for his hobby, for the (electric) railway, or what do I know ... or for sailing.

That, well, even though we have worse conditions, but if you get along well in the family, if you like each other, a couple, a partner, then there is a real partnership. No "that's mine and that's yours, you get thousand Marks for the household." No, you always sum it up. If something is left over, then you are able to afford something, but not prior to that. She is expected to turn around every penny three times before she spends it, while he should spend half of his income /eh/ for his hobby? In Germany it's not better either. The women who don't work, who don't have a job aren't independent either. They cannot do as they like. You know, I see it's not different in Germany, too. Here in Germany the women also get beaten, also get abused, they have to do /eh/ without their occupation, (without) their personal sides, too. What does a man give of himself? Nothing! Not even two percent. But always the woman. Not even...
A narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in a German city

1030. fifty-fifty. Would be beautiful, no, too beautiful to be true. Not even fifty-fifty, not even in
1031. Europe. Well, you can't expect much from us, from a developing country. When it's like that in
1032. Europe, in such a progressive country, (what do you expect) from Turkey .... but ....
1033. 1034. (That means that you just don't dare imagine how and where your life will go on in the end?)
1035. 1036. No, I cannot imagine. I .. will .. just .. go back to Turkey when I am sure that I will be
1037. independent financially. Even though I don't think that /eh/ money is /eh/ important. Money is
1038. /eh/ money /eh/ always ranks last .. /eh/ for me, it's not the first thing, not on the first place.
1039. Money is on the last place. But money is very important. If you have money, you are strong,
1040. too. Without money it's .. we have a proverb /eh/: If you have money, you have friends. If you
1041. have no money, no friends. That's also true. If you are bad off, then all people move away. I
1042. thus tell myself,"When you have to work, as long as you have to work, you will stay in
1043. Germany. If you can, if you're allowed." Since I don't know what will be tomorrow. It might be
1044. that I'll lose my job, and it might be that I'll never find work again. Maybe I will make another
1045. decision and say, "I'll go home." But as long .. as I can stay here, work here, I will go back
1046. when I can live independently and securely in Turkey.
1047.
1048. I bought an apartment for myself, I .. just paid off .. my debts, but an apartment is not
1049. everything. It's still empty, I still have to furnish it and then I must have some money that I ..
1050. can live rather independently of every (other) person. (That's a place where) I can retreat, can
1051. go for a walk and do as I like. (I) don't necessarily have to be together with bad people. There
1052. are good people, too, who accept me perhaps as a single woman ...
1054. It might be that I will find someone when I am forty, you know, who also thinks like me, a man. There are still good men, not all of them ((she laughs)) are bad, otherwise one couldn't bear it. ((She and the interviewers laugh.)) But .. no, not like that, not /eh/ at any cost. Not like: that people should accept me, "She is married to a /eh/ good man." That's unimportant. I don't want to live for other people, I want to .. live my life. I have given enough /eh/ of myself. It's enough what I have abandoned. I have sacrificed myself sufficiently. I don't want it anymore. If I find someone ... /eh/ who .. fits my imaginations and that he thinks like myself \!\!

1055. don't say that I am good - maybe I am bad, but the one whom I'll find should be bad, too. You have to understand each other. (For) .. maybe .. ((she laughs)) maybe I'll go back, some time, but it's not sure when. ((end of the tape recording))

1056. Fieldnotes of the interviewers on what they learned from Hülya after the interview:

1057. "Hülya's mental stability was shaken very much when her mother died of cancer in 1980; she was 56 years old. Hülya was just at home with her parents on vacation and witnessed her mother's death. She had had a close relationship to her. She regards it as positive to have been there at this time. Since her mother's death her father lives alone close to her sister in another town. (...) According to Hülya her relationship to her father deviates from traditional norms. He accepts her and her way of life. He also didn't restrict her during her childhood with regard to the common restrictions of a girl's life. The relationship of both of them seems to be like the relationship of comrades."
1078. Hülya is from Southern Turkey, from a village which is about a 100 kilometers from Antalya.

1079. It's very warm there and the soil is fertile."