

Hometown Associations as Transnational Bridges: A Case Analysis of a Turkish Cultural Association in Austria

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Abstract

In this research article, I aim to consolidate our knowledge in the developmental processes and the transnational implications of migration formations in Europe by referring to the case Turkish hometown association both in Vienna and other locations. Within the understanding of neoliberal agendas and the globalizing forms of migration, the case analysis suggests some important results as to why and how certain migration formations emerge at particular times despite the migrants' long history in the country of settlement. Besides, I point out to the association's strategies and events that contribute to both the construction and sustenance of the transnational bridges across countries beyond the singular localities of migrants. The research utilizes narrative interviewing conducted with the association's president, and applies content analysis based on the association's online presence.

Keywords: Migration Studies, Transnational Migration, Hometown Associations

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Uluslararası Köprüler Olarak Memleket Dernekleri: Avusturyadaki Türk Kültürel Birliđinin Vaka Analizi

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Özet

Bu araştırma makalesi, hem Viyana'daki hem de diğer yerlerdeki Türk memleket dernekleri örneđine bakarak Avrupa'daki göç oluşumlarının geçiş süreçleri ve gelişim süreçleri konusundaki bilgilerimizi pekiştirmeyi hedefler. Neoliberal süreçlerin ve küreselleşen göçmenliđin ışığında, vaka analizi, göçmenlerin yerleşim ülkesindeki uzun geçmişine rağmen, belirli göçmen oluşumlarının neden ve nasıl belirli zaman dilimlerinde ortaya çıktığı konusunda bazı önemli sonuçlar ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırma kapsamında, derneğin göçmenlerin kendi bölgelerinin ötesindeki ülkelerdeki ulusötesi köprülerin hem inşasına hem de sürekliliđine katkıda bulunan stratejilerine ve etkinliklerine yer verilmiştir. Araştırma, dernek başkanıyla yapılan görüşmelerini kullanır ve niçerik analizi uygular.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç Çalışmaları, Ulusötesi Göç, Memleket Dernekleri

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INTRODUCTION

Hometown associations (HTAs) have multiple functions varying from “social exchange and political influence to the pursuit of small-scale development goals” (Orozco, 2005). HTAs stand out to be a source for social capital and a platform where transnational relations are formed. As a transnational feature of HTAs, social networks and relationships, cultural practices and political participation are all fostered and built by HTAs. On the other hand, HTAs are remarkably important for the migration and development nexus. As a part of the developmental agenda in the communities of origin, HTAs foster a social exchange of resources for the vulnerable ones and support crucial areas of development such as education. These developmental activities become translocally situated while arising from the localities of the migrants extending beyond the nation-state boundaries. For this reason, I aim to analyze the selected HTA on the basis of its essential role in transnational development. Moreover, It’s important to note that these developmental translocal ties are not necessarily formed on a national level but also on a city level where the migrant incorporation suggests particular ‘dynamics and agencies’ in a city context. The migrant incorporation and the formation of transnational relations within the confines of the city are significantly connected to the local opportunities and the processes of migrant settlement. (Çağlar, 2013: 34.) Having the goal to refer to those opportunities, settlements, and translocalities, the objectives of this article are to explore the dynamics of migrant incorporations, the formation of translocal connections, and the migrants in their agency to shape and actively participate in translocal activities reaching beyond the confines of nation-states. I analyze all these aspects in the context of a particular hometown association of migrants from Sivas, Turkey. In addition, I aim to connect such analyses on the translocal ties established by HTAs to the concepts of physical and social space / the social and the spatial as articulated by Ludger Pries. In this regard, the research formulates two main research questions; a) *Why do migrant formations emerge at particular times despite the migrants’ long history in the country of settlement?* b) *How do the hometown associations form strategies and events that contribute to both the construction and*

sustenance of the transnational bridges across countries beyond the singular localities of migrants?

Research Methods

All the analyses and discussions this article makes are based on the content analysis through ASBİR's official webpage, news published in several online newspapers and visual contents as disseminated by ASBİR. These online contents were gathered by referring to the online platforms such as social media accounts and the association's official website in which the subject migrant association shared both textual and visual materials. The content analysis of all the collected online data was primarily focused on three main objectives; the association's emphasis on its founding purposes, its activities toward the member migrants, and its events that have transnational functions. The news coverage of the events held by the association was analyzed based on how the association is considered to have contributed to the lives of the migrants and how translocal ties were developed. Also, the visual content through even posters was analyzed to see which certain information about the events was written on these visual materials. The discourse analysis is grounded in two major facets, one of which is the organizational discourse analysis in which members create a coherent social reality within their organizations, which forms their conception of who they are. The second is the correlation between language and ideology in which language through disseminated content function to consolidate the association's ideology and the objectives. Besides the content analyses, I had the opportunity to get in contact with the president of ASBİR Vienna, whose name is kept anonymous upon her request, and to have access to her social media page where she actively posts content concerning ASBİR. During my two-hour meeting with her, I used narrative interviewing and note-taking as my method. Among the questions raised during the interview were the events and activities she organized and took part in, the developmental history of the association, why she thinks the association was formed at a particular time, and how she thinks the association forms transnational ties between various spaces. The answers the president provided were analyzed in relation to the research

questions highlighting key points, identifying recurring themes and coding through labeling relevant and similar phrases and sentences.

Defining the Unit of Analysis

ASBİR (Föderation der Sivasstämmigen in Europa e.V.) is a hometown association with its headquarter in Hamburg, and it is officially registered and affirmed under the association's chamber of Germany. After several cities including Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Mannheim, Köln, Hannover, and Stuttgart, ASBİR established another branch in Vienna in 2011, where nearly six-thousand migrants from Sivas lives and twenty-thousand in Austria. As the president herself described the group of people the HTA targets, ASBİR Vienna does not look at the member's religious or ethnic affiliations as 'atheists and even gays could join' as stated in her own words. The opening speech given by the president of the association was crucial for us to see the founding purposes; to provide humanitarian aid and education, to sustain the culture and traditions. The general president from Germany stated that they have had the goal to unite all migrant HTAs of Sivas under one umbrella since 2012.¹ Moreover, providing the women with handicrafts, the youth with education, and transmitting the local customs and traditions to the younger generation were said to be among the objectives of the association. In the following sections, I aim to discuss the social, cultural and economic activities of ASBİR, to explore the reasons behind the need to establish another branch in Vienna, especially after a long history of the migrants' presence from Sivas in Vienna. Moreover, I seek to explore how the translocality of the selected HTA is produced through transnational ties and analyze the extent to which both the HTA in Sivas and Vienna are tied to one another through developmental activities. In addition, I intend to discuss whether or not the cultural and economic activities of ASBİR create certain distinctions between the social and the spatial, disconnecting these two social spaces; the country of settlement as a physical space and the community of origin together with multiple social localities in Europe.

¹ <http://www.mootol.com/Haber717/turkiyede-bir-ilki-gerceklestirecek>

Restructuring Through Globalization

Under the influence of a global perspective approach, it could be argued that transnational formations require certain re-arrangements in social relations, and the migrants can now be seen as social actors tied to certain fields of power. It is to say that the local politics are very much linked with the newer spatial configurations of globalization. Hence, a restructuring process that takes place in a given area of settlement highly impacts on the ties of translocal incorporations with other localities. Therefore, the existing conditions at the localities of migrants cannot be separated from the 'global forces of capital restructuring'. It is for this reason that ASBİR functions beyond the limitations of solely being considered as an ethnic or religious group but extends toward the dynamics of different localities as transnationally connected to one another. Such a non-traditional approach helps us to see the 'new opportunities that inserted the emigrants as the agents reshaping these particular localities' (Çağlar, 2013: 39). Thus, the city of Sivas in its efforts to modify the dynamics of its global connectedness is crucial for us to see the transnational ties and the social space ASBİR seeks to create. As the examples in the further sections demonstrate, migrants from Sivas in Vienna had the need to build an HTA in order to develop hometown connections based on the emerging and increasing opportunities for further developing the urban and cultural structures of Sivas. In such an attempt, transnational ties are brought together through the involvement of political and economic actors such as the mayor of Sivas and district presidents, the consul general of the Turkish embassy in Vienna, the Sivas city council, the general president of the headquarter in Hamburg, and many business partners from Europe. In this sense, the activities of ASBİR is not merely on the basis of connecting the member migrants to their hometown but also aims to support the business partners in Europe for their incorporation with Sivas, which altogether serve the development of Sivas and creation of transnational business incorporations between the country of origin and settlement.

Before elaborating on the manifold cultural, educational and economic activities of ASBİR, I would like to discuss one very important question which was raised by Çağlar in her *Locating Migrant Hometown*

Ties in Time and Space article (Çağlar, 2013: 31): “Why are HTAs being formed at particular times and only in particular places despite a long story of migration to that place?” As explained in the introductory booklet of ASBİR², the association was established in 2003 in Hamburg, Germany. One of the founding purposes is stated to reunite those approximately five hundred thousand migrants from Sivas who migrated to unknown countries nearly fifty years ago. One, then, ponders on why it has taken so many years to establish the HTA only in 2003 -and 2011 in Vienna- considering nearly fifty years of presence of the people of Sivas in Europe. To answer such a question, I would firstly like to touch upon several activities and objectives ASBİR aims to work toward based on the charter available on their official webpage. One important aspect of the association is to unite people of Sivas both in Turkey and in the World, to assemble the businessmen and entrepreneurs under one umbrella, and to provide a sense of unity and solidarity around social and cultural activities. They also have the goal to preserve the collective identity and memory of their hometown against the dominant western societies and cultures they settled. ASBİR, on the other hand, feels responsible for those who are in financial need as well as assisting them for their integration process in the new country of settlement. The association provides counseling assistance on social affairs, strives to protect women’s rights by forming women’s units, and contributes to the educational flow of the young or children migrants from Sivas by providing seminars, conferences, exhibitions and sports events.³ In light of all these founding purposes and the kind of activities ASBİR engages in, I would like to argue for the idea that the emergence and development of such an HTA is very much connected to the neoliberal context, as also argued by Çağlar. As I was exploring the news published about ASBİR’s both social and economic initiatives, it stood out to me that there has been a restructuring process of both the social and economic capitals, which ultimately affect the nature of the social ties, institutional connectedness between the state representatives in Sivas and those in Vienna. The restructuring of relations between two localities, Sivas and ASBİR in Vienna, took place in several forms, one of which is through

² <http://www.mootol.com/Haber717/turkiyede-bir-ilki-gerceklestirecek>

³ <https://asbir.weebly.com/>

the developing ties between the ASBİR branch in Sivas, managed by a local president, and the association in Vienna. Certain attempts have been made to engage the state officials and the city hall in the association's activities in order to expand the area of influence. For instance, on the twenty-seventh of April 2018, ASBİR held an event called '*Sivaslılar Birlik Beraberlik Gecesi*' that can be translated as the unity and solidarity night for the people of Sivas. Among the guests were the consul general, Sivas city mayor, and some other district presidents. Moreover, the Turkish armed forces '*Mehmetcik Vakfı*' was among the many sponsors for the event. Being one of the few woman presidents among the Turkish HTAs in Vienna, she explained the improbability to unite the people of Sivas in solidarity. She laughingly gave the example of two villages of Sivas: Sızırılılar & Eşşekliler. Two villages located in one district of Sivas formed their small communities in Vienna but they refuse to come together being almost hostile to one another.

ASBİR has donated nearly seven-hundred fifty to eight-hundred battery-operated cars for disabled people in Sivas, which were purchased from the Netherlands through the ASBİR president in the Netherlands. This particular initiative is significantly important in connecting not only Sivas and Vienna but also another European city and HTA. In this sense, we could say that such investment to Sivas has multiple trajectories varying from the Netherlands, Austria, and Turkey with an attempt to form a translocal tie for the benefit of their community of origin. Moreover, ASBİR Vienna planted one hundred thousand trees at a location allocated by the Sivas governorate, carried out a campaign to donate an ambulance helicopter to Sivas. All these developmental contributions and social and economic ties lead us to consider the role of neoliberal globalization and its impact on restructuring social relations among different actors and localities. More interestingly, the need to socially and economically unite these groups of migrants from Sivas has always been there from the very beginning of their settlement. The need for education, assistance for integration, and financial aid were perhaps even stronger before the establishment of ASBİR as an official association. However, 'the processes of uneven neoliberal globalization that altered the parameters of regional, national, and global connectedness

of cities' (Caglar, 2013: 35) is the key argument to understand why ASBİR was established at a particular time and space. The emerging distinction between the social and geographical is also essential to our understanding of how different social localities are formed in Vienna that affects the physical and geographical locality of Sivas. In this sense, proximities between the social and spatial are not straightforwardly produced but rather global forces and relations contribute to translocal ties of multiple social spaces outside the geographical confines. Sivas, in relation to other cities of Turkey, suggests a form of contestation by striving to expand its regional and global network, and the newer urban restructuring and politics contribute to such a vision of expansion. Another worth mentioning aspect of globalization is the opportunities provided to both the urban dwellers and migrants from Sivas. For instance, the project called "*Nakışlı Eller Projesi*" organized by ASBİR provided training sessions for women to weave carpets to be later sold throughout Europe. ASBİR Sivas agreed to send fifteen carpet weaving looms to Vienna, and thirty trainees were selected to weave Sivas carpet in Vienna. This project aimed to employ so many women who were stuck in the state parks of Vienna or in their houses. The president of the association in Sivas stated that the carpets from Sivas would soon be all over Europe and European homes.⁴ Considering such a project where two remote localities were tied to one another on a project that has both social and economic benefits is crucial to see, whether marginalized or not, all cities are influenced by global processes. Urban resources, carpets, and weaving looms in this case, were given a newer and much more global value to be situated in the global competition of reshaping of cities. However, the project faced some important obstacles due to financial inabilities. Besides, I would like to mention a project she had involved in ASBİR. Using the rural areas improvement funding that spared one million euros for a developmental project for Sivas, she met so many federations and associations in Vienna to promote the project and ask for their involvement. Unlike other projects where she failed to draw necessary attention, this particular project was taken seriously with the involvement of a special team from the ministry of agriculture. This case stands out to show us how certain political involvement can trigger positive

4 <https://www.yenisafak.com/kultur-sanat/sivas-halisi-avrupaya-aciliyor-560808>

business partnerships and economic ventures. As the president explained during my interview with her, the presidents of the associations are all in certain industries and business partnerships such as construction and food. As part of their interests, these presidents took so many business partners to Sivas in order to convince them about the possibility to establish one branch of their companies in Sivas. For instance, the owners of the manufacturing companies in Europe run by businessmen from Sivas were encouraged to extend their businesses toward Sivas. Considering all the eleven ASBİR HTAs across Europe, the amount of intended translocal business ties are enormous. What is more interesting in all these multi-directional activities is that the state actors are involved to a certain extent but they go beyond the restrictions and regulations of a singular nation-state, forming a sense of disruption for the state control. Such activities are pure cases for the formation of transnational migrant operations on the basis of economic and social projects.

Multi-Localities & Integration

In this section, I would like to analyze whether or not the social, cultural and economic activities of ASBİR affect the relationship between the physical and social spaces of the Turkish migrants from Sivas. I would also like to discuss the active role of ASBİR, and therefore HTAs, in contributing or hindering the process of integration. Transnationalism refers to ‘the process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders’ (Basch, Schiller and Blanc, 1994: 6). It is important to note that through the social capital and network, grassroots construct a certain sense of transnationalism. States could become a part of transnational processes but they are not the initiators. Therefore, there is a distinction between transnationalism from above vs. below as the terms coined by Guarnizo and Smith (1998), which respectively point to the cross-border initiatives of governments and corporations, and those of immigrants and grassroots entrepreneurs. Being more interested in the initiatives by immigrants and grassroots entrepreneurs, I would like to underline the nature of the immigrant activities, which are

informal and outside the state regulation. Therefore, the key function of transnational activities is to be goal-oriented that needs corporation across national borders by members of the community (Portes, 2001: 181-194). Thus, I analyze the goal-oriented initiatives and activities that fall under the transnational from below category. When analyzing such initiatives and activities, it is notably important to mention that connection with the country of origin isn't necessarily because of a failure in the settlement in the host country but, on the contrary, the more secured and established the migrants are, the stronger the connection with the origin country could become. These connections, namely transnational ties, can also be seen as transnational social spaces, which suggest multi-local geographic links. The most common being the state, geographical spaces can overlap the social space, and these two spaces could also come in clash instead of smoothly overlapping. It is also the case that within a particular geographical space, it is possible to have various social spaces. What happens with the globalization process is that one's social space can cover different parts of geographical spaces. This is the exact case with the migrants represented by ASBİR as it goes through several borders. Thus, it appears that the emerging disruption between social space and geographical space is not solely about proximities, meaning that one can have a different sense of social closeness to a particular geographical space than the geographical space the person is located in. Social space can connect different geographical spaces or within a particular geographical space can occur in different social spaces. Moreover, as Pries uses the term multi-plural localities, geographical spaces are not necessarily bipolar as sending and receiving. In this regard, transnational migration can express itself in various geographical spaces, and it is not obliged to be between a sending and receiving country. Thus, it is important to refer to the process as the multi-directionality in transnational migration (Pries, 2001: 55-74). One example of the formation of multi-directional connectedness can be given from the aforementioned handicraft initiative through weaving Sivas carpets. The president of ASBİR in Sivas stated that they intend to expand toward the other countries of Europe by opening similar courses in countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and France. The multi-directional goal-orientedness in this particular initiative demonstrates how

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the translocal activities of an HTA can be considered on the basis of global influences re-shaping the relation between physical and social space. Through such a project where both the country of origin and the country of settlement aim to reach toward other countries in Europe, manifold social spaces are formed, and it even challenges the conception of a bipolar geographical space. I would also like to draw attention to a special TV program titled “*Sivas Elleri*”, which is being broadcasted at Kanal Avrupa (Channel Europe)⁵. I argue that ASBİR, by utilizing the media, attempts to connect migrants from Sivas who live in different European countries under one collective umbrella. Being beyond the confines of a singular geographical space, this TV program attempts to encourage a sense of belonging to various social spaces beside the city of origin, Sivas. By the TV appearance of different migrants groups whose origins are from Sivas, a sense of global connectedness is fostered and such connectedness is not necessarily bound to one particular physical and social space. Moreover, “*Sivas Elleri*” allows students, artists, and businessmen to find their voice, and reach hundreds of other migrants in order to expand their area of influence. Thus, it can be concluded that such disruption between the social and the spatial as fostered by the HTAs initiatives and activities work for the benefit of the migrants, as it allows the represented migrants to better integrate into their country of settlement. However, one question remains inevitable to ask: While the migrants feel more comfortable and accepted through the activities of their HTAs, is it really valid to call it integration when it is not necessarily the host society that is being integrated into? Hence, the process remains rather conflicting between the function of an HTA as a body to aid and assist the migrant and the different cultural and social scene the host society offers. In this regard, I would like to bring in some more activities that ASBİR organizes. The HTA regularly celebrates both the national and religious holidays, and works to establish the ‘*European Sivas Sports Club*’. Moreover, Besides organizing German and Turkish language courses, ASBİR publishes certain pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers to disseminate news regarding their community, and offers a library facility to the members. In all these cultural activities, ASBİR clearly shows its openness to partake in certain projects and receive funding

5 <http://www.mootol.com/Haber717/turkiyede-bir-ilki-gerceklestirecek>

from similar associations, from the EU, and business corporations. In light of all these activities ASBİR offers, I would like to connect them to the idea that such initiatives can function as an agency that can be seen as a social and economic tool for the integration processes of migrants. It was suggested that “HTAs were first ignored, then seen as hindrances to assimilation in the host country, and most recently embraced as a potential policy tool in promoting economic development. HTAs have strong and underdeveloped integration functions. They can be helpful as institutions of immigrant socialization in the host country and they act as organized points of contact and coordination between immigrants, the host government, and other institutions” (Somerville, Durana, Terrazas, 2008: 2). HTAs can be seen as informal and volunteer-driven formations but such informal formations turn into a platform for ‘maintaining ties with the home community, establishing a social support network in the country of destination, and sharing experiences’ (5). As the aforementioned examples of ASBİR’s activities show, HTAs can assist new migrants in the first stages of their settlement, and HTA membership can be seen as ‘the first step toward active citizenship in the destination country’ (14), especially when migrants lack proficiency in the language of the country of settlement. Well-established and defined HTAs focus on the development and integration objectives by providing legal and welfare services, educational opportunities through language courses and scholarships. As all these functions of an HTA is seen in the operational objectives of ASBİR and the case activities from ASBİR Vienna demonstrate, such translocal ties influenced by global forces resulting in multi-directional connectedness and various social spaces might not necessarily hinder the integration process, by ripping them out of the realities of their geographical space and merely keep them in remote social spaces. Thus, the question I previously raised cannot be straightforwardly answered but rather the process of integration can be seen as a continuum in which different actors, including local and global forces, exist to provide the migrant with necessary conditions for settlement. Thus, the translocal ties fostered by ASBİR can be well seen as social and economic tools utilized in the integration process, and the successful developmental ties to Sivas suggest well-groundedness in the country of settlement. In this sense, I would like to discuss another

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cultural event held by ASBİR in 2013. Some craftsmen from Sivas were invited to Vienna to introduce handicraft products unique to Sivas. One of the renowned figures of Sivas, nicknamed as ‘Şirin Baba’ who is a master of the knife, took place in this cultural event to familiarize people with the Sivas knife⁶. As stated in his own words, Şirin Baba saw it necessary to introduce his handicrafts in order to sustain the knife and keep his craftsmanship alive, which he sadly sees it as being forgotten. What makes this particular event especially important, from my standpoint, is that it does not only create a translocal cultural activity but also the translocality of the event contributes to the sustenance of the tradition, and therefore the collective identity. As items and tools can be seen as the symbols and material representations of a given culture or collective identity, the translocality and multi-connectedness ASBİR formed, in this case, have been the key elements for the immigrants’ ties to their homeland. Also, ASBİR sponsored the seminar on ‘*Psychische Probleme bei Jugendlichen während der Pubertät*’ (puberty and mental breakdown among young people) as a way to support the younger community members and create awareness among the parents. ASBİR’s involvement, in this case, is not only directed toward Sivas but rather appears to be an overarching involvement that goes beyond the homeland ties, though promoting the HTAs presence. Finally, I would like to mention the president’s goals for the future and what future projects ASBİR Kultur Verein in Österreich aims to carry out. One of her outstanding projects is that she would like to create a public bank account for the people of Sivas all around the world, which is estimated to be around 7.5 million. Leaving aside my concerns over the feasibility of such a project, her vision for the future can suggest some reflections for the prospective conditions of transnational migration activities. She would also like to focus more on connecting the people of Sivas more regularly via social media. In one case, through a Facebook page called ‘*Mavi Düşler*’, one woman from Sivas who lives in France was suggested to contact the president of the ASBİR Vienna. She needed some assistance for her retirement process. Such translocal connections can

6 <http://www.sivasirade.com/haber/-749.html>

7 <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1642438625801007&set=a.331473263564223&-type=3&theater>

easily be made via social media in the network age that we are in, and these multi-faceted networks show us the broader impact of globalization on the operational structures of HTAs.

Concluding Remarks

Hometown associations function as “organizations that allow immigrants from the same city or region to maintain ties with and materially support their places of origin” (Orozco, 2005: 1). It has also been argued that HTAs, as small grassroots organizations, constitute joint forces to support practical social projects addressing the country of origin (79). Similarly, the hometown association analyzed in this research is driven by a “practical desire to improve economic and social conditions of their hometowns” (80). Findings from both the content analysis and the interview show that ASBİR attempts to bring co-nationals under one big overarching umbrella reaching toward multiple localities in Europe, which eventually brings about the formation of various social spaces often transcending the physical localities of the immigrants. Such an attempt is actualized through “the penetration of national cultures and political systems by global and local driving forces” (Smith, Guarnizo, 1998: 3).

One finding on ASBİR shows that it plays the role of an agent for the development, meaning that HTAs can connect migrants with developmental activities in their hometowns and contribute to their integration in their new countries of settlement. These developmental processes are to “generate conditions conducive to the creation of new liberatory practices and spaces ‘from below’ like transnational migration” (Smith, Guarnizo, 1998: 3). The developmental strategies used by ASBİR did and continue to involve governmental involvement and initiatives. As the examples shown, ASBİR works closely with certain state officials from the communities of origin, and the Sivas branch of ASBİR functions as a unifying agent connecting remote proximities and source of authorities that are both in Vienna and Sivas (e.g. Turkish general consul and the mayor of Sivas). It has been argued that HTAs support immigrant integration by helping them to cope with the initial stage of settlement and providing services on legal and educational matters (Somerville, Durana, Terrazas, 2008: 10). Within

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the safe and familiar environments HTAs attempt to create for migrants, the process of adjustment to the new communities is argued to be easier (10). Thus, the question on whether or not the contribution of ASBİR in forming multiple social spaces, other than the social space of the host society, for the people of Sivas actually might hinder the familiarization process with the host culture and society cannot be so simplistically answered (Pries, 2001). I would contend that the activities that seem to be promoting different social spaces can contribute to a smoother integration process, which would perhaps be not so easy without the contributing role of the subject HTA. Services that cater to local language acquisition or knowledge sharing from more experienced migrants toward newcomers can be considered as one of the many ways the analyzed HTA plays an important role in settlement processes. For instance, the activities of ASBİR that connect different European localities through TV broadcasting or broader cultural events such as the solidarity night can be considered as both a challenge to the adaptation to the social space the host society has and an advantage that helps the migrants be much more rooted in their countries of destination. Caglar (2006) mentions the emergence of a shift from ‘charitable activities to infrastructural developments’, which manifests itself through partnerships with local governments and business partners in the case of ASBİR. Varying from arranging fundings for certain projects to generating investment initiatives, Caglar argues, HTAs are impacted by the rescaling process in relation to neo-liberalism (16). Similarly, ASBİR, together with its investment ventures with both foreign and local business partners and developmental contributions toward Sivas, stands out as a valid case for how re-scaling of the relationship between the social, the spatial and different localities takes place. It can then be concluded that the association’s emphasis on certain initiatives with particular bureaucratic authorities as well as the incentive actions toward private traders are examples of how local becomes globally governed, and how migrant formations are developed with the involvement of economic initiatives. Ultimately, the investigated migrant association can be seen as an “expansion of social networks that facilitate the reproduction of transnational migration, economic organization, and politics” (Smith, Guarnizo, 1998: 4).

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