

From Object to Actor? Building Partnerships with Migrant Organisations: The Case of Germany

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Abstract. The existing problem of integration of migrants coming to Germany is far from being resolved due to a long-lasting lack of a specific integration policy. However, at present, a growing number of German political institutions encourage cooperation with migrant self-organizations (MSOs) believing that this is a successful policy tool to involve migrants to the integration process in Germany. The paper scrutinizes the interaction between political bodies and MSOs at a conceptual and an operative level. It will highlight to what extent MSOs have been consulted and included on matters of policy formulation. Furthermore, their role as project executing organization will be addressed. It will demonstrate the importance assigned to them and what achievements were made to include representatives of migrants into the integration process. In an attempt to tackle problems of cooperation between organization and the state, policy recommendations will be provided.

Keywords: *Migrant-Self Organizations, Germany, Migrants, Cooperation*

In September 2009, Kenan Kolat, chairman of the Turkish community in Germany (*Türkische Gemeinde Deutschland*), called for the establishment of a new ministry, the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge¹ (BAMF) in Germany.² This call underlines what has been self-evident for a long time: integration of migrants is far from being a closed matter in Germany. High unemployment rates among migrants,³ as well as poor access to housing and many other indicators reveal that former policies have not yielded the desired effect. Besides the poor levels attained within these integration parameters, it remains an enduring problem that migrants have no or insufficient means to bring attention to their concerns. This is

¹ Ministry for migration and refugees

² Umbrella organisation of Turkish migrant self-organisations founded in 1995.

Turkish German Community. *Erklärung zum nationalen Integrationsplan – Zwischenbilanz*, 2008.

³ In 2007, the risk of the foreign born being unemployed was twice as high as that of people born in Germany. OECD, *OECD warnt Mitgliedsländer vor Abschottung gegen Migration*, 30. June 2009.

particularly disquieting as it also violates principle six of the European Union's (EU) Common Basic Principles (CBP) on integration, which states that "access for immigrants to institutions, (...) on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration".⁴

Furthermore, the lack of participation is not only a question of migrants' rights. Instead, it might provide the explanation for ineffective integration policies, since non-involvement means that regular input and feedback loops do not flow. To address this problem, an increasing number of political institutions in Germany, for example, ministerial offices, express their willingness to cooperate with migrant self-organizations (MSOs). Hence, this paper discusses whether the cooperation with MSOs might be an effective means to solve the problem. Data will be drawn from existing literature as well as own surveys. Germany is the selected case study for two reasons: first, because it is one of the major, if not the largest, European migration countries, and second due to the recent paradigm shift towards perceiving itself as a migration country.

In order to tackle the question of whether cooperation with MSOs is a good policy tool, it is essential to analyze the landscape of MSOs, as well as the actual interaction between them and the relevant political bodies. Within the analysis, particular focus will be on the position of third country nationals' (TCN) organizations. In the last part, insights attained throughout this paper will be used for the formulation of policy recommendations, as well as a foundation for examining the implications of state-MSO cooperation for good practice within the EU.

Policy-making not only relates to the situation it intends to address, but also to the existing policies. Thus, it is necessary to look at the migrant population in Germany, its outlook as well as the current integration framework. In 2007, Germany had about 15.4 million inhabitants with a migration background.⁵ Despite this high number, migration has been comparatively low in recent years. The majority of migrants have been guest workers who came to Germany after the Second World War. Migration to Germany was an unconstrained issue until the oil crisis in 1973. Since then, however, Germany issued a recruitment ban (*Anwerbestopp*), which is still valid today. The current flow of migrants is mainly

⁴ European Commission, *A Common Agenda for Integration Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union*, 2005, COM (2205) 389 final.

⁵ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, *Working paper 27 – Grunddaten der Zuwandererbevolkerung in Deutschland*, 2009.

composed of asylum seekers, family members and economic migrants. Yet, the latter group is subject to certain conditions such as a minimum income. Special agreements exist for students and seasonal workers whilst resettlers also have a special status.⁶

It is remarkable that 8.3 million of Germany's population with a migration background is foreigners, that is, people without a German passport. Such a high number is due – among others - to low naturalization rates, which arguably result from the country's quite strict citizenship requirements. However, about 3.7 million are EU-27 inhabitants who, due to their reasonably privileged status, might be less interested and dependent on acquiring German citizenship.⁷

Traditionally, German citizenship has been more dependent on a person's descent (*ius sanguinis*) rather than someone's place of birth (*ius soli*). Nevertheless, the new migration law⁸, which entered into force in January 2005, tried to make a step in adopting aspects of the *ius soli* model for migrants of the second or third generations. In most cases, obtaining German citizenship requires giving up possibly existing second citizenship and the same applies for first generation migrants. Mostly, first generation migrants can obtain citizenship after having lived in Germany for at least eight years, subject to the following conditions⁹:

- Sufficient knowledge of the German language,
- Possession of residence permit or warrant/entitlement,
- Giving up of other citizenships,
- Declaration of loyalty stating both the absence and non intention of violating the Constitution,
- Commitment to free, democratic based order,
- Sufficient resources to secure living,
- No criminal record,
- Test (courses for preparation are offered)

This exemplifies that access to citizenship is low, thus, integration policies

⁶Jan Schneider, *Working Paper 25 Die Organisation der Asyl und Zuwanderungspolitik in Deutschland*. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2009, p. 49ff.

⁷ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, *Working Paper 27*

⁸ Bundesministerium des Inneren, *Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern (Zuwanderungsgesetz)*, 2004.

⁹ Bundesministerium des Inneren, *Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern (Zuwanderungsgesetz)*, 2004.

should pay more attention to ensuring migrants' rights. Yet, for many years, Germany did not pursue a specific integration policy. Politicians were convinced that migrants would go back to their countries and consequently, integration efforts did not go beyond the necessary. In fact, until 1998, politicians stressed that Germany was not an immigration country.¹⁰

Recently, the situation has changed considerably. Integration is mainstreamed into more policy fields and new immigrants are obliged to take part in integration courses. Tests (*Einbürgerungstest*) intend to ensure that migrants do not only learn the language, but also have a basic knowledge about the country and its values.¹¹ Nevertheless, as already assumed in the introduction, integration policy is far from being a groundbreaking success. One problem raised by the increasing migrant population is their (non-)ability to make their voices heard.

In comparison to EEA citizens who since the Maastricht Treaty have an active and passive right to vote in communal elections,¹² third country nationals in Germany are not entitled. In fact, as illustrated by the table below, it is often the case that migrants have no communal voting right.¹³

Voting rights of third country nationals	Country
No communal voting right	Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland,
Only active but no passive right to vote	Belgium, Estonia, Portugal*
Communal right to vote (sometimes only after fulfilment of certain conditions)	Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, Malta, Luxembourg, Portugal*, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Great Britain, Belgium, Estonia

(* depends on country of origin)

¹⁰ In the coalition contract of CDU/CSU and FDP in 1982, it is stated 'Germany is not an immigration country', there are disputes about the end of that era. CDU, CSU and FDP, *Koalitionsvertrag*, 2009.

¹¹ *Informationen zum Einbürgerungstest*, last modified 2010, available at http://www.integration-indeutschland.de/nm_1344932/SubSites/Integration/DE/02_Zuwanderer/Einbuengerungstest/einbuengerungstest-inhalt.html (accessed 10 Nov. 2011)

¹² Hilmar Von Wersebe, *Das neue Wahlrecht für EU-Bürger*. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2000

¹³ Table in German is to be found in Norbert Cyrus and Dita Vogel, *Förderung politischer Integration von Migratinnen und Migranten. Begründungszusammenhänge und Handlungsmöglichkeiten*, (Oldenburg: Universität Oldenburg: 2008), p. 25.

To balance the lack of voting rights, advisory councils for foreigners (*Ausländerbeiräte*) were set up in many communities; they assemble at the local, federal and state level.¹⁴ In 2009, we attest more than 320 in the country.¹⁵ However, their role is merely consultative and elections are subject to enormously low turnouts, often below 20 per cent.¹⁶ In North Rhine Westphalia, the average turnout was 12.28 per cent¹⁷ and in Rhineland Palatinate it was 9 per cent, in 2004.¹⁸

In light of the above problems, cooperation with MSOs appears to be necessary. However, before discussing the role of MSOs, it is essential to establish its concept. Moreover, in order to prevent any confusion regarding the term, some scholars and officials use instead the expression “immigrant associations”. Nevertheless, there is no common definition, which goes beyond what the word itself implies. The following definition given by Huth, serves well to exemplify the breadth of the term and the extent of the phenomenon. She defines MSOs as all forms and occurrences of migrants’ self-help, whether in a formal or an informal union.¹⁹ As factual as this broad definition is, there are important differences between the various forms. Nonetheless, the paper will not elaborate on this issue before presenting in brief the development of MSOs. It is important to look at the historical emergence of these organizations to understand the driving force behind MSOs’ force and some of the complexities of the current landscape.

The development of MSOs closely relates to Germany’s immigration history. As already mentioned, the first major migration flow to Germany was guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) following the World War II. However, as the migrants believed that their stay would only be temporary, they made little or no effort to assemble in particular organizations. Furthermore, it was argued that self-help

¹⁴ Thomas Haug, *Politische Partizipation von Inländern ohne deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit in Deutschland – Ein Beitrag zu Integration und Demokratisierung*, 2003, available at <http://www.emanzipart.de/Politische%20Partizipation%20von%20MigrantInnen.pdf>

¹⁵ Miguel Vincente, *Ausländerbeiräte in Deutschland. Situation und aktuelle Entwicklung*. Arbeitergemeinschaft der Ausländerbeiräte in Rheinland-Pfalz (AGARP), 2008, p.2.

¹⁶ Uwe Hunger, *Politische Partizipation der Migranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und über die Grenzen hinweg*, BAMF, 2009, p.11.

¹⁷ Norbert Cyrus, 2005, *Active Civic Participation of Immigrants in Germany*, Politis: Oldenburg, p. 33.

¹⁸ Vincente, *Ausländerbeirat*, p.4

¹⁹ Susanne Huth, *Partizipation durch bürgerschaftliches Engagement in Migrantenselbstorganisationen*. Impulsreferat, 2004, p. 1.

activities were seen to be an unwelcome sign and even dangerous²⁰ and attempts of self-organization were alleged communist acts.²¹ Thus, the German State, itself even more convinced of the temporary nature of migration, called for charity organizations to care of the migrants' most pressing needs. Apparently, the charity organizations informally divided up responsibilities according to migrant groups' religions. The *Caritas*, for example, was responsible for catholic migrants from Italy, Spain and Portugal.²²

In spite of the initial idea of social support, charity organizations also became involved in giving migrants a voice in public.²³ Nevertheless, as they adopted this mandate reluctantly, new civil society organizations established themselves to improve foreigners' living conditions. Arguably, these new organizations laid the foundation for the emergence of self-organizations.²⁴ In fact, by the 1970s, MSOs had started to emerge. By the 1980s, all major groups of guest workers had established their own organizations. Many scholars explain this as being a consequence of deficits in the service provision of the charity organizations and the non-involvement in their internal management.²⁵ Others, however, see this increased desire for self-organization down to migrants' awareness that migration would not necessarily be temporary and guest workers had started to bring over their families (*Familienzusammenführung*). Arguably, the families' contact with the host society led to the desire to preserve their own culture through self-organizations.²⁶ Some countries of origin even encouraged the foundation of self-organizations as to maintain migrants' bond with their home countries²⁷. The

²⁰ Dietrich Thränhardt, *Integration und Zivilgesellschaft. Der Beitrag bürgerschaftlichen Engagements zum sozialen Zusammenhalt*, n.d., p. 18.

²¹ Sabine Jungk, *Soziale Selbsthilfe und politische Interessensvertretung in Organisationen von Migrantinnen und Migranten. Politische Rahmenbedingungen, Forschungslage, Weiterbildungsbedarf*, 2001, p. 2.

²² Uwe Hunger, *Von der Betreuung zur Eigenverantwortung - Neuere Entwicklungstendenzen bei Migrantenvereinen in Deutschland. Muensteraner Diskussionspapiere zum Nonprofit-Sektor 22*, Münster, 2002, p. 3.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Uwe Hunger, *Einwanderer als Bürger – Initiative und Engagement in Migrantenselbstorganisationen. Muensteraner Diskussionspapiere zum Nonprofit-Sektor 21*, Münster, 2002, p. 4.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 1.

²⁶ Justyna Nedza, *Türkisch-islamische Organisationen – integrativ oder separativ?*, 2004, p. 8

²⁷ Marlou Schrover and Floris Vermeulen, 'Immigrant Organisations', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31 (5), 2005, pp. 823-832; p.827

relevance of this historical background will become evident throughout the next section on the current landscape of MSOs in Germany.

The introduction to this chapter already outlined the diversity of MSOs in Germany. However, one can further distinguish MSOs according to their organization as well as their orientation. In fact, MSOs in Germany are active in many different fields. The first organizations, as the section on the historical background indicated, were mainly concerned with cultural issues. Over time, however, MSOs became more concerned with issues related to the host country. Their activities diversified and single entities often specialized in one particular area such as educational support for their children. Nowadays, different authors place existing MSOs in different categories. Below, Hunger's categorization is illustrated as it comes closest to a quantitative account, which is not limited to groups of one single nationality.²⁸

Type	%
Cultural Clubs	22,3
Meeting Centres	16,5
Social and Humanitarian Organisations	14,9
Sport and Leisure Clubs	14,8
Religious Organisations	11,6
Political Organisations	5,3
Family and Parents Organisations	5,2
Economic Organisations	4,7
Organisations for single groups	4,6
No categorisation possible	0,1

Within these categories, organizations still differ largely. Moreover, the orientation of groups varies amongst the different groups of migrants. Spanish and Greek organizations, for example, are renowned to be interested in education

²⁸ Uwe Hunger, *Wie können Migrantenselbstorganisationen den Integrationsprozess betreuen?* Wissenschaftliches Gutachten im Auftrag des Sachverständigenrates für Zuwanderung und Integration des Bundesministeriums des Innern der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Münster/Osnabrück, 2004, p.12.

issues.²⁹ Yet, the category of political organizations is not the only one who is politically active; all groups have specific interests whose realization may improve through contact with political institutions.

As regards their organization, the main distinction is, on the one hand, between formal and informal organizations and, on the other hand, between homogenous and heterogeneous.³⁰ Even though there are no common criteria to define the formal or informal nature of the organizations, one indicator might be whether an organization has an internal organization in terms of, for example, a board. The distinction between heterogeneous and homogeneous groups refers to the composition of its members. Homogeneous groups are the ones whose members share the same origin or ethnicity, while heterogeneous consist of people from different ethnic backgrounds.

Formal organizations in particular are likely to maintain contacts among each other. There are horizontal contacts, which tend to be fairly informal and vertical ones, which are more likely to be formal. More precisely, single entity MSOs tend to be organized in umbrella organizations.³¹ How many umbrella organizations exist is unknown, but there are both, homogeneous and heterogeneous ones. One can recently observe that umbrella organizations form transnational alliances at, for example, the European level;³² yet, this issue goes beyond the scope of the paper.

In 2001, about 16.000 MSOs had registered in the Central Register of Foreign Associations (*Ausländervereinsregister*) of which around 11.000 were Turkish.³³ Due to the informal nature of many organizations and the lack of registration, there is no concrete account of MSOs in Germany. However, extensive investigations in North-Rhine-Westphalia, a Bundesland amongst those with the

²⁹ Ibid, pp.14-15

³⁰ Karin Weiss, *Weiterbildungsbedarfe bei Migrantenorganisation, in Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement, Migrantenorganisation als Akteure der Zivilgesellschaft: Integrationsförderung durch Weiterbildung*. Dokumentation der Fachtagung am 14. und 15. Dezember 2007 des Bürgernetzwerks Bürgerschaftliches Engagement, Nürnberg, p.20.

³¹ Uwe Hunger and Stephan Metzger, *Kooperation mit Migrantenorganisationen – Studie im Auftrag des Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, Münster, 2011, p.18.

³² Ibid.

³³ Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration, *Bericht über die Lage der Ausländerinnen und Ausländer in Deutschland*. 2007, p.170.

highest shares of foreigners, disclosed about 2.400 MSOs in this single state.³⁴ Consequently, it seems likely to assume that there are about 20.000 to 30.000 organizations in the whole country.³⁵ As regards the distinction between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups, Hunger found that 80 per cent are homogeneous.³⁶

Because of the homogeneous nature of most MSOs, the discussion about their role focuses mainly on whether this homogeneous nature either supports migrants' integration or rather creates obstacles. Elwert and Esser initially led this argument. In particular, Elwert argued that MSOs play an important, integrative role by providing migrants with guidance and information. He assumed that the exchange of information, for example, would help newcomers to integrate into the host society³⁷. Esser, on the other hand, claimed that MSOs had a segregative effect. From his point of view, MSOs led migrants to remain with each other and thus to develop parallel societies instead of integrating into the host society³⁸. In essence, a key issue is that migrants tend to communicate in their mother tongue.

Thus far, there are supporters of both sides. However, as Thrändhardt has regularly stressed out migrants do not have the chance to decide between participating either in organizations of the host society or their own.³⁹ Various obstacles and discrimination often hamper migrants' access to host society organizations. For example, migrants' membership in political parties is low.⁴⁰ Some German parties, e.g. CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union) allow only German or EEA citizens and foreigners who have stayed at least three years in Germany, to apply for a membership.⁴¹ Among others, this might be caused by political skepticism, language problems and possibly fewer opportunities

³⁴ Ministerium für Arbeit, Integration und Soziales des Landes Nordrhein – Westphalen, *Migrantenselbstorganisationen*, n.d., available at http://www.integration.nrw.de/Infrastruktur_NRW/Migrantenselbstorganisationen/index.php

³⁵ Cyprus, *Active Civic Participation*, p. 37.

³⁶ Hunger, *Von der Betreuung zur Eigenverantwortung*, p. 4.

³⁷ Georg Elwert, 'Probleme der Ausländerintegration', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*. (4) 1982, pp. 717-731.

³⁸ Hartmut Esser, 'Können Befragte Lügen? Zum Konzept des „wahren Wertes“ im Rahmen der handlungstheoretischen Erklärung von Situationseinflüssen bei der Befragung', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* (38) 1986, p.314-336

³⁹ Thrändhardt, *Integration und Zivilgesellschaft*, p. 21.

⁴⁰ There are no numbers for the whole of Germany. However, in a study in North Rhine Westphalia, only 0.4% of those interviewed were members of a party Marplan 2001 in Cyprus, *Active Civic Participation*, p. 32.

⁴¹ CDU webpage <http://www.mitglied-werden.cdu.de/page/18.htm>

within the party. Therefore, regardless of the integration effect of the MSOs, one should better reflect whether political parties contribute to maintaining a distinctively segregative stance.

Moreover, it appears that migrants who are members of homogeneous organizations have better contacts with Germans than those who are not affiliated with any group or organization.⁴² Accordingly, Huth argues that participation in any organization is beneficial in giving members a sense of belonging.⁴³ Riesgo also points out that homogeneous organizations are well suited to teach migrants some active engagement.⁴⁴ Interestingly, some scholars actually argue that involvement in MSOs allows migrants to gain new skills which are of great help in fostering access to the labor market. Last but not least, MSOs also play a role in collecting remittances.⁴⁵ Turkish organizations, for example, raised money for earthquake victims in Ismet. But the link between MSOs and remittances has not yet been studied in any detail. Nevertheless, it serves to exemplify the benefits to be gained by MSOs.

The first section of the paper showed that Germany missed various chances to achieve successful integration in the past. Nevertheless, the need for multiple inputs was eventually recognized. Because of this understanding, cooperation with migrant self-organizations emerged on the agenda.⁴⁶ Cooperation is not only motivated by the desire to give migrants a voice and, thus, increase the legitimacy of policies, but also by the attempt to benefit from their specific position. Cooperating with MSOs carries many benefits.⁴⁷ First of all, MSOs have a lot of knowledge about migrants' problems due to their direct contact with them.⁴⁸ The European handbook for integration confirms that MSOs "can draw attention to problems such as health care, housing or education, and make suggestions for

⁴² Cyrus, *Active Civic Participation*, p. 23.

⁴³ Huth, *Participation durch*, p. 39.

⁴⁴ Vincente Riesgo, *Selbsthilfepotentiale von Migrantenvereinen als Ressource des Integrationsprozesses*, 2003, p. 64.

⁴⁵ Stefan Gaitanides, *Freiwilliges Engagement und Selbsthilfepotential von Familien ausländischer Herkunft und Migrantenselbstorganisationen – Anforderungen an die Politik auf Bundes-, Landes- und kommunaler Ebene*, n.d, p. 43.

⁴⁶ Katharina Schuler, 'Integrationsgipfel – Vom Ziel noch weit entfernt', *Die Zeit*, 13.05.2009, available at <http://www.zeit.de/online/2008/46/integrationsgipfel/seite-2>

⁴⁷ Romy Bartels, *Kompetenzen nutzen: MSO als Akteure der Integrationsförderung stärken – Verstärkte Partizipation von MSO an der Integrationsförderung*. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2008.

⁴⁸ Nicole Möhle, *Kompetenzen nutzen: MSO als Akteure der Integrationsförderung stärken – Bundesweites Integrationsprogramm*. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2008, p.3.

improvements to the relevant ministries”.⁴⁹

In addition, MSOs are not only aware of migrants’ problems but are also able to address and reach them.⁵⁰ Moreover, contacts and cooperation with migrants may affect them positively since organizations have the power to formulate their opinion.⁵¹ Giugni and Passy also indicate that providing MSOs with moderate participation channels will ensure they will not use aggressive forms of action such as protests.⁵²

To make the cooperation more feasible, the next section will attempt to distinguish between the conceptual and operational dimension. This distinction already reveals that cooperation manifests itself in different forms. Whereas the conceptual dimension refers to MSOs’ involvement in the design of policies, the operational one is mostly concerned with MSOs’ participation in the policy implementation. Generally, the picture is complicated as, on the one hand, the federal, state and local levels share their responsibilities likewise the political and administrative authorities, and on the other hand, there is little or no coordination among the actors involved. Even though not all of the initiatives for cooperation emanate from the institutions, the focus of the paper is on the federal level.

As said earlier, the conceptual level refers to policy formulation. As diverse political and administrative actors are involved in policy design, so the cooperation problems are various. For instance, it is very difficult to attest how much cooperation is enough and, since there is no impact assessment, to what extent it has been successful.

The most common form of cooperation is the German integration summit,

⁴⁹ DG Justice, Freedom & Security, *Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners*, 2007, p. 19, available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/immigration/integration/doc/2007/handbook_2007_en.pdf

⁵⁰ Tatiana Curvello, *Integration durch Migrantenorganisationen*. In *Documentation of E&C forum on Integration junger Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund – Sozialer Zusammenhalt durch interkulturelle Strategien und integrierte Ansätze in benachteiligten Stadtteilen*. 2006, p. 35.

⁵¹ Bartels, *Verstärkte Partizipation*

⁵² Marco Giugni and Florence Passy, ‘Migrant Mobilization between political institutions and citizenship regimes: A comparison of France and Switzerland’, *European Journal of Political Research*, 43(1), 2002, pp. 51 – 81.

which took place for the first time in 2006.⁵³ The main purpose of the summit is to bring together different actors from politics and administration but also civil society. MSOs participated as part of the last group. The participating MSOs were selected on the grounds of existing contacts. In particular, there was preference for nationwide-operating organizations and there were efforts to have representatives from different migrant groups.⁵⁴ So far, three summits have been organized and the second one in 2007 resulted in the adoption of the German National Integration Plan (NIP)⁵⁵, which is composed of various self-obligations of the different actors.

Among others, it includes promises made by the German State regarding the method of cooperation with MSOs, such as:⁵⁶

- MSOs will be consulted in the development of state and local integration plans;
- The Federal Government assured that it would fund technical assistance to MSOs by supporting MSOs in implementing projects and supporting the development of MSO networks;
- The BAMF is committed to involve MSOs in the development of nationwide integration programs.

Despite MSOs' general consent to the summit, the run-up to the second and third summits came under the banner of protest. Before the second summit, many – especially Turkish – MSOs announced that they would not participate due to the immigration law, which had entered into force. This law addressed certain restricting provisions about family reunification e.g. excluding elderly and sick people from reunification.⁵⁷ The 2008 summit intended to analyze the progress

⁵³ Bundesregierung, *Erster Integrationsgipfel*, 14.07.2006, available at http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/IB/Artikel/Nationaler_20Integrationsplan/2006-07-14-erster-integrationsgipfel.html

⁵⁴ Email from state Ministry for Integration and Refugees (BAMF).

⁵⁵ Bundesregierung, *Der National Integrationsplan*, 2007

⁵⁶ Erwin Schindler, *Integrationsförderung: Perspektiven für die Zusammenarbeit mit MSO*, Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement Integrationsförderung durch Migrantenorganisationen, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2008, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Fluechtlingsrat, *Zur Änderung und Evaluation des Zuwanderungsgesetzes*, 2007, available at http://fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/gesetzgebung/2_AendG.html#mozTocId237228

made in implementing the national integration plan.⁵⁸ At this event, MSOs expressed their discontent, mainly with the failure of migrants' educational success. Within Germany's three-tier school system, a majority of children with migration backgrounds visit the lowest level school (*Hauptschule*).⁵⁹

Besides the annual integration summits, it is worth mentioning that the national Minister of state for migration, refugees and integration participates in further dialogue with MSOs. The frequency, scope and topics of these meetings vary considerably. On the ministerial level, the information is less transparent. Parliamentary groups are also in contact with MSOs. For example, the Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP)⁶⁰ convened a congress with MSOs in July 2009.

In theory, the Ministries of Interior, Labor and Social Affairs are mostly concerned with integration issues. There was also a large meeting of MSOs at the Culture Ministers' conference in June 2008.⁶¹ However, their willingness to communicate ongoing cooperation and projects with MSOs has only increased in the last few years. Some information appears on the website of the BAMF and it was recently (2010) that the federal office, in association with the Ministry of Interior, established a working group which drafts proposals and recommendations for new migration legislation.⁶²

On request, the two relevant parliamentary committees (interior, labor and social affairs), declared that they do not consult any MSOs on their own but rather rely on the information provided by the Ministries. The committee of the interior, however, stated that MSOs request meetings; yet, no further information on realization and frequency is ever given.

Furthermore, in relation to some initiatives taken by MSOs, it emerges that some well- organized MSOs, especially umbrella organizations, strive to issue their

⁵⁸ Die Bundesregierung, 'Integrationsgipfel in Berlin', 2.11.2009, available at <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/MS-Integration/2010-11-02-integrationsgipfel-ankuendigung-ir.html>

⁵⁹ Fokus online, *Integrationsgipfel – Türken fordern bessere Schulbildung*, 2008. Available at: http://www.fokus.de/politik/deutschland/integrationsgipfel-tuerken-fordern-bessere-schulbildung_aid_346555.html

⁶⁰ Free Democratic Party (Liberals)

⁶¹ BAGIV, *Migrantenorganisationen und Kultusministerkonferenz erzielen Einigkeit in der weiteren Vorgehensweise zur Umsetzung des Integrationsplans*, 17.07.2008, available at <http://www.bagiv.de/archiv-2008.htm#17-06-08>

⁶² Bundesamt für Migration und Integration, *Migrantenorganisation – wichtige Partner bei der Integrationsförderung*, 19.05.2011, available at: <http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Meldungen/DE/2011/20110519-nuernberger-tage-integration-migrantenorganisationen.html>

opinion(s) on specific issues publicly or to address certain politicians and other stakeholders directly. Recently, for example, an umbrella organization of MSOs wrote, together with the charity organization to which it is still affiliated, an open letter to Thilo Sarrazin, politician and board member of the German Central Bank, asking him to resign.⁶³ Sarrazin came under severe criticism for alleged hostile statements against immigrants. Besides this, some MSOs have attempted to raise their issues by inviting politicians to discussions.

Actually, MSOs have relatively precise interests. In their position concerning the 2009 elections, MSOs organized in *der Paritätische Gesamtverband*, called for, amongst others, local suffrage, easier naturalization, no discrimination regarding family reunification, improved educational opportunities, more funds for integration policy and also a consolidation of MSOs.⁶⁴

As indicated above, operational cooperation is concerned with getting MSOs involved in policy implementation. In fact, this is mainly related to MSOs taking part in projects. However, it does not necessarily entail that migrants take over projects, which the state develops, but it mostly suggests that MSOs run projects, which are relatively close to their regular activities, on behalf of the state.⁶⁵ The beneficiality of subsidies, however, is disputed. In general, the benefits for the state rely on using MSOs' knowledge and experience whilst the greatest advantage for MSOs is the additional income. Opponents argue that subsidies lead to a crowding out effect, meaning that subsidies will simply replace previous funding, instead of leading to the set-up of new projects.⁶⁶ Even though funding can direct organizations' activities in certain directions, studies have confirmed that state subsidies do not lead to such a crowding out effect.

As MSOs do not receive any funding from the state, their income is often limited to membership fees, donations and income from events (Pallares et al, 2006, p.15). Thus, project funding is very valuable. In 2010, new funding guidelines were published which for the first time denominated MSOs as project executing organizations. Furthermore, the guidelines called for more cooperation with MSOs in integration projects. Within the last three years, the numbers of participating

⁶³ Der Paritätische Gesamtverband, *Offener Brief an Thilo Sarrazin*, 2009, available at http://data6.blog.de/media/022/3990022_6580d082f4_d.pdf

⁶⁴ Der Paritätische Gesamtverband, *Positionen zur Bundestagswahl 2009*, 2009, Available at http://www.der-paritaetische.de/uploads/media/Par_Positionspapier_Migration_Wahl2009.pdf

⁶⁵ Bartels, *Verstärkte Partizipation*

⁶⁶ Schrover and Vermeulen, 'Immigrant Organisation', p.829.

MSOs have tripled. Currently, they exceed a hundred MSOs. In 2008, only eleven percent of the projects, funded by the BAMF, were run by MSOs.⁶⁷ This poor level of participation is significantly explained by the difficulties encountered by the organizations.

In many cases, MSOs are unable to handle the formal requirements for state funding. In order to be able to respond to MSOs' needs and to strengthen them as long-term partners, the BAMF conducted a study on this issue. One of the main conclusions of these studies was that, due to MSOs' limited financial means, special difficulties exist with regard to the own share of project costs. To respond to this specific problem, the state actually took the rather innovative step to recognize time contributions as cost share.⁶⁸ However, there are still many more problems faced by MSOs. In particular, small MSOs have no experience of writing tender applications or project management.⁶⁹ As a sign of success, the share of MSO projects has increased by 17% and now amounts to 27%.⁷⁰ (A sample of projects is in the annex).

In order to address this situation, two main responses can be identified. On the one hand, they train "multipliers".⁷¹ In this context, there is an effort to educate some central members of MSOs so as to share and exchange information. In many cases, these trainings are provided by foundations. Additionally, many umbrella organizations started to provide useful information brochures on their websites. On the other hand, attempts have been made to help MSOs through so called *tandem* projects. In September 2009, the BAMF issued another call for *tandem* projects for which it has awarded grants. *Tandem* projects focus on the cooperation of established bodies, which are experienced in running projects and MSOs wanting to improve their project skills.⁷²

Even though both sides value the cooperation, they nevertheless face certain problems. A distinction must be made between problems which occur in

⁶⁷ Bartels, *Verstärkte Partizipation*

⁶⁸ Hunger and Metzger, 'Kooperation mit Migrantenorganisationen'

⁶⁹ Bartels, *Verstärkte Partizipation*

⁷⁰ Email from state Ministry for integration and refugees (BAMF).

⁷¹ Bartels, *Verstärkte Partizipation*

⁷² Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, *Öffentliche Bekanntmachung eines Interessensbekundungsverfahrens des Bundesamtes für Migration und Flüchtlinge zum Thema – Verstärkte Partizipation von Migrantenorganisationen*, 2009b, Available at <http://www.integrationspotenziale.de/wp-content/interessenbek-migrantenorga.pdf>

the actual cooperation and problems which hamper closer cooperation. Most points made by the MSOs are more concerned with obstacles to closer cooperation. Nevertheless, a few problems which were faced in the previous framework will first be touched upon. Firstly, MSOs criticize the fact that, in many cases, they themselves have to bear the costs of travel and time. As most MSOs operate on a voluntary basis, meetings during official office hours create an associated obstacle.⁷³ Secondly, as might also be indicated by the first point, they believe that their work is not sufficiently recognized.⁷⁴ Often, MSOs feel used to attract participants to projects of other organization, because of their proximity to migrants. In return, they sometimes are prohibited from participating in the design and management of projects.⁷⁵ Thirdly, MSOs feel as though they have no or little agenda-setting powers, but, are more or less consulted on a closed list of items. MSOs want institutionalized rights, which legally require their involvement in the agenda-setting process and grant them agenda-setting powers.⁷⁶ Additionally, they demand more and better support for programs, allowing them to become professional.

State and administration, on the other hand, appear to face fewer problems in the existing cooperation. Nevertheless, it seems likely to assume that they are rather unhappy with some MSOs' tendency to use their (non-)participation in set consultations to express their discontent regarding migration laws or integration successes, as was the case in the integration summit. Moreover, in some cases cooperation is difficult because some MSOs refuse to sit at the same table with other organizations.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the BAMF, which might be regarded as the main administrative actor at the state level, lacks exact data of the existing number of MSOs. Only a fraction of the MSOs existing in Germany is registered at the central register. Thus, it is difficult to address and inform MSOs about existing consultations and support activities. As concerns further cooperation, they are mostly concerned with the complex landscape; they find it difficult to identify contact persons. According to the BAMF, there is a lack of connectedness between

⁷³ Möhle, *Bundesweites Integrationsprogramme*

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Hunger and Metzger, 'Kooperation mit Migratenorganisationen', p.7

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ These other organisation are mainly composed of individuals without migratory background. These may be for example, charity organisations, youth clubs, cultural centres, sports clubs, etc.

the different organizations.⁷⁸

Determining the position of TCNs is a challenging task. As the whole institutional construct lacks a clear structure and clear rules of in- or exclusion, one cannot really say that TCNs are disadvantaged from a theoretical standpoint. Also, it is important to note that due to the early and huge influx of Turkish guest workers, Turks are not well categorized as Third Country Nationals within that context.

The history of MSOs in Germany has shown that the migrant groups who came to Germany as guest workers established themselves very early and are, thus, often more organized and, consequently, likely to be more influential. For example, better organized groups can be expected to have more resources to finance travel costs to political institutions and the like. Furthermore, new organizations have less knowledge about access points. However, there is not only the temporal disadvantage but also one of size. Very small population groups, as is the case for many TCNs, do rarely have their own groups. Consequently, they can only organize themselves in less specific groups which make the articulation of more particular interests more difficult. Additionally, size can be a criterion for funding.⁷⁹

In addition, Danish found that, in the case of Spain and Italy, migrants' political activism was dependent on their cultural background and the way they participated in politics in their country of origin.⁸⁰ As it seems reasonable to assume that the same holds true for migrant organizations in Germany, this is another factor leading to the betterment of specific migrant groups.

As mentioned beforehand, MSOs request more institutionalized rights and propose the establishment of an advisory board. Even though the Ministry of State had always been reluctant towards the establishment of such an advisory board, the new government revived the idea in its coalition agreement⁸¹ in autumn 2009. It was finally established in early 2011 as part of the Office of the Chancellor (*Bundeskanzleramt*). It is within the competence of the operating staff responsible for integration. It comprises thirty-two members, of which ten are MSOs. The representative of this advisory board is the Minister of State for migration,

⁷⁸ Hunger and Metzger, 'Kooperation mit Migratenorganisationen'

⁷⁹ Schrover and Vermeulen, 'Immigrant Organisations', p.831

⁸⁰ Gaia Danese, Participation beyond Citizenship: migrants' associations in Italy and Spain, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 35(1), 2001, pp. 69 - 89

⁸¹ Coalition agreement is an agreement, which is completed between the parties that form the government. It is signed after the elections and within this agreement parties formulate policy priorities for the upcoming legislative period, CDU, CSU and FDP, 2009

refugees and integration.⁸² Originally, it had been criticized that such an advisory board would be too selective. The common migration advisory board of German foundations was also skeptical. It remains to be seen as to how far this will be beneficial for the empowerment of the migrant population. However, the establishment of the advisory board can be interpreted as a success and reflects the willingness to include migrants' opinions into the process of policymaking.

Conclusions and recommendations

This paper has shown that cooperation between migrant organizations and state actors takes place in various forms and allows policy-makers to get feedback and input as a means to improve policies. Nevertheless, the emergence of this cooperation requires Germany to recognize itself as an integration country and to adopt a two-way integration approach. Facing up to the facts seems to be a precondition for effective integration policy and should be taken into consideration, especially by the newly emerging migration countries on the outskirts of the European Union.

The emergence of the abovementioned cooperation policy has most certainly brought about a further step, nevertheless leaving potential for improvements. In the following recommendations for state actors, MSOs as well as the civil society will be introduced.

State:

- The state should evaluate its hitherto cooperation with MSOs. This will allow it to detect and address previous shortcomings. Without such an impact assessment, it is not possible to know how successful cooperation has been and what it holds for the future. As concerns MSOs' involvement in project implementation, previous experience should lead to the formulation of best practices.
- There should be better cooperation and exchange between the different levels of government. Policies tend to vary considerably among the different federal states. Dialogue will allow them to learn from each other. In the long run, minimum standards could be agreed

⁸²Die Bundesregierung, *Beirat der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration*, 2011, available at http://www.bundesregierung.de/n_n_836544/Content/DE/Artikel/IB/Artikel/Beirat/2011-01-13-intergrationsbeirat.html

upon as a means to ensure equal participative opportunities for migrants throughout Europe.

- Increased efforts should be undertaken to get in contact with MSOs and establish networks among them - especially MSOs who are interested in lobbying. In the selection of MSOs for consultation purposes, special attention should be paid to the equivalent involvement of TCNs. Consultative meetings should be accompanied by a call for written observations.
- Even though there are many challenges in improving the current cooperation, it should not be forgotten to foster the more innovative involvement of MSOs in, for example, the raising and sending of remittances.

MSOs:

- MSOs should not perceive boycotting consultations as a means to achieve their interests or to get attention, but should notice the consultations as the right place to raise their concerns.
- MSOs should keep trying to integrate new members and ensure that they act in the interest of the majority.

Society:

- Media should draw attention to the role played by MSOs in Germany. They should eliminate the misconception that MSOs are only oriented towards their home countries.
- Society organizations like parties and trade unions should undertake increased efforts to attract migrants as members.
- Charity organizations should bear in mind that they support MSOs but do not prevent them from acting independently or even compete with them for project funding.

Regarding the question whether cooperation is seen as an effective tool to make integration policy more effective, it can be suggested that this newly emerged cooperation is likely to improve integration policies as it provides a participative channel for the migrant population. However, it has shortcomings in its scope as well as its operation. For example, migrants do not have any real power to put issues on the agenda. Consequently, it can be said that MSOs have become actors, but in no way equal partners.

Furthermore, certain groups of migrants appear to be advantaged and MSOs are not democratically operating bodies. Studies have shown that participation in MSOs is positively related to members' education. As a result, mere cooperation with MSOs might lead to ignoring the voice of the highly vulnerable. It is safe to say that cooperation with MSOs cannot be seen as an effective alternative for giving third country nationals the right to vote. As this requires a constitutional reform, it is essential to boost efforts to change public opinion and start seeing integration policy not only as a reaction but also as a tool to be proactive – making Germany an attractive destination for migrants.

As concerns lessons for the international scene, the case of Germany has shown that cooperation with MSOs bear many benefits. Concrete forms of cooperation certainly depend on a country's very specific circumstances. Most importantly, cooperation presupposes the existence of MSOs which might not necessarily be the case in newly emerging migration countries. However, through subsidies and other forms of assistance, states might be able to take an active role in contributing to their formation.

Annex I: Sample of subsidized projects

This table is in no way comprehensive. It merely serves to provide some example of projects subsidized by the state.⁸³

Migrant Organisations	Project
Khan & Milusic GbR Institut für Veranstaltungs- und Projectmanagement	Database of youth MSOs as well as MSOs which are active in youth work
AGARP – consortium of foreigners' councils in Rhineland-Palatinate	Among others: workshops for the professionalisation of members of the foreigners' councils
Haus Afrika	Among others: workshops, seminars, consultancy etc. to make the German school system more transparent – especially for African parents
Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland E.V.	Traveling exhibition about Germans of Russian origin
Griechisch-Orthodoxe Metropole von Deutschland – Bikariat in Bayern	Integration measures for Greek population in Munich and the surrounding areas

⁸³ Email from state Ministry for integration and refugees (BAMF)

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