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**MIGRANT ORGANIZATIONS: ACTORS OF INCORPORATION,  
TRANSNATIONALIZATION OR BOTH?**

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**SEKTION MIGRATION UND ETHNISCHE MINDERHEITEN:  
(GRENZÜBERSCHREITENDE) MIGRANTENORGANISATIONEN – NEUE AKTEURE DES  
SOZIALEN WANDELS?**

In the study of migration and migrant settlement the incorporation of migrants in the receiving society was at the centre of academic interest through out most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Just as the physical movement from one place within one country towards another place in another country, social and cultural incorporation was taken to follow the same direction. By the same token, ethnic associations have either been objected as a symbol of integration failure or are acknowledged as means and mediators in the process of incorporation. Seldom are they seen (or welcomed) as permanent features of pluralized societies. One main question in the research on migrant organizations has therefore always been whether these are oriented towards their origin countries or whether they actively promote migrants' incorporation into the host society.

Transnational approaches in migration research have put emphasis on the transnational practices and ties of migrants connecting places of origin and settlement which they found to continuously exist, to get reinforced or emerge in the very context of migration and settlement. Increasingly, today, scholars observe migrant organizations' engagement in community development in their origin countries. Accordingly, questions emerge anew as to the time horizon of these collective actors as well as to its meaning in relation to migrant incorporation.

This contribution intends to address these questions by discussing current transnational dynamics. First, we ask whether migrant collective actors are likely to become permanent actors in this context, and second, how this does or does not relate to migrants' incorporation into the host society. It is based on field research in Southern Europe, where migrant collective formation is relatively new given that international migration itself is rather recent; moreover the situation is characterized by strong dynamics issuing collective actors engaged in migrant incorporation as well as transnationalization.