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MOBILIZATION OF TURKISH MIGRANTS AND THE DISCOURSE ON HOMELAND ORIENTATED MIGRANT ORGANIZATIONS

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

Since the beginning of their migration to Germany, Turkish migrants (TMs) have formed a large number of civic organizations. A burgeoning number of Turkish migrants' organizations (TMOs) are involved in activities to support TMs integration into the German society. These organizations also aim to generate public awareness of the problems facing migrants while also making claims to the German decision-makers to improve the social, civil, economic and political rights of TMs in Germany. In many cases, however, efforts of the TMOs are simply ignored as German decision-makers have not yet valued and/or accepted these organizations as legitimate representatives of the Turkish community¹. Most frequently, TMOs have been criticized because of their ties to Turkish political parties and their interest in homeland politics has generally been evaluated as a hindrance to the integration process.

Combining approaches from organizational sociology and migration research, this article aims at generating an empirically founded knowledge about TMOs and discusses why a strict demarcation can not be made between the organizations interested in promoting the integration of TMs into the German society and those who are homeland-oriented. It specifically concerns itself with: (1) the aims and activities of TMOs; (2) the role and function of these organizations as representatives of TMs; (3) transnational ties of TMOs; and (4) homeland oriented claims-making. The main argument in this article is that homeland political orientations are often highly intertwined with host land politics and in many cases TMOs are able to effectively coordinate these seemingly separate policy areas.

¹ Sezgin, Zeynep (2007): A Comparative Analysis of Migrants' Claims-Making: Turkish Umbrella Organizations in Austria and Germany. Doctoral Thesis. University of Leipzig.