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Hometown associations, urban-to-rural collective remittances and rural development in Turkey

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Abstract

Aiming to understand the role of rural-to-urban collective remittances on rural development in Turkey, this study presents the findings of a fieldwork in a hometown association (HTA) in Istanbul. Deep-interviews and semi-structural interviews are conducted with the members of the HTA and then analyzed mainly to clarify the remitting behaviour of immigrants and figure out the ways their remittances are used in the rural area they feel somehow attached to, the village of Boyalı in the province of Sivas. As a result, it is found that collective remittances are spent not to improve agricultural productivity and rural employment but mainly to build non-productive infrastructure in the village and also contribute to the socio-economic integration of immigrants in Istanbul. Age, marital status, economic well-being, degree of attachment to the village, future plans of eventual return to the village are found to be significantly associated with the remitting behaviour. In this specific case, it appears that remittances are not used to provide long-run economic development in rural areas but rather to fill in governments' shoes in a neoliberal economic setting.

Keywords: hometown associations; collective remittances; rural development; urbanization; Turkey.

JEL Classification: F24, R11, O18

Introduction

The impact of rural-to-urban migration on rural economic development is an issue stirring curiosity especially in countries with a high level of urbanization. It has been argued that rural-to-urban migration represents “a significant means for removing supply constraints to improved productivity in agriculture.” (Rempel and Lobdell, 1978) An important contribution of urbanization to rural development is undeniably through urban-to-rural remittances although “remittances cannot be assumed to account for the total

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accumulation of surplus consequent upon migration.” (Stark, 1991) Likewise, according to Stark (1991) again, it is not only “urban-produced” surplus which is revealed through remittances but also “farm-produced” surplus that is coming from the farm-generated income that accounts for the total accumulation of surplus as a result of rural-to-urban migration. Although farm-produced surplus is related with the production capacities in rural areas, ways of utilizing remittances can also affect it through the changes in agricultural value added.

Analyzing the effect of international remittances on the economic development of sending regions, Jones (1998), for example, states that “there is probably no other more bottom-up way of redistributing and enhancing welfare among populations in developing countries than the remittances”. Moses (2009) also argues that remittances are the most efficient way for the development of Bangladesh. Besides, Ratha and Sirkeci (2010), among others, argue that there are both direct and indirect benefits of migrant remittances for the receiving households. Reduction in poverty, higher spendings on health care and education, increase in job creation and higher levels of trade between countries of origin and destination are some of those indirect contributions. (Martin and Sirkeci, 2017) Moreover, looking at the case of South Asia, Ullah (2017) provides data about the percentage of international remittances spent in various activities which are mainly education, house renovation, consumption, business, buying land and repayment of loans. Obviously spending remittances on those areas have both a direct and indirect benefit to the economy.

In addition to focusing on the effects of migrant remittances, the role that diaspora networks play on the sending countries started to be analyzed in the literature in recent years. Diaspora networks have an undeniable role in enhancing cross-border flows of goods, capital and, knowledge which contributes to efficient specialization, investment and productivity growth in the countries of origin. (Rapoport, 2016) Focusing on the role of Mexican hometown associations in the United States on the local development, Orozco (2002, 2004) defines Mexican HTAs as small voluntary philanthropic organizations whose activities focus on basic health, education and public infrastructure mostly in rural Mexico. Besides, he argues that their partnership with government enhance their development goals. There are also other studies which focus on the different migrant groups in the United States. Landolt, Autler and Baires (1999), for example, discusses Salvadoran associations and, Portes and Zhou (2012) focuses on Mexican and Chinese immigrant associations again in the United States. Although the link between HTAs abroad and the



development of source countries through remittances is addressed in the transnational migration research especially in the last two decades (Çağlar, 2006), the impact of HTAs in a national territory on the economic development and, especially, on rural development is largely neglected. One of those few examples is a recent work of Regmi and Tisdell (2002) in which they analyze data on Nepal to understand the remitting behaviour of Nepalese rural-to-urban migrants and, discuss the likely effects of those collective remittances on the rural development. They found that possibilities for inheritance, degree of family attachment, the likelihood of eventual returns to place of origin and investment in education of the migrants have a significant influence on the level of remittances. Interestingly this issue has not been studied before in Turkey even though it is a country of rapid urbanization.

This paper, therefore, aims to contribute understanding the role of rural-to-urban remittances on rural development in Turkey analyzing a micro-level data collected through interviews with immigrants in Istanbul -who are at the same time members of their hometown's association- mainly answering three questions: 1- How do remittances affect rural development in the village, 2- Who are willing to send collective remittances? And, 3-Why do they send remittances?

Before moving on to the discussion of the analysis, it is worth noting two things: First, this paper does not focus on individual remittances but rather focuses on collective remittances. Economic remittance is a term that is generally used for the flow of finances from destination region to source region and, it is an individual form of transfer of either in cash or in kind. Collective remittances is, however, raised by a group or community and sent to the benefit of another group or community. (Goldring, 2004) Second, although the micro-data analyzed in this paper is a random and representative sample of the HTA members of Boyalı village it is not a nationally representative data. Therefore, it does not aim to provide generalized conclusions at nation-wide but rather is an attempt to understand the mechanism. Needless to say, further studies must be done in other HTA associations in order to see if the findings are similar or not.

The structure of the paper is as follows: Section II discusses the hometown associations in Turkey and the role they play for the economic development of rural areas. Section III briefly discusses the data and methodology. Section IV presents the empirical findings and, Section V concludes.

Hometown Associations in Turkey and 'Boyali Village Development Association'

Hometown associations (HTAs; hereafter) are defined as "associations and foundations regrouping people from the same place or 'memleket' [village, town, county]" (Hersant and Toumarkine, 2005, p.1) with the aim of both helping their *hemşehris* (a term used in Turkish for villagers and villagers) in destination region and back in their villages through remittances. After fulfilling this primary aim, we see that their secondary aim is to help the development of their villages through 'group' remittances which are channelled into either infrastructural investments such as providing potable water to houses, constructing roads or building mosques, renovating village cemetery, so on and so forth.

HTAs in Turkey started to appear in 1940s and their number soared particularly during 1990s. (Hersant and Toumarkine, 2005) As of 2017 there are 14,541 HTAs in Turkey, 98 of which are established by Turkish-origin immigrants from abroad such as Bulgarian-Turks (author's own calculation using the data from Ministry of Internal Affairs' Directorate of Associations Statistics, 2016). The majority of HTAs are based in metropolitan areas such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. There were 6,338 HTAs in Istanbul, 2,310 in Ankara and 729 in Izmir by the end of 2016. Besides, the highest number of HTAs are established by immigrants from Sivas (977 of HTAs as of 2017). It is interesting to see that the growth of HTAs cannot be directly linked to the urbanization as there was a high level of urbanization after 1960s although the number of HTAs increased especially after the 1990s. Deep interviews I had with the members of an HTA, specifically the Boyali Village Development Association (Boyali HTA, hereafter) established in Istanbul by people of Boyali village origin from Sivas, provided a clue for the reason of this gap:

"Our *hemşehris* have started migrating in Istanbul in 1950s. Life was too difficult for them at first as they had to build shantyhouses and find jobs to take care of their families both in Istanbul and back in village. So, they were not in a position to think about their village as they did not have the necessary economic power. When they were able to think about establishing this association and supporting their *hemşehris* and village, there were years of political instability and military takeovers. For instance, it became literally forbidden to establish such an association after the coup d'etat of 1980. So, it was only in 1986 that they were able to establish this association." (Ahmet, 37)

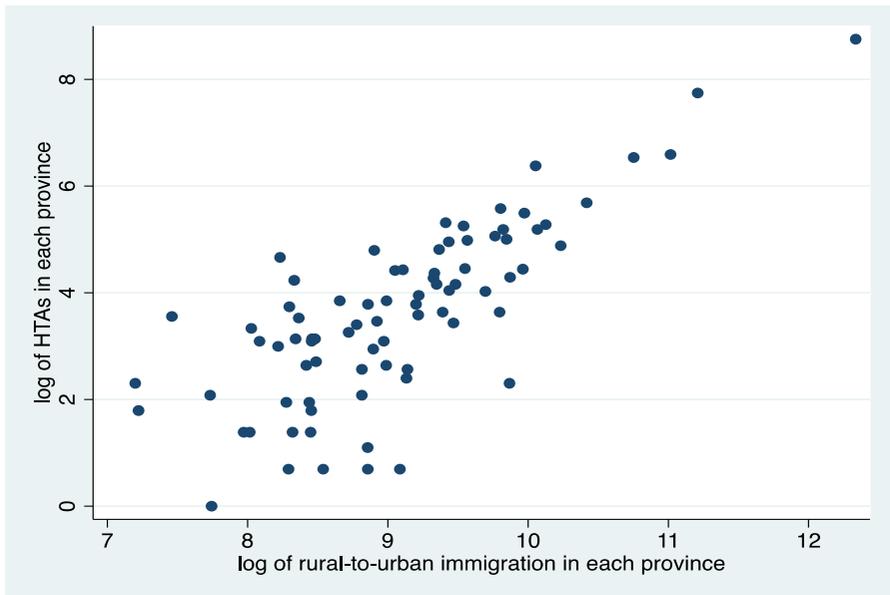
Considering all the interviews, it is possible to list mainly three reasons for this lag. Initially, they had to first cope with economic difficulties in



urban areas and, then, they could think about establishing the HTA. This also explains the delayed rise in the numbers of HTAs because first years after migration are usually spent for helping and supporting the countrymen in the destination province. Secondly, they did not have the knowledge about the possibility to open an association to further socialize with their countrymen and also give back to their village for those who are left behind. Third, political instability in the country and especially the years of military rule prevented them from establishing an association. Hersant and Toumarkine (2005) confirms the findings of this fieldwork research and argues that factors which influenced the growth of HTAs during 1990s are "the economic and social integration of the different waves of migrants into the urban setting, upon the existing legal constraints, and upon connecting these to the political background- especially following the military coup d'etat of 12th September 1980."

After 1990s, however, descriptive statistics show that higher numbers of HTAs exist in cities with higher numbers of immigrants. This positive correlation can be clearly seen in Figure 1 below.

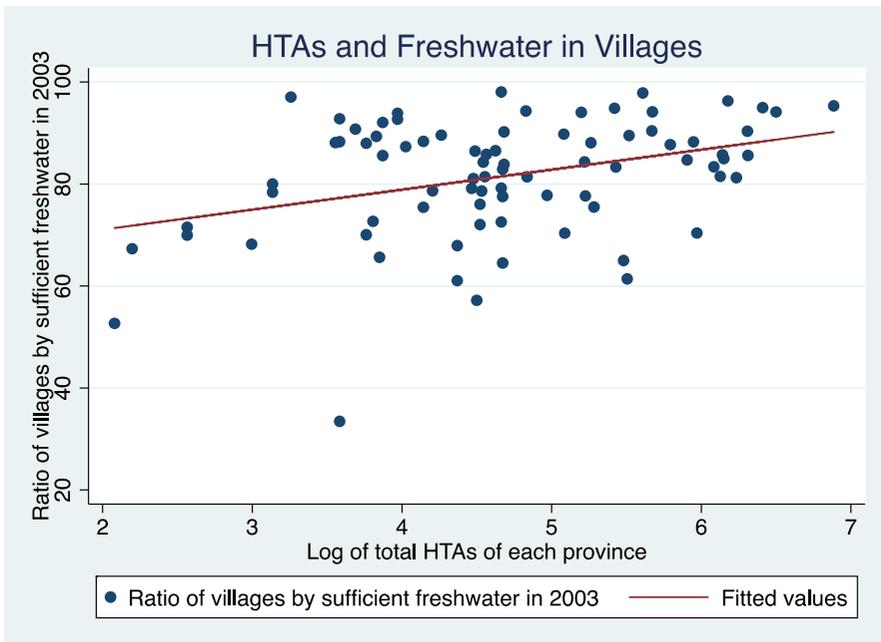
Figure 1. Correlation between urbanization and total number of HTAs in each province



In order to understand the role of HTAs in rural development, Boyalı HTA was chosen for a fieldwork of 6 months during which both semi-structural and deep interviews were conducted. The way of

establishing and funding of Boyali HTA are through membership fees but donations of villagers are economically much more significant. In my fieldwork, I observed that donations are collected mostly when there is an infrastructure investment project for the village or if an *hemşehri* (who could be living either in Istanbul or back in Sivas) is in dire financial need. It seems that Boyali HTA is not alone in investing in infrastructure in villages around Turkey. When we look at the correlation between total number of HTAs of each province around Turkey (Kayaoglu (2018), forthcoming) and the ratio of villages with sufficient freshwater (data obtained from TUIK), there a significant positive correlation between the two which can be seen from the Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Correlation between total number of HTAs of each province and the share of villages with sufficient freshwater



Moreover, it was interesting to see that huge amounts of money is remitted to Boyali village through donations. Boyali HTA periodically releases the list of all donors together with the amount of donations they made on a specific board in its office building in Istanbul so that all villagers together with state auditors can learn who donates and how much. This is also seen as a way to gain prestige among villagers who know each other very well. Therefore, especially businessmen use this opportunity to increase respect for themselves among the



community. The person who donates the most is named *köy ağası* (village chief) and his photograph in traditional dresses that represent power is exhibited at the Boyalı HTA office. Moreover, names of those members who did not pay their membership fees are also advertised, a strong incentive for people to regularly pay their fees. During my fieldwork, I have seen the cases where some members were paying debts of their relatives so that their surname would not appear at all on that list of non-payers. Thus, one can argue that the whole mechanism works as an incentive for remittance donations as it pushes people to donate as much as they can.

Boyalı HTA does not only mobilise businessmen but also lobby central/provincial/local government officials and individual politicians to direct investments into the village. The investments made through remittances for the last two years are listed in Table 1. As it is seen from the Table, some of the investments are pretty large scale. Other than using remittances for the development of the village, the remittances are also used in other activities of the association such as delivering aid to families with lesser means, organizing social events in Istanbul, spending for the management costs of coffeehouse within the HTA office, visiting and helping villagers who have health problems, doing investments to increase income of the HTA, financing soccer club of the village. Apart from spending remittances insufficiently on education in Istanbul, the types of investments in Boyalı village are related mainly to infrastructure. During my fieldwork both in Istanbul and Sivas, I observed that these infrastructural investments are not productive type of rural infrastructure as they were not used for improving rural schooling or rural employment but they have rather accomplished to improve the life-standards of villagers.

In terms of the role of the HTAs for the rural-to-urban immigrants and their siblings, Hersant and Toumarkine (2005) argues that "the hometown association is not so much a meeting place publicising a pre-existing community solidarity, rather it is the point at which political and social networks fuse giving rise to a means of communication with the political-institutional system". Others in the literature, including Woods (1994) and Barkan et al. (1994), also discuss the role of HTAs as intermediaries between state and society. My fieldwork analysis shows that HTAs are both meeting places of countrymen which makes the community solidarity alive in the urban setting but it is also a very useful device of communication in political-institutional and economic system. Collective remittances of Boyalı HTA members are spent both on the economic integration of villagers in Istanbul and also for the infrastructural investments in their hometown. The latter type of

economic activity replaces the government's role in a neoliberal economic setting.

Table 1. Some Investment Items of Boyali HTA through collective remittances

INVESTMENT TYPE	COST (YTL)
Building roads between village and <i>yayla</i> (summer settlement)	350,000
Yayla festival	150,000
Water distribution to village houses	80,000
Water distribution to <i>yayla</i> houses	60,000
Purchasing land for the HTA in Lüleburgaz (close to Istanbul)	50,000
Istanbul picnic organization	39,250
Istanbul summer festival	26,000
Food aid to members in need during Ramadan	20,000
Establishment of soccer team	5,000
Touristic trip for young members	4,500
Soccer festival	2,5000

Data and Methodology

The data analyzed empirically is collected by conducting structured interviews with rural-to-urban immigrants who are currently living in Istanbul. The target group is immigrants from a village in Sivas, a province in Central Anatolia which also happens to be the province to whose benefit the highest number of HTAs are established countrywide. The majority of immigrants in Istanbul are from Sivas, too. During the 6-month fieldwork, both deep interviews with 10 members of the association and 176 structural questionnaires are completed. Individuals are randomly selected from the list of members. There are around 600 active members many of whom voluntarily donate remittances as well as an annual membership fee to the association so that it can contribute to life in Boyali with sizable infrastructure investments. Additionally, many immigrants send remittances directly to their family who still live in the village.

Apart from structured interviews, I have also done deep interviews with the management and some members of the HTA from different age/gender groups, which aim to fully understand both immigrants' motivation behind sending remittances back to their villages and the channels through which those remittances affect the development of their villages. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used to analyze the primary data and empirical findings are presented in



the following section. Descriptive statistics of the variables in empirical models are provided in the Table 2 below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variable Name	Mean	Min	Max
Male	88.64	0	1
Age	46.48	23	76
Marital Status (1=married, 0=single)	93.71	0	1
Education level			
1. Illiterate	1.70	0	1
2. Literate without diploma	2.27	0	1
3. Primary school diploma	56.82	0	1
4. Secondary school diploma	14.20	0	1
5. High-school diploma	15.34	0	1
6. University degree and above	9.66	0	1
Birthplace (1=Sivas, 0=Istanbul)	77.84	0	1
Years after migration	19.9	1	49
Homeowner in Istanbul	76.14	0	1
Homeowner in Sivas	85.8	0	1
Willing to return	50.58	0	1
HTA membership duration	19.96	1	30
Remitting other than membership fee	66.67	0	1
Reason of HTA membership			
1. Development of hometown	62.43	0	1
2. Helping socio-economic integration of villagers	37.57	0	1
Importance of hometown for member's identity			
1. Not important at all	2.87	0	1
2. Neither important or unimportant	7.47	0	1
3. Important	89.66	0	1
Importance of Istanbul for member's identity			
1. Not important at all	12.79	0	1
2. Neither important or unimportant	25.58	0	1
3. Important	61.63	0	1

As it can be seen from the Table 2, 88.64% of respondents are male. This is a very representative summary of the total membership profile of Boyali HTA as the number of female members are significantly less than male members. This does not mean that women do not participate in the activities of HTA but it is because generally only a single person in each family is usually a formal member of the HTA not to pay multiple membership fees. However, I observed that in general male members visit the HTA building to spend time at its teahouse and

women are only there when they take part in activities specific to females. Thus, one can argue that Boyali HTA is a male-oriented association and men have a direct role in providing remittances to the HTA as women are usually housewives and not bread winners. As the remittances are paid by males in each family and females are usually not formal members of the HTA, the gender dummy variable is not included in the regression models. Another important descriptive statistic is about the education levels of members as majority of them have only primary school diploma which also signals the low levels of educational activities through remittances. Moreover, only 22.16% of respondents were not born in their hometown. So, the majority of HTA members are first-generation immigrants.

In terms of homeownership, it can be seen that majority of members do own the apartment they live both in Istanbul and in Boyali. Furthermore, 50.58% of respondents have reported that they are willing to return to their villages in the future. Members are also asked about their main reason of being a member to the Boyali HTA and results show that 62.43% of them have said that they became a member in order to contribute to the development of their village. The remainder of the respondents have said that they became a member to help the socio-economic integration of their countrymen in Istanbul and socialise with them. Around 90% of all respondents have noted that their hometown is important to their identity although Istanbul where they currently live in is important to 62% of them.

Logit regression is performed in the empirical analysis as the dependent variables in the empirical models are binary (in the first model the binary variable equals to 1 if the member remit to HTA and in the second one it is equal to 1 if the reason of membership is to help the development of hometown). The following section presents the results.

Empirical Results

The first empirical model aims to understand characteristics of immigrants who send collective remittances to the village via HTA. Table 3 presents the marginal effects of logit model where a dummy variable which is equal to 1 if members remit to HTA other than membership fee is used as the dependent variable.

Model (4) in Table 3 shows that older people are, on average, more likely to remit when we control for other variables. This could be due to stronger ties of the elderly with their hometown compared with the younger members. Moreover, Table 3 presents a statistically significant positive association between contributing collective remittances and members' view about how much their hometown is important for their identity. Interestingly, regression results show that



stronger ties with Istanbul also increase the chance of remitting to HTA. This could be due to the positive correlation between monthly income of members and their view about the importance of Istanbul for their identity. In other words, one can argue that economically better integrated immigrants have a stronger connection with Istanbul and have higher chance to remit due to their economic means. This has also been explicitly stated by HTA members during deep interviews. A 43-year old male member stated:

"Istanbul is, of course, very important. We were born in our hometown but Istanbul is where we earn our money. Job is here. We eat Istanbul's bread even when we visit our hometown in the summer."

Table 3. Marginal Effects of the Logit Regressional (Dependent Variable: binary variable which equals to 1 if the member remit to HTA)

Variable Name	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Age	.011***	.009***	.007*	.007*
Marital Status (1=married, 0=single)	-	-.230*	-.307**	-.275**
Education level (RC: Illiterate)	.249***			
Literate without diploma	2.69	2.60	1.89	1.85
Primary school diploma	3.23	2.50	2.31	2.07
Secondary school diploma	3.23	2.51	2.32	2.13
High-school diploma	3.26	2.40	2.24	1.99
University degree and above	3.14	2.28	2.20	2.06
Birthplace (1=Sivas, 0=Istanbul)		-.27	-.044	-.045
Homeowner in Istanbul		.255***	.259***	.215***
Homeowner in Sivas		.224***	.245***	.185***
Years after migration			.001	.001
Willing to return			.124*	.125*
HTA membership duration			.009*	.008**
Importance of hometown for member's identity				.084*
Importance of Istanbul for member's identity				.118***
Pseudo-R ²	.0986	.2055	.2634	.3081
Predicted probability of dependent variable	.6719	.6939	.6777	.6843

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Moreover, it is found that married members are less likely to remit on average when we control for other variables. This is understandable

as married people have higher expenditures which may not allow them to remit. Model (4) also controls for the effect of homeownership on the decision to remit. Results show that being a homeowner in Istanbul increases the probability to remit, on average, by 21.5% compared to members without homeownership in Istanbul. Thus, we can say that economic wellbeing in the destination province is important to be able to contribute to the development of the origin provinces. Furthermore, homeowners in the village are also, on average, more likely to remit. Having a house in the village would mean to have a higher attachment to it and, thus, it is no surprise that those people have a higher probability to remit compared to the ones who do not own a house in the village.

When we control for the willingness to return, as expected, it is found that members who are willing to return to their hometown permanently in the future have 12.5% higher probability to remit as they would like to live in a more developed hometown. Lastly, membership seniority is found to increase the probability to remit when we control for other variables and this can be due to a better connection between the HTA and members.

In addition to understanding who are more likely to remit, it is also interesting to understand who chose to become a member to HTA to contribute to the hometown development and who joined the HTA to support the socio-economic integration of their *hemşehris* in Istanbul. Table 4 presents the results of the regression analysis where the reason of becoming a member is the dependent variable. Results show that there are mainly two statistically significant factors that decrease the likelihood of being an HTA member with the aim of improving their hometown's development basically through infrastructural investments. Those variables are namely: being born in the hometown and, reporting a higher level of importance of hometown for the member's identity. Thus, one can argue that older generation prefers to contribute more in socio-economic integration of immigrants in Istanbul and to socialize with their countrymen. This is also supported by the deep interview results. For example, a 71-year old male member stated:

"Better connections with our relatives are only important for us, the elderly. New generation is lost. They do not give importance to kinship. HTA helps new generation to be a little more connected and know each other."

Furthermore, the members who stated willingness to return to the village have a higher probability to become a member of the HTA with the aim of contributing to the development of their hometown.



Table 4. Marginal Effects of the Logit Regressional (Dependent Variable: binary variable which equals to 1 if the reason of membership is to help the development of hometown)

Variable Name	Model 1	Model 2
Age	.003	.003
Marital Status (1=married, 0=single)	.138	.111
Education level (RC: Illiterate)		
Literate without diploma	-3.11	-3.07
Primary school diploma	-2.74	-2.56
Secondary school diploma	-2.66	-2.54
High-school diploma	-2.72	-2.56
University degree and above	-2.75	-2.69
Birthplace (1=Sivas, 0=Istanbul)	-.200*	-.204*
Homeowner in Istanbul	-.007	.036
Homeowner in Sivas	-.150	-.071
Years after migration	.002	.001
Willing to return	.154*	.151*
HTA membership duration	-.009*	-.008
Importance of hometown for member's identity		-.100*
Importance of Istanbul for member's identity		-.081
Pseudo-R ²	.0798	.1030
Predicted probability of dependent variable	.6473	.6501

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Conclusion

This study aims to show the role of hometown associations and the generated collective remittances on rural development in Turkey. A fieldwork study in an HTA in Istanbul helped me not only to understand why rural-to-urban migration or collective remittances sent back origin regions does not improve the economic development of those rural areas in Turkey but also to capture the characteristics of immigrants who were willing to remit and contribute to the development of their villages. The results also showed that HTAs play an important role especially in an economic world with increasing inequalities by improving the socio-economic integration of immigrants into the urban areas and providing a redistributive mechanism which acts as a remedy for the rural areas under neoliberal economic policies.

In order to understand the role of collective remittances on the rural development in Turkey and, thus, the role of HTAs, one of the HTAs in Istanbul namely "Boyalı Village Development Association" (Boyalı HTA) is chosen for the fieldwork during which both semi-structural and deep interviews are conducted. The way of establishing and funding of

HTAs are through membership fees but donations of villagers are economically more significant resources. In a fieldwork that has stretched over a 6-month period both in Istanbul and Sivas, I have observed that donations are mostly collected when there is an infrastructure investment project for the village and, it is interesting to see that sizable amounts of money is remitted through these donations. In the case of Boyali village, two reasons can be identified to understand the puzzle of no effect of urban-to-rural collective remittances on the economic development in rural areas. Firstly, there is almost no agricultural employees left home as the village seems to be almost forbidden during the winter. Chain migration and the lack of economic and educational prospects led almost all the villagers to migrate to Istanbul. Secondly, it has been found that collective remittances are spent not to improve agricultural productivity and increase rural employment but mainly to build non-productive infrastructure in villages such as building roads, distribution of clean water to each house and so on.

Moreover, the analysis of semi-structured interviews show that older people are, on average, more likely to remit through their HTA when we control for other variables. It is also found that the higher the importance of hometown for one member's identity, the more likely that individual is to donate to his/her HTA. Interestingly, regression results show that stronger ties with Istanbul also increase the chance of remitting through HTA. This could be due to the positive correlation between income of members and their view about the importance of Istanbul for their identity that is observed in the data. In other words, one can argue that economically better integrated immigrants have a stronger connection with Istanbul and have higher chance to remit due to their better economic means. It is also found that homeownership in Istanbul increases the probability to remit, on average, by 21.5% compared to members without a home in Istanbul. Thus, we can say that economic wellbeing in the destination province is important to be able to contribute in the development of the origin provinces. Furthermore, homeowners in the village are also, on average, more likely to remit. When we control for the willingness to return, it is found that members who are willing to return to their hometown permanently in the future have 12.5% higher probability to remit as they would like to return to a village where life is more comfortable. Lastly, membership duration is found to increase the probability to remit when we control for other variables and this can be due to a better connection between the HTA and members.

In addition to understanding who are more likely to remit, it is also interesting to figure out who became a member to HTA with an aim



to contribute to their hometown's development and who rather joined the HTA to support the socio-economic integration of their countrymen in Istanbul. Micro-level analysis shows that there are mainly three statistically significant factors that effect the likelihood of being an HTA member with the aim of improving their hometown's development basically through infrastructural investments. Those variables are namely: being born in the hometown, willingness to return to the hometown and, reporting a higher level of importance of hometown for the member's identity.

All in all, fieldwork analysis showed that the collective remittances are used to improve the infrastructure of villages and to contribute to the socio-economic integration of immigrants in urban areas which could be the reason of no positive link between rural-to-urban migration and rural development in Turkey. The use of collective remittances for non-productive infrastructural investments seems to only help emigrants to continuously visit their villages during summer season. However, as the collective remittances do not contribute to increasing the agricultural productivity, increasing rural employment and/or rural schooling, younger generations of immigrants in Istanbul do not necessarily have an intention to return to their howetowns. Members of Boyalı HTA argued that they cannot go back to their villages even if this is what they desire and the main obstacle is the lack of educational opportunities for their children. Older generation who do not have to work to have a sustainable income and can instead rely on their pensions are far more willing to return to their hometown eventually.

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