

Migrant Organizations

Size, Structures, and Significance

1. Introduction

People with similar conceptions of life or shared interests organize themselves in various ways into associations. This is also true of migrants who form organizations because of their common cultural, political, economic or social interests and values. Roughly one-fifth of the German population has a so-called migration background which means that they can point to their own experiences with migration or to that of their parents' generation.¹ Accordingly, there is a broad spectrum of migrant organizations; estimates are that there are between 10,000 and 20,000 such associations in the country. Their role in the social integration of individuals and in the support of migrants' interests and participation has been the subject of some controversy over the question of whether migrant organizations tend to promote or hinder the integration of people with a migration background.

The following section introduces the concept of migrant organizations. Section 3 then examines their distribution and activity structure in Germany, and section 4 discusses the significance of migrant self-organizations for processes of social participation on the basis of the current state of social scientific research. A brief summary concludes this article.

2. What Are Migrant Organizations?

Definition

There is no generally accepted definition of 'migrant organizations' or 'migrant self-organizations' (MSOs). In this article, MSOs will be understood as associations (1) whose goals and objectives are derived primarily from the situation and the interests of individuals with a history of migration *and* (2) whose members are mostly individuals with a migration background *and* (3) in whose internal structures and processes individuals with a migration background play a significant role.² With regard to their goals and objectives, MSOs may thus refer to the process of migration itself and to the issues associated with the social participation of migrants (as well as their ancestors and descendants) in their regions of origin and arrival.

Therefore, this definition does not include support and counseling organizations, such as welfare associations active in the area of social work which deal with migration-relevant issues or local tenant associations which do not regard themselves as migration-specific associations even though most of their members may actually be individuals with a migration background. (On the problem of classifying migrant organizations, see also Waldrauch and Sohler 2004: 40ff.)

Significant heterogeneity

In public debate, migrant organizations are often perceived and treated as relatively homogeneous or even monolithic, as reflected in such expressions as "*the* Islamic associations," "*the* Italian associations," and "*the* Mosque communities". In fact, however, these organizations sometimes vary considerably in terms of their predominant (explicit or rather implicit) goals and orientation as religious, business, political, professional or cultural, self-help, welfare or leisure associations. MSOs also differ in size (with the number of members ranging from just a few to several thousand), assets and facilities, and legal status (registered association, religious community, non-profit association, individual organization, umbrella organization). Other features of their members by which MSOs differ include ethnic, cultural, national, and religious self-image, context of regional origin, level of education, and gender and age distribution. There are also differences in terms of the prevailing forms of internal and external resource mobilization (e.g., membership subscriptions, donations, government subsidies, participation in national or international programs) and environmental relations (with other migrant organizations, public administration, the media, social movements, etc.). MSOs exhibit very different internal structures and processes in relation to such aspects as decision making (Who decides what, and when?), provision of information, opinion formation, coordination of members, development of management structures, and relative significance of voluntary and full-time participants. Finally, MSOs also differ considerably in their focus of activities on either the country of origin, the country of arrival, or both.

Public and scholarly perception of MSOs

This variety within and between MSOs is usually overlooked in public debate. Generally, most MSOs remain rather marginal for majority society and public discourse, and it is only in the context of political protests, controversial construction projects or unification efforts of Muslim associations that they are noticed. Traditionally, the general public and the scholarly community have perceived MSOs primarily as a challenge to integration or as a potential risk to public security. This was true of the associations of the Polish labor migrants who came to the Ruhr Valley in the 19th and early 20th century (see, e.g., Spendel 2005), and it has been evident in the scholarly debates concerning the integrating or disintegrating role of MSOs in the 1980s and 1990s (see section 4) and the security debates following the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Rosenow-Williams 2012). It is only since the paradigm shift with regard to integration and migration policy at the turn of the millennium that MSOs have increasingly come to be seen as representatives of specific social and interest groups and valued as dialogue partners, such as in the development and implementation of national and community-based integration concepts.

3. Number and Structure of Migrant Organizations in Germany

Number of active MSOs in Germany

The exact number of MSOs in Germany is unknown, so the number of foreigners' and foreign associations is used to make estimates. According to the law on associations, an association whose members or leaders are mainly foreigners is considered to be a 'foreigners' association'; while an association based abroad whose organization or activity relates to Germany is considered to be a 'foreign association'. The establishment of a foreigners' association or a foreign association must be reported to the authorities within two weeks. This information is collected centrally in the Register of Foreign Associations (*Ausländervereinsregister*).³ Based on the former Register of Foreign Associations, the number of such associations in 2001 was calculated to be approximately 16,000. After associations of EU foreigners had been exempted from the obligation to register—mainly because of legal considerations—the official number of registered foreign associations decreased significantly. There are also several lists of MSOs in addition to the Register of Foreign Associations which have been derived from scholarly studies. In the foreword to her study on migrant (umbrella) organizations in Germany which presents 32 such organizations in greater detail, the Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration of the German Federal Government makes explicit reference to the studies by Hunger (2005) and MOZAIK (2009):

“Officially, there are about 16,000 migrant organizations in Germany, some of which have not only increased in size but also in importance, primarily in their roles as mediators in intercultural dia-

logue in public debate. The actual number of migrant organizations is estimated to be around 20,000. The official number of 16,000 represents only the number of organizations registered in the Register of Foreign Associations, which lists all associations of foreign third-country nationals in Germany. This figure does not include organizations of migrants from the member states of the European Union or organizations and initiatives which are not registered as foreign associations because their managing committee or membership do not consist mainly of foreign nationals” (Integration Commissioner 2011: 6, transl. by the author).

The estimates cited in the report of the Integration Commissioner are probably too high. In response to a query by the author, the Federal Office of Administration in Cologne replied in November 2012: “There are currently about 10,360 foreign associations registered with the Federal Office of Administration. However, this number is subject to individual fluctuations because we rely on information about deletions and new registrations being reported to us by the various authorities” (transl. by the author). It appears safe to assume that the figure cited in the report of the Integration Commissioner is that for 2001, when the Register still contained the organizations of migrants from the member states of the European Union.

But information on the number of MSOs in Germany has been provided not only as a result of the administration process, but also by several scholarly studies. In the late 1990s, a comprehensive survey of migrant organizations in North Rhine-Westphalia was conducted (MASSKS-NRW 1999a; 1999b). Of the 952 recorded MSOs, 302 participated in the study (MASSKS-NRW 1999a: 25). Given the ratio of the population of North Rhine-Westphalia to the national population of Germany, and given that there were only 952 MSOs in North Rhine-Westphalia at the time, the estimate for Germany of 16,000 is likely to be too high.

In 2009, a survey of MSOs in Germany identified 3,480 organizations in 75 major administratively independent cities which met the definition criteria of having a “migration-specific topical and task focus with at least half of the members and organization activists having a migration background” (TRAMO 2010; Pries and Sezgin 2012: 16). Of these MSOs, 28 percent (or 963) had a country-of-origin reference to Turkey, whereas, for example, only 3 percent (or 119) had a country-of-origin reference to Poland. Generally, the willingness of people with a migration background to organize varies strongly according to the country of origin, and people of Turkish origin organize themselves relatively often into associations.⁴

Key areas of focus of MSOs

With regard to the key areas of focus of MSOs and the major countries of origin, an analysis of the Register of Foreign Associations provided by Hunger (2005: 226ff.) found that of the roughly 16,000 associations registered in 2001, about 11,000 could be regarded as associations dominated by people of Turkish origin. A relatively high

percentage of MSOs (approx. 83 percent) were homogeneous in origin, in the sense that the majority of their members originated from the same country; 11 percent were classified as German–foreign and 6 percent as multi-country-based. Hunger (2005: 231) provides a general ranking of objectives on the basis of the frequency with which *the purpose of the MSOs* is mentioned in their statutes: 1. culture, 2. meeting, 3. religion, 4. sports, 5. counseling, 6. guidance, 7. politics, 8. education, 9. humanitarian aid, and 10. leisure. In a special report prepared for the Advisory Council on Immigration and Integration of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Hunger has also presented his own *typology of activities* of MSOs which is based on data from the Register of Foreign Associations (Table 1).

Of the 3,480 MSOs ascertained throughout Germany in the context of the TRAMO study, 35 percent of all MSOs classified as having Turkey as the country of origin reference and 40 percent of all MSOs having Poland as the country of origin reference could be classified as religious organizations. Cultural organizations were the second most common type of MSOs, with 25 percent of MSOs promoting Polish identity and 8 percent promoting Turkish identity. Some 14 percent of MSOs identifying as Turkish and 12 percent of MSOs identifying as Polish were found to have different characteristics and to be involved in various areas, such as religious, cultural, and political activities (see also Amelina and Faist 2008; Diehl 2002; Özcan 1989).

In public debates, religious associations—and, most important in this case, mosque associations—are often described as typical MSOs. Table 1 shows that more

than two thirds of MSOs actually are secular in character. These include cultural associations, meeting centers, social and humanitarian associations, and sports and leisure associations. However, it should be emphasized that it is difficult to assign individual MSOs to particular areas of activity, not least because in many cases their areas of focus and activity are varied and overlapping, so that, say, a sports club which also provides social counseling for its members may be classified as ‘multifunctional’. Also, the focus and membership of MSOs may change over time. For example, since the 1990s, an increasing number of self-employed individuals and academics with a migration background have joined MSOs as a way to better pool their resources and advance their common interests. The generational change within many long-standing MSOs has also led to a shift in focus from the country of origin to the country of arrival and, thus, to a stronger emphasis on the integration perspective (Gaitanides 2003: 25ff.). This discussion of the MSOs’ focus of activities leads us directly to the question of their role in social participation.

4. The Role of MSOs in Social Participation

Two opposing positions

Since the 1980s, most of the debate in the social sciences in Germany on the societal roles of MSOs has revolved around two opposing positions: Either MSOs are seen as promoting or as hindering integration. At issue as the framework for this discussion is essentially the question as to what effects a strong involvement of migrants in ethnic and country-of-origin-related social relations and groups have on their participation in and integration into the society of arrival. Some studies, such as Breton (1964),⁵ have concluded that migrants who are strongly involved in country-of-origin-related social relations (for example, in MSOs) are also less likely to integrate into their host country. However, other studies have stressed the generally positive integration effects of internal ethnic integration: “Under certain conditions, strong integration of immigrants from another culture into their own social contexts within the host society—in other words, internal integration—has a positive effect on their integration into the host society” (Elwert 1982: 718, transl. by the author). The sociologists Georg Elwert and Friedrich Heckmann consider internal ethnic integration to be a transitional stage in a longer and complex integration process which involves the whole of society. In this case, MSOs can assume important roles in promoting social integration (in the sense of stabilizing group identities) and in ensuring system integration (in the sense of articulating collective interests in the society of arrival). Involvement of people with a migration background in their own group of origin (internal ethnic integration)—through MSOs, for example—can thus promote the integration of immigrants and their descendants into the wider society of the host country (Ibid.; Heckmann 1992).

The sociologist Hartmut Esser has drawn precisely the opposite conclusion, noting that successful internal ethnic

Table 1: Foreign associations in Germany in 2001 according to type of association

Type of association	Percentage of all associations
Cultural associations	22.3
Meeting centers	16.5
Social and humanitarian associations	14.9
Sports and leisure associations	14.8
Religious associations	11.6
Political associations	5.3
Family and parents’ associations	5.2
Economic associations	4.7
Associations for individual groups	4.6
No classification possible	0.1

Source: Hunger 2004: 12

integration increases the risk of separation from the society of arrival (Esser 1986). In the short run, getting involved in one's own ethnic group may seem promising and may help immigrants to cope in the country of arrival and to stabilize their own identity in the difficult situation of migration. However, Esser suspects that, in the long run, getting too deeply involved with one's own ethnic group of reference may prove to be a 'trap' which may prevent socioeconomic advancement because integration into the educational system and the labor market of the host country can only be successful if immigrants adapt to the demands of the host country.

Several migration researchers have also emphasized that little empirical research has been done on the specific impacts of internal ethnic integration and MSOs and that it is impossible to draw any useful conclusions, "particularly about their role as integration-promoting sluices or as segregation-promoting, mobility-preventing sociocultural traps" (Fijalkowski and Gillmeister 1997: 29, transl. by the author).

No consensus on the role and impact of MSOs

Although numerous individual empirical studies on MSOs have been conducted since the 1980s, no consensus has been reached on the predominant role and impact of MSOs. Indeed, "the integrative and disintegrative potential of self-organizations have received considerable attention from researchers and have become the subject of much controversy in the public and scholarly debates, with one side accusing [MSOs] of creating and consolidating a parallel society and the other emphasizing their mediating role and service functions" (Huth 2002: 4, transl. by the author; see also Fijalkowski and Gillmeister 1997; Güngör 1999; Jungk 2000; Thränhardt 2000).

It is true that the focus of some MSOs, such as the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), certainly is on representing the interests of the countries or cultures of origin of their members and that others, such as the Grey Wolves, an organization that has been under the surveillance of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, make deliberate efforts to prevent their members from integrating themselves into the country of arrival.⁶ However, if we take an expanded perspective which considers contexts of origin and contexts of arrival, it becomes clear that such MSOs still play a specific role in processes of integration. This role must be analyzed empirically.

Characteristics of MSOs

Two ideal types of migrant organizations can be distinguished: (1) *member associations*, which focus primarily on their own internal affairs (cultural migrant associations, mosque communities, and 'tea houses'), and (2) *lobbying associations*, which focus primarily on political or general social recognition and external impact (political, refugee, ethnic minority associations). If the main purpose of a migrant organization is to provide a place for 'fellow countrymen' to meet and for people with a migration background to find appreciation and to share a common language, a common culture and similar interests, then its *attachment or bonding character* is its predominant feature. If, however,

the main purpose of a migrant organization is to establish contact and communicate with other associations (soccer clubs, religious associations) or with government agencies (integration councils, government ministries) and to influence their environment in the country of arrival and, possibly, in the country of origin through collective mobilization, then its *uniting and bridging character* is its predominant feature.

Recent research perspectives

Research on MSOs in Germany and internationally has significantly increased since the late 1990s.⁷ Over the past few decades, researchers have realized that rather than asking whether MSOs tend to promote integration or segregation, they ought to ask what roles MSOs play and what effects they have on social groups and social spaces under certain conditions and how their potential can be utilized to promote participation in specific social settings. In this connection one can proceed on the basis of three assumptions: (1) MSOs are usually oriented toward more than a single goal and role; they almost always have multidimensional tasks and change over time; (2) there is interaction between MSOs and their environment, in that the behavior and impact of MSOs are strongly affected by the way they are perceived and treated by their social environment; (3) MSOs are very often rooted and active in migrants' transnational contexts of origin and arrival, so their influence must also be assessed based on plurilocal or plurinational aspects. These three assumptions are examined in the following section.

4.1 Multidimensionality and the Dynamic Character of Migrant Organizations

Multidimensionality

As indicated above, MSOs are almost never limited to one single responsibility, field of activity or social and societal role: "Migrant self-organizations are [...] rarely specialized. Rather, they usually take a holistic, multi-functional approach" (Gaitanides 2003: 26, transl. by the author), and they are involved in very different areas.⁸ They may, for example, help recent immigrants on their arrival in the host country by absorbing the culture shock and offering them a first point of contact to give them the opportunity to make contacts and build social networks in the country of arrival which extend beyond family relationships. As a result, the migrants gain access to resources which facilitate the integration process, such as information about the educational system and the labor market in the host country. In addition, MSOs contribute to the formation of a collective identity and "increasingly become agencies for interest representation and intercultural dialogue" (Ibid.: 27). They act as contacts for the municipal administration and politics, in that the opinion leaders within MSOs have privileged access to their community of origin. As discussed earlier, some MSOs not only have host-country-related functions but also influence developments in their members' coun-

try of origin, such as by using donations to support humanitarian projects. However, MSOs do not just serve as points of contact for immigrants and their descendants but may also be of interest to German citizens who do not have a migration background. For example, MSOs may provide professional development in the form of courses in the language of their members' country of origin.

Dynamics

The tasks, goals, and influences defined by the MSOs themselves or by their environment can change over time (see the articles in Pries and Sezgin 2010). They are thus by no means inflexible but rather they are dynamic.

Because migrants organize themselves into organizations, they are perceived as social actors (BMFSFJ 2011) who want to participate in such areas as social work, education, housing, health, and politics. MSOs can therefore be considered as forums for civil involvement and the creation of social capital through the social networks and the resources they provide.

This complexity of roles makes it difficult to identify any effects MSOs may have which are unambiguous and do not change over time (Müller-Hofstede 2007). The ways in which MSOs are perceived by the general public and the scholarly community also change. (Muslim) religious associations in particular have often been viewed with some skepticism since the attacks of September 11, 2001, but the political scientist Christoph Müller-Hofstede and many other experts who have done research on the issue have emphasized the considerable integration potential of MSOs and the opportunities these organizations give individuals through their services in the areas of active citizenship and integration policy, such as the provision of everyday knowledge, assistance (especially with school integration), and orientation during the immigration phase (see also Hunger 2004: 18ff.).

4.2 Interaction between Migrant Organizations and their Environments

In addition to the multidimensional and dynamic character of MSOs, one must also consider the interaction of MSOs with the opportunity structures and policies of their environment (Koopmans and Statham 2000; Pries 2010). These are influenced primarily by the predominant migration regime of the society of arrival and by the 'organizational field' in which migrant organizations operate (see the definition below).

Migration regime

A national migration regime, as understood here, is a country's system of values, laws, practical policies, and procedures relating to the control of migration (emigration and immigration regulations) and the treatment—that is, the inclusion or exclusion—of individuals with a migration background. This concept involves four key dimensions.

The first dimension is the historical context of a country, which may include its status as a country of emigration and/or immigration; its colonial history and the rules that have resulted from it; its explicit recruitment, immigration, and emigration policies; the historical/cultural national self-image, and the resulting concepts of citizenship and social participation.

The second dimension relates to the general sociopolitical system of institutions which is relevant to people with a migration background, such as the fundamental model which migrants and their associations can use to gain access to the political system (as a result of their own organization's struggle for public influence or the formation of groups within established parties and organizations), the various political parties' stance on migration (distribution or concentration of migration-related issues among the parties, migrants in leading positions in parties and parliaments, types of integration or assimilation orientation), and the public institutions which deal with migration and integration (in the case of Germany, for example, the role of associations such as AWO, Caritas, Diakonie, the German Red Cross, officially recognized religious institutions, and labor unions).

The third dimension of the migration regime involves the formal rights and actual opportunities for participation given to migrants. It relates primarily to the different status groups of people with a migration background (migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, ethnic emigrants, citizens of former colonies, etc.), their residence status, the typical procedures involved in the adjustment of migrant rights to full citizenship rights (e.g., passive and active right to vote), and the variety of opportunities for civil and political participation (right of association, integration commissions, opportunities for participation in local government, etc.).

The fourth dimension relates to the opportunities given to migrants to secure a livelihood and to find employment. Pertinent questions include: How much access do migrants have to the systems of social security and to the labor market? What policies and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, of discrimination or equal treatment do the government and the major collective and corporate groups of actors follow?

Organizational field

In addition to these four key dimensions of national migration regimes, studies of MSOs must also give attention to the particular specific organizational field in which they operate; that is, the entire set of organizations that are important to an MSO as units of reference and legitimizing agents of its collective activities (other MSOs, political parties, government agencies, foreigners' councils, federations of labor unions). Without considering the migration regime of the country under study (on the national level of the countries of origin and arrival and on the supranational level, such as the level of the EU) and the corresponding organizational fields, it is practically impossible to engage in a scientifically

based and empirically grounded discussion of the wide range of roles which MSOs can play, from serving as 'a bridge to integration' to acting as 'an integration trap'.⁹

4.3 MSOs between the Countries of Origin and Arrival

MSOs connect their members' societies of origin and societies of arrival. For example, for the members of an organization of Turkish-born parents, Turkey will continue to be the main point of reference to define common interests even if their organization provides additional German language courses for their own children because it is very strongly oriented toward the country of arrival and toward integration. The cross-border character and reference of MSOs are much more obvious, such as when the MSOs express their views on human rights in the countries of origin or when they organize relief efforts or money transfers to such countries. The cross-border character of MSOs has been confirmed by several studies. For example, in a study on the voluntary involvement of people of Turkish origin in Germany, 12 percent of those surveyed indicated that the work of their MSO was equally oriented toward Germany and Turkey (Halm and Sauer 2005), and a survey among MSOs in North Rhine-Westphalia which also focused on the cross-border activities of these organizations found that as many as 13 percent named providing humanitarian aid in the country of origin as their main area of activity (MASSKS-NRW 1999a; 1999b).

According to Thränhardt (2000), close relationships of migrants and their MSOs to the society of origin expand their social capital, and social networks in the country of origin and can promote successful integration into the country of arrival, such as by providing social and personal stability. Many MSOs in Germany are much more strongly oriented toward the country of origin of their members than MSOs in other countries:

"It should be noted that the strong orientation of migrant self-organizations toward the country of origin was also the result of the official doctrine held until the end of the millennium that Germany was not a country of immigration and of the many obstacles to naturalization. In the United Kingdom, most immigrants are naturalized on the basis of long-standing Commonwealth privileges. As a result, the self-organizations of these migrants are much more involved in the social integration and the political participation issues which affect ethnic immigrant minorities than German migrant self-organizations" (Gaitanides 2003: 27, transl. by the author).

In countries which explicitly define themselves as immigrant societies, the prospects of participation for migrants are in all probability more clearly oriented toward these very countries of immigration than in countries in which an immigration option is negated or handled very restrictively, in which latter case the life and participation strategies continue to be oriented toward the country of origin as well. A recent comparative study on MSOs in

Germany, the United Kingdom, Poland, and Spain (Pries and Sezgin 2012) has shown that these differences between the national migration regimes also play a role in determining whether MSOs orient themselves toward the country of arrival, the country of origin, or both.

Generally speaking, the research shows that the functions of MSOs which promote social participation are not determined by whether they orient themselves *either* toward the country of arrival *or* toward the country of origin. Rather, MSOs are able to implement a variety of activities *in both areas of reference* and can have participation-promoting effects on the societies involved as well as on their members.¹⁰

In recent years, the potential of MSOs to promote economic and social development in the country of origin and to facilitate integration into the country of arrival have been more widely discussed (see, e.g., Schimany and Schock 2010: 332ff.; BAMF 2012; BMZ 2012). While in other countries the discussion of this issue has been going on for some time (on the debate in the U.S., for example, see Portes et al. 2007; 2008), the problem in Germany is that now, after decades of disregard and suspicious surveillance, the importance of MSOs may be completely blown out of proportion and MSOs are regarded as the new 'silver bullet' for development and integration.

5. Conclusion

Migrant self-organizations can be analyzed from very different perspectives. They can be considered as interest groups, as means to promote the integration of immigrants into a society of arrival, as mechanisms of ethnic segregation, and as a forum for interest groups to participate in the political system of a country. The existing studies on MSOs in Germany recommend that any debate on principles which would oversimplify the role of MSOs as either 'bridges to integration' or 'integration traps' should be avoided and that MSOs should instead be considered as multidimensional and multi-functional organizations which change over time and which are usually rooted both in the country of origin and in the country of arrival in which they operate.

The exact nature of the various roles they play and the influence these roles may have not only depends on the organizations themselves, but also strongly depends on the social environment in which they act. Their internal structures, processes, and strategies can only be understood and explained by studying the migration regimes and organizational fields in their environment. Moreover, MSOs should always be examined from a systematic perspective which considers their relationships with other MSOs, the interplay between the country of origin and the country of arrival, and the migration regimes of and organizational fields in the country of origin. With the general societal relevance of MSOs having been more widely recognized for about a decade, researchers must now use appropriate resources and take a broader, more comprehensive perspective to extend the empirically based knowledge about these organizations.

Notes

¹ Individuals with a migration background are “all immigrants to the present territory of the Federal Republic of Germany after 1949, as well as all foreigners born in Germany and all individuals born as Germans in Germany with a least one immigrant parent or one parent born as a foreigner in Germany” (Statistisches Bundesamt 2012: 6, transl. by the author). As of 2011, there were 16 million individuals with a migration background living in Germany, representing 19.5 percent of the population (Ibid.: 7). Although the concept is not uncontroversial, it is used here for lack of a consensual alternative to apply to those people who as a result of their own or their parents’ migration experiences beyond nation-state borders are able, on the one hand, to mobilize particular abilities and competencies (for example multilingualism, knowledge of and understanding for different cultures) but on the other are also confronted with special challenges in making their claims to social participation heard.

² Migrant organizations, as understood in this article, are organizations of migrants; that is, individuals with a migration background. The definition given here — a large percentage of the members and leaders have a migration background — designates these organizations as self-organizations. This article therefore uses the terms ‘migrant organization’ and ‘migrant self-organization’ synonymously, indicated by the abbreviation ‘MSO’. The discussion provided in this chapter draws heavily on an international three-year research project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (cf. TRAMO 2010; Pries 2010; Pries and Sezgin 2010). I would like to thank Andrea Dasek for her helpful additional research.

³ The basis for these provisions is not the promotion of integration but rather “protective (security) measures.” See http://www.bva.bund.de/nn_2142812/DE/Aufgaben/Abt__III/OeffentlicheSicherheitAuslaender/Auslaendervereinsregister/avr-node.html?__nnn=true; on the legal foundations see <http://www.behoerdenwegweiser.bayern.de/dokumente/aufgabenbeschreibung/16220942276> (accessed 4-11-2013).

⁴ According to Halm and Sauer (2005), about one third of individuals of Turkish origin in Germany are organized in associations. However, this statistic should be viewed with caution because people of Muslim faith, for example, regard even a loose affiliation to mosque communities as membership in an MSO. On the problem of classification, see MASSKS-NRW (1999a); Waldrauch and Sohler (2004).

⁵ In a study on MSOs in Montreal, Raymond Breton has examined the role of MSOs in stabilizing ethnic communities and in promoting assimilation in the society of arrival, concluding that the degree of independence of the infrastructure of migrants’ own ethnic group was inversely proportional to the degree of interethnic relations (Breton 1964: 197; see also Elwert 1982).

⁶ The members of the youth wing of the Turkish Nationalist Movement Party—which also operates in Germany—refer to themselves as the ‘Grey Wolves’. Their aim is to unify and establish the supremacy of all Turkic peoples, from the Balkans to Central Asia, and to fight against other religious, ethnic, and national groups. DITIB is a foreign association with charity status which is registered in Cologne. The organization and its staff are actually managed by the Presidency for Religious Affairs (Diyanet), the highest Islamic authority in Turkey.

⁷ “Our comparative perspective shows that until 1998 [MSOs] only played a marginal role in the German-speaking countries and internationally and that they received considerable interest between 1999 and 2007” (Schimany and Schock 2010: 356, transl. by the author).

⁸ The discussion of the roles of MSOs provided here is based on observations by Gaitanides (2003).

⁹ For an example of an international comparative study on active cross-border MSOs, see Pries and Sezgin (2012) and the international literature cited therein; on MSOs in Germany, see also Hunger and Candan (2009); MASSKS-NRW (1999a); Müller-Hofstede (2007).

¹⁰ In his PhD dissertation on Turkish MSOs in Denmark, Sweden, and Germany, Martin Bak Jørgensen concludes that “particular groups appear to be integrated (or assimilated) in majority society while they at the same time display sustained transnational ties and in general articulate transnational identifications” (Jørgensen 2008: 350, see also p. 365).

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