Transborder Kin-minority as Symbolic Resource in Hungary

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Abstract

The paper argues that diaspora engagement policies were designed by the Orbán government in order to strengthen the government's nationalist image within the homeland constituency. First, I offer an overview of main comparative approaches in the study of diaspora engagement. Then I turn to the Hungarian case. After giving a brief summary of pre-2010 developments, I analyze the Orbán government's diaspora politics with a special emphasis on non-resident citizenship. The main argument is that the centre-right Orbán government elected into power in 2010 was not motivated by geopolitical or economic aims when it introduced non-resident citizenship and designed a new set of diaspora engagement institutions. By embracing non-resident citizenship the main aim of the Hungarian centre-right party was to strengthen its nationalist image within the country as the radical populist Jobbik party emerged and started to challenge Fidesz from the right. Through the inclusion of transborder and diaspora Hungarians, the Orbán government could claim that it restored the unity of the Hungarian nation and, at least symbolically, undid the border changes of the 1920 Trianon Peace Treaty. The new diaspora policies and institutions including birthright travel programs and language courses were intended to folklorize and diasporize Hungarian expatriates and their descendants in the overseas territories rather than mobilize them. Through these symbolic inclusion efforts, the Hungarian nationalist government wants to claim that it maintains Hungarian ethnocultural heritage in the overseas diasporas as well. Thus, the overseas diaspora has been utilized by the Orbán government as a symbolic resource.

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1. Diaspora and transnationalism: a comparative sketch

In the past decades, transnationalism and diasporas have become a major research field in social sciences (Agunias, 2009; Basch et al., 1994; Bauböck, 2010; Erdal and Oeppen, 2013; Esman, 2009; Faist and Kivisto, 2007; Faist et al., 2010; Faist, 1999; Faist et al., 2011; Øestergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Quayson and Daswani, 2013; Sheffer, 2006; Smith, 2010). The phenomena themselves, however, are not new. Transnationalism, defined broadly as ties linking people across borders of states, predates the emergence of modern nation states (Cohen, 1999; Vertovec, 1999). The dispersion of ethnic and religious groups was common well before modern times. Mass population movement was a common result of wars and conquests, demographic and economic changes before the emergence of Westphalian nation states. Well before modern transportation and telecommunication tools, the transfer of goods and knowledge was carried out by mainly by migration which had a huge impact on ancient empires (Koslowski, 2002). There are, however, important systemic differences between past and contemporary transnational networks and engagement. While dispersed ethnic and religious groups often maintained and reproduced their cultural customs and identification with their homelands often before the modern era, contemporary diasporas can become virtual members of their homeland societies through the use of modern telecommunication technologies. Satellite television and the internet rendered geographical distance less relevant and made it possible for expatriates and diaspora groups to overcome physical distance and actively participate in the social life of their homelands (Basch et al., 1994). In contrast with older forms of migrant crossborder activities, contemporary transnationalism implies "regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders" (Portes et al., 1999, p. 219). Frequent interaction through modern means of communication establishes a qualitatively different transnational experience, since it makes it possible to maintain active presence in homeland public spheres.

Transnational participation impacts not only the sense of belonging and identification, but also transnational political and economic participation. As diasporas and expatriates became constantly connected to their homelands, they could easily utilize their dual, in-between status and start lucrative business projects. "Middleman diasporas" (Cohen, 1997; Esman, 2009) have been active in two directions. On the one hand, they have been importing goods and ideas from their homelands as well as acting as magnets for chain migration. Overseas diasporas have also been active in the reverse direction. Through investment, remittances and the import of knowledge, they have become important economic actors in

their homelands. In some cases, they demanded political rights so that they can as stakeholders and influence decisions (Bauböck, 2007, 2003). The increasing volume of grassroots transnational engagement has incentivized governments to intervene in order to regulate and further mobilize diasporas (Portes, 1999). In contrast with migration and transnational engagement, institutionalized diaspora politics is a relatively new phenomenon. With the increase in the volume of migration and the parallel growth of transnational networks, governments became interested in diaspora institution building. Since the 1980s there has been a significant growth in the number of diaspora institutions, and today more than half of all states are estimated to have set up some formal institutional arrangements to include expatriates and diasporas (Gamlen et al., 2013).

In many cases, governments realized that expatriates could be used for lobbying purposes in geostrategically important developed countries. In order to facilitate lobbying, governments tried to organize diasporas and strengthen their ties with their homeland governments so as to make lobbying more effective. Institutionalizing diaspora networks also serves economic purposes. Through the opening of diaspora investment channels and setting up diaspora investment schemes, governments hope to boost the volume of diaspora investment and remittances. In these cases, governments react to the realities of transnational social engagement, but their engagement nonetheless will impact transnational networks. In other cases, governments do not simply react, but rather they themselves try to initiate transnational engagement in the hope of higher economic returns and increased lobbying power. Paradoxically, national governments that engage with expatriates and diasporas become transnational actors themselves (Chin and Smith, 2015, p. 83).

The comparative analysis of diaspora management is a relatively recent phenomenon. In this emerging field, different comparative approaches have been suggested to understand the variations of diaspora constellations. The study of transnational engagement has been dominated by three main approaches. Ethnographic research investigates how transnational belonging and activities impact individual and group identification, cultural reproduction, consumption patterns, migrant solidarities, integration in host societies, and transnational political participation. In contrast with these mostly micro-level approaches focusing on individual experiences, mezzo-level sociological and economic analysis explore the dynamics of transnational informal networks. Third, special attention has been given (mostly by political scientists) to the institutionalization of diasporas from a macro perspective. In the following, I will sketch a typology of the main institutional macro approaches before I turn to

the overview of the Hungarian case. As it would be impossible to give an exhaustive taxonomy of diaspora scholarship, I will identify only the main thematic issues and research perspectives. I will mention literature only to illustration my points rather than to offer a complete catalogue of all relevant studies in the field.

1.1 *Transnational agency*

In the study of diaspora institutions, one important variable to look at is agency. Since the emergence of transnational scholarship, "bottom-up" transnational activity has been distinguished from state-lead, "from above" initiatives (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998). This distinction has become the mainstream analytical tool both in case studies and comparative research (Délano and Gamlen, 2014; Øestergaard-Nielsen, 2003). As mentioned above, the institutionalization of diasporic relations is often preceded by the emergence of grassroots, bottom-up diaspora network building processes (Portes 1999). In these cases, transnationalism follows a bottom-up trajectory, and nation state actors react by institution-building to the social realities created by grassroots transnational movements. Consequently, the institutionalization of transnational activities can at best channel, stimulate or contain established transnational practices rather than initiate them. In this view, nation states are not the main actors in transnationalism but have only a rather limited impact on the development of crossborder modalities.

The bottom-up approach has been criticized for ignoring or downplaying nation states' efforts to dominate transnational engagement and transactions. As Gamlen points out, the "migration state" has far more leverage in transnational interaction than bottom-up perspectives suggest (Gamlen, 2008). According to Gamlen, governments often take an active and preemptive role in diaspora building through facilitating the cultivation of the national culture in expatriate and diasporic communities as well as through giving official recognition to diaspora organizations (Gamlen, 2008, pp. 843–844). The integration of diasporas may also entail the inclusion of non-resident nationals in the citizenry as equal members through the introduction of non-resident citizenship which confers citizenship rights as well as obligations on migrants and transborder kin-populations (Gamlen, 2008, pp. 847–851; Pogonyi, 2011). Although formal inclusion through fast-track non-resident citizenship creates a legal tie between the individual and the homeland, it also impacts identification and diasporic group formation processes (Barry, 2006, p. 19). Diaspora should not be seen as a bounded entity, but rather as a claims making tool (Brubaker, 2005) which is used to create diasporic groups (Tölölyan, 2010). Legal recognition of non-resident kin-populations

(including expatriates and their descendants, more distant diasporic communities as well as transborder kin-populations) is an identitarian project that aims at constructing or strengthening symbolic nationness across borders (Délano and Gamlen, 2014, p. 49).

The relationship of active diasporas demanding institutional recognition and homeland governments is often marked by differences in interests and strategic aims. The transborder state-diaspora nexus is not a one-way process but rather a "complex empirical dialectic between sending countries and emigrants of diasporas," that try to use transnational institutions to extract benefits for their own particular purposes (Øestergaard-Nielsen, 2003, p. 14). As Itzigsohn points out, governments which have long ignored diasporas try to channel diasporic activism through policies which do not necessarily coincide with the interests of diasporas (Itzigsohn, 2007). For example, the Mexican and Dominican governments facilitated diaspora investment, while expatriates wanted more than easy access to the homeland market and symbolic rights and pressured their governments into making dual citizenship including voting rights available for expatriates (Barry, 2006, p. 15; Itzigsohn, 2007, p. 127). Expatriates, exiles and diasporas can also be important facilitators of political change. Transnational engagement and the growing symbolic and economic power of diasporas help external populations to put forward to contest state lead identity construction projects and politics (Basch et al., 1994).

Diaspora engagement policy building is a dialectic process influenced by different aims and strategic interests of multiple actors. Transnational agency issues are very hard to study in an analytically appropriate way. Transnational approaches have been proposed as alternatives to methodological nationalist (Basch et al., 1994; Reisenauer and Faist, 2010; Wimmer, 2013) and groupist (Brubaker, 2005, 2004) perspectives. Nonetheless, even the more nuanced transnational perspectives which try to go beyond the nation- and state-centric approaches tacitly accept methodologically probably necessary, but conceptually problematic simplifications and generalizations on agency (Collyer, 2013, p. 328). Most of the analysis I have so far mentioned focuses on home state, diaspora and host state actors, and analyzes variations in transnational engagement in the triadic nexus of these three main agents. Diasporas make demands on host and home states, home states institutionalize diasporic networks and use them for lobbying purposes while host states also try to utilize diasporas to formulate their own geopolitical and economic interests in diasporas' homelands (Safran, 2005). Although the triadic agency model is very helpful in highlighting some important structural patterns of diaspora engagement dialectic, it should be noted that there is a great

diversity within the three main actors themselves. As Dufoix explains, diasporas are heterogeneous and have diverse, contested and often conflicting "internal" interests and identifications (Dufoix, 2008). To make things even more complicated, diasporic identifications and transnational experiences change over time (Gamlen, 2006) both spontaneously and also as a result of institutionalization of transnational belonging. Diaspora organizations and groups are marked by internal disputes and intra-diasporic competition (Coufoudakis, 1993) in which diasporic identifications are constantly contested, renegotiated and reconfigured (Paerregaard, 2010). Likewise, states' strategic objectives in diaspora mobilization are diverse and subject to change (Koinova, 2012, 2010). Thus, diversity applies within diasporas, homelands and host states as well.

1.2 *Rationale of engagement*

In addition to examining the question of agency, contemporary diaspora scholarship has focused on the reasons of diaspora engagement. In order to understand the patterns and dynamics of institutionalization of transnational engagement, it is important to discuss whether transborder exchanges are initiated by non-government actors or governments. But the analysis of diaspora engagement policies also requires the systematic analysis of governments' specific reasons for institutionalizing diasporic relations.

In the literature, three main arguments can be identified concerning states' motivations in diaspora institution building. First, it has been argued that governments follow their pragmatic economic and geopolitical interests in designing diaspora and expatriate inclusion measures. In an early comparative effort, Barry acknowledges that states and diasporas often have different reasons for strengthening transnational activities, however she claims that state actors' motivations in diaspora engagement are explained first and foremost by economic considerations (Barry, 2006, p. 28). Countries of emigration try to extract investment and remittances from expatriates and expect that diasporas will further homeland interests through lobbying. It follows that diaspora engagement is an important project primarily in developing countries with a high volume of outmigration. In addition to economic considerations, governments may also want to counter unfavorable demographic trends by institutionalizing diaspora relations. The maintenance of transnational ties with migrants and diasporas can be used to facilitate return migration and counter demographic decline in emigration states (Fitzgerald, 2009).

The instrumental explanation is still widespread, but more recently a number of quantitative studies have suggested that governments' increasing diaspora activism cannot

always and fully be explained solely by the pursuit of rational economic and geopolitical interest (Délano and Gamlen, 2014; Gamlen, 2006). Through the quantitative analysis of 144 countries, Gamlen tests if rationalist, constructivist or institutional theories explain state's diaspora engagement projects (Gamlen et al., 2013). The main finding of Gamlen's regression analysis is that several non-economic factors including domestic and international variables impact diaspora engagement strategies. Interestingly, Gamlen finds no empirical evidence that resource tapping or efforts to counter brain drain are important incentivizing factors for states in reaching out to their external populations.

Similarly to Gamlen, Collyer stresses the relevance of non-economic factors in diaspora engagement (Collyer, 2013). Collyer maintains that in addition to pragmatic material considerations, states introduce "transsovereign" (Csergo and Goldgeier, 2004) or "transnational nationalist" (Pogonyi, 2014) inclusion policies in order to reconceptualize statehood and adjust nationalist narratives to transnational developments. In addition to the reconceptualization of nationhood conceptions, another factor in diaspora engagement initiatives is the growing normative importance of migrants' recognition in international arrangements (Collyer, 2013, p. 13).

In another quantitative comparative analysis, Ragazzi proposes a new typology on the basis of existing scholarship (Ragazzi, 2014). He distinguishes five different policy areas in diaspora incorporation: symbolic, bureaucratic, legal, diplomatic, and economic policies. Ragazzi uses this typology to identify five main types of diaspora regimes. In his analysis, variations in diaspora institution building cannot be fully explained either by structural instrumental assumptions or transnational nationalist considerations. Ragazzi acknowledges that economic development is an important structural factor that informs diaspora engagement policies. Less developed, economically peripheral emigrant states follow a different pattern in policies on transnational economic transactions and in their external cultural policies as well. Ragazzi, however, contends that different diaspora policy patterns are in correlation with what he calls as the broader "governmentality framework" (Ragazzi, 2014, p. 74) rather than purely economic pragmatism.

Pragmatic and symbolic aspects of diaspora engagement are often intertwined. Even what seems to be a purely symbolic measure may have pragmatic implications. Emigrant states have a pragmatic interest in maintaining symbolic nationhood in the diaspora. Although governments claim sovereignty not only over territory but over their citizenry as well (Pogonyi, 2011), they have very limited means to extract obligations from their citizens

residing outside state borders. States' monopoly over coercive power applies only within the states' territory. Transsovereign state action need to rely on alternative solutions and use non-coercive means to compel non-resident citizens to make contributions. As Fitzgerald notes, governments are motivated in their diaspora engagement policies by hopes that emotionally and symbolically more attached expatriates and diasporas are more likely to send remittances and development aid (Fitzgerald, 2009, p. 175). Moreover, diaspora engagement may also serve governments' internal political purposes. As Bauböck notes, through the reproduction of nationness beyond the borders, the emigrant state wants to increase its "political support among domestic constituencies that are ideologically committed to ethnic nationhood or socially linked to emigrant societies" (Collyer, 2013, p. xv). Ostergaard also thinks that the inclusion of migrant diasporas strengthen a specific image of nationness and strengthen nationalist projects within the homeland (Øestergaard-Nielsen, 2003, p. 18).

1.3 *Institutional variations*

The institutional arrangements that are introduced to foster transnational interaction show an "amazing complexity" (Tölölyan, 2010). Path-dependent processes and states' and diasporas' specific interests result in diverse institutional frameworks. The most common forms of institutionalized transnationalism include quasi or full non-resident citizenship, facilitated repatriation/return migration policies, official recognition (and even financial support) of diaspora institutions, the introduction of separate government offices (including separate ministries) responsible for overseeing diaspora relations, state sponsored education and cultural events outside the borders, birthright travel frameworks, setting up global television channels and internet forums, and bilateral treaties with states where significant diasporic populations reside. It is important to add that non-state and state actors cannot always be easily distinguished. Governments often rely on non-governmental organizations, schools and churches in the propagation of national culture and solidarities abroad (Delano, 2011). Bearing all these complexities in mind, the methodologically proper examination of diasporic constellations and politics necessitates the combination of multi-level and "neopluralist" (Fitzgerald, 2006) and "multilevel" (Delano, 2011) research approaches.

In the past years, several taxonomies have been put forward in the comparative study of diaspora engagement state policies. In an overview of diaspora institutions, Portes contends that transnational exchanges happen in three main distinct terrains: the cultural, political and social spheres (Portes et al., 1999, p. 221). Similarly, Vertovec identifies transnational exchanges in political, socio-cultural and economic domains (Vertovec, 2004). Levitt and De

la Dehesa categorize state outreach policies along five main types: setting up new government offices, investment and remittance channeling policies, extension of citizenship to non-resident populations, introducing new state services abroad, and launching programs with the objective of maintaining emigrants' sense of belonging (Levitt and de la Dehesa, 2003). Gamlen distinguishes diaspora building measures which maintain diasporic belonging from formal diaspora integration tools that create a legal bond between homelands and diasporas in order to extend membership privileges and extract obligations from diasporas (Gamlen, 2008).

1.4 *Further systemic variables*

In addition to the questions of agency, the issue of states' interest in engaging the diaspora, and the institutional variations of diaspora inclusion, another relevant factor in comparative research is the temporal dimension of diaspora policy making. Several case studies have looked into the structural factors that actuate the institutionalization of transnational ties. One of the most widely shared assumptions is that institutional transformation follows the shifting of the perception of diasporas and émigrés. Such changes occur not only in the aftermath of increased outmigration, but also during democratic transition (Brand, 2014; Délano and Gamlen, 2014). As part of historical reconciliation, post-authoritarian regimes turn to diasporas and incorporate them politically to strengthen the state's democratic image (Pogonyi, 2014). Increasing immigration may also have a significant impact on diaspora policy making. According to Joppke, right-wing nationalist parties in traditional emigrant states reach out to co-ethnic populations abroad in order to counterbalance increasing immigration and to maintain the dominant national group's claims over the state (Joppke, 2005). A similar strategy has been pursued by newly independent states with large ethnic minorities. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the newly independent countries reached out to their overseas diasporas and transborder ethnic kin-minorities in order to strengthen the ethnic character of the state (Pogonyi et al., 2010). The same considerations are present in newly independent countries and migrant sending states involved in geopolitical and ethnic conflict (Øestergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Diaspora activism in times of statehood struggles and during intra- or inter-state armed conflicts has become an important research field since Benedict Anderson's conceptualization of "long-distance nationalism" (Anderson, 1998). Koinova has investigated the systemic variables that determine the ideological direction and impact of diaspora involvement in homeland conflicts in a series of in-depth cases studies and comparative analyses (Koinova, 2014, 2013a, 2013b).

The comparison of the scope and density of engagement policies opens up another rich research perspective. Itzigsohn distinguishes narrow and broad transnational modalities (Itzigsohn et al., 1999). In this analysis, the depth of transnational practices are measured along the degree of institutionalization, individual involvement in transborder interaction, and physical movement of people between the homeland and the host state.

Diaspora management strategies can also be assessed in terms of implied incentives for repatriation. Although governments are usually interested in establishing transborder networks and securing the flow of capital, know-how and political influence from migrant populations, in some cases, the institutionalization of diasporic networks are intended to facilitate return migration, while in other cases there are no such motifs present (Brubaker and Kim, 2011; Mylonas, 2013a, 2013b; Tsuda, 2009).

In contrast with migrant diasporas, transborder kin-minorities created by shifting international borders have received relatively little attention in transnationalism scholarship. But despite their different historical background, transborder kin-minorities are not at all different in terms of transnational engagement from classical migrant diasporas that emerge in border regions. It could even be argued that the transboder kin-communities are the paradigmatic examples of transnational engagement. From a normative liberal point of view, national minorities created by shifting international borders have stronger moral claims for the maintenance of their national culture and ties with their homelands than expatriate diasporas. Transborder kin-minorities never moved, their minority status should not be seen as a result of their deliberate action and thus they have more compelling claims than immigrant minorities to maintain and reproduce their minority culture and language (Kymlicka, 1995, pp. 30–31; 78–79). Bilateral approaches and the involvement of kin-states in resolutions and disputes that involved their external kin-minorities have been present in Europe since the 1919 large scale border adjustments. Not surprisingly, most countries in Eastern, East Central and Southeast Europe recognized some special responsibility for the protection of their kin-minorities in their constitutions in the early 1990s (Pogonyi et al., 2010, pp. 3–4). Kin-state involvement in minority protection through bilateral agreements with the host-states has also been encouraged by the Council of Europe and the United Nations (Council of Europe, n.d.). In addition to bilateral minority protection measures, kin-states throughout East and Southeast Europe offer facilitated naturalization and/or fast track repatriation to their kin-minorities. Thus, for analytical purposes, transborder kin-minorities could be regarded as a special subset of diasporas.

2. Hungarian diaspora as a symbolic asset

Hungarian minorities in the Carpathian Basin created after the border changes in 1920 have long been an important symbolic asset in Hungarian politics. Irredentist ideas dominated the politics of the interwar era. One of the reasons for Hungary's involvement in World War Two as an ally of Nazi Germany was the prospect of reannexation of territories with large Hungarian minorities. After World War Two, the cooperation of the Warsaw Pact states and the official rhetoric of socialist internationalism precluded the Hungarian government step up in the defense of Hungarian minorities in the near abroad. Nonetheless, the concern for transborder Hungarians did not fade away from public memory. From the 1970s, the Hungarian democratic opposition openly demanded help for Hungarians discriminated against in Romania and Czechoslovakia. Democratization and transborder engagement have become twin projects of the anti-Communist opposition including both nationalists and liberals.

Since the early 1990s, right-wing parties increasingly used transborder Hungarians to strengthen their national image, while liberals and social democrats used the opportunity to accuse the Right of nationalism and even irredentism. The shift in the political use of transborder populations is well illustrated by the fact that in the first democratic election after the fall of Communism, it was the liberal Free Democrat's Party (SZDSZ) that promised to offer non-resident citizenship for transborder Hungarians. In the 1989 party program, the SZDSZ called for "national sovereignty that includes active solidarity with members of the Hungarian nation that have citizenship in another country". SZDSZ advocated not only active state involvement for the support of transborder Hungarians, but also citizenship for "every person who declares to be Hungarian and their families" (Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége, 1989). The right-wing government elected in 1990 institutionalized transborder engagement but it did not offer citizenship to non-resident Hungarians (Kántor, n.d.). Transborder organizations have since 1998 requested the extension of Hungarian citizenship so that Hungarians outside the borders would have access to Hungary when it joined the EU. The first Orbán government elected into power in 1998, however, decided to introduce only quasi-citizenship for Hungarians. It introduced the so-called Status Law, which made visa free entry, limited employment opportunities and access to educational institutions in Hungary available for ethnic Hungarians in neighboring states ("Legislation on Kin-Minorities: Hungary. CDL(2002)077-e," 2002). In the 2002 parliamentary election campaign, the left-wing and liberal parties opposed the Status Law, fearing that it would open up the possibility

for all Romanian citizens to come and work in Hungary. After their victory, the new left-liberal government amended the Status Law and removed the references to a unified Hungarian nation beyond the borders. The amendments were criticized by the Fidesz, which claimed that by adopting the amendments, the left-wing government betrayed transborder Hungarians ("Ellenzéki nem a státustörvény lefejezésére" [Opposition votes against the beheading of the Status Law]," 2003; Kántor et al., 2004).

While in opposition between 2002 and 2010, the center-right Fidesz party kept the issue of transborder engagement continuously on agenda to maintain its national image. In 2003 Fidesz helped the transborder organizations that initiated a referendum on the introduction of non-resident citizenship. Although the referendum failed, Fidesz committed to introducing non-resident citizenship as soon as it was back in power. After the landslide victory of the center-right Fidesz party at the 2010 parliamentary election, nationalism became the main organizing principle of the Hungarian government's symbolic, economic and geopolitical policies. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced what he called a "freedom fight" against "colonizing" foreign powers including multinational companies, foreign investors, the IMF and the European Union in order to strengthen national sovereignty and boost the economy through reducing what the government considered "unfair extra-profit" made by multinational companies in the country. Streets were renamed, new monuments were erected and history books were rewritten with the aim of restoring Hungary's national pride. The government intended to structure social reality in line with the reinvigorated nation-centric imagination.

As part of the nationalist reframing of social and political life, the new government in 2010 introduced non-resident citizenship for Hungarians living outside the country in the name of "national reunification beyond the borders". The reformed Act on Citizenship of 2010 is a slightly updated version of the 2009 October proposal on non-resident citizenship. The draft law – among others, signed by Viktor Orbán – was submitted to Parliament only three days after the inaugural session of the new House. Two days later, the newly elected representatives of Fidesz submitted another symbolic proposal on the commemoration of the tragic consequences of the 1920 Trianon Peace Treaties as Hungary's biggest national catastrophe. This latter bill stressed that the Parliament was committed to restoring the national unity which was broken up by the 1920 Trianon Peace Treaties and stepping up against the assimilation of Hungarians who were cut from their homelands by shifting borders ("Act on National Belonging, ACT XLV of 2010," 2010). The center-right government

claimed that external citizenship facilitates national reunification and remedies the tragic consequences of the 1920 Trianon Peace Treaties. By doing so, it sent the clear message that the Fidesz would continue with the nationalist rhetoric in the hope of pre-empting the nationalist initiatives coming from the radical right-wing party Jobbik, which came in third in the 2010 May elections by securing 16.7% of the popular votes.

In addition to offering non-resident citizenship for Hungarians living outside the borders of the country, the new Fundamental Law adopted in 2011 also relies on the concept of a "single Hungarian nation" transcending borders ("The Fundamental Law of Hungary, 25 April 2011.," 2011). The former constitution (originally adopted in 1949 and amended 1989) stated that Hungary "feels responsibility" for the fate of Hungarians living abroad and to "promote and foster their relations with Hungary" ("Act XX of 1949. The Constitution of the Republic of Hungary," n.d.). The new Fundamental Law takes a much broader and active role than the earlier constitution in protecting transborder Hungarians and maintaining Hungarian culture beyond the borders. The Preamble promises "to preserve the intellectual and spiritual unity of our nation torn apart in the storms of the last century". The Fundamental Law also stipulates that Hungary "shall bear responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living beyond its borders" which includes helping the "establishment of their community self-governments" and "the assertion of their individual and collective rights" (for a detailed analysis of the Fundamental Law's implied nationhood conception, see (Körtvélyesi, 2012; Pogonyi, 2013; Venice Commission, n.d.). Left-wing analysts have accused the Orbán government of following Russian President Putin's path and nurturing clandestine territorial revisionist hopes after offering citizenship for Hungarians living in the transborder area (Orenstein et al., 2015). Following this logic of transborder national reunification, the government in 2011 amended the electoral law so that newly naturalized non-resident Hungarians would also have the right to participate in parliamentary elections (Pogonyi, 2013).

Non-resident votes did not become very important in the final mandate allocation at the 2010 April parliamentary election. By then 600,000 non-resident Hungarians had acquired citizenship. Among them, 193,793 had registered to vote, but as a result of the overcomplicated voting procedure, only 128,429 valid mail votes were counted. Fidesz received the overwhelming 95.4 percent of these votes, while Jobbik had 2.3 and the left-wing alliance had 1.2 percent. In the election, Fidesz won 133 seats – exactly the number necessary for an absolute majority. In the final calculation, votes from the non-resident constituency secured one seat for Fidesz, without which it would otherwise have no absolute majority.

With two-thirds of seats in Parliament, Fidesz may rewrite any laws including the Basic Law adopted in 2011. Fidesz luminaries including Prime Minister Orbán thanked non-resident Hungarians for their overwhelming support of the "national reunification" project. Viktor Orbán reinstated that he wanted to represent Hungarian interest regardless of borders and committed himself to help transborder Hungarians in their pursuit of territorial autonomy ("Orbán beiktatási beszéde," n.d.). While non-resident voters do not have a huge impact on the final election result, they are used as a legitimizing tool by the nationalist right-wing government.

It is important to note that non-resident citizenship is not intended to facilitate repatriation to Hungary. While in the late 1990s and early 2000s transborder Hungarians have been seen as potential labor force, the Hungarian government claims that non-resident citizenship offered for ethnic Hungarians will slow down outmigration of Hungarians from transborder historical Hungarian territories (Melegh, 2003). Nonetheless, easier access to Hungarian (and with it EU) citizenship may speed up migration from the less developed Hungarian regions in the neighboring countries to the kin-state. In the last decade, the number of Hungarians has continued to decline in Romania and Slovakia, which strengthened the process that Rogers Brubaker calls the "ethnic unmixing" in the transborder territories. According to the 2011 Slovak census, the number of Hungarians living in the country declined by 62,000 in the last decade; in 2001, 10.7% of the Slovak population had declared themselves to be Hungarian, whereas in 2011 only 9.4% declared themselves as Hungarian. In Romania, the number of Hungarians declined by 194,000 since 2002 and by around 400,000 since 1990. Although we have no empirical evidence if or how non-resident citizenship fosters outmigration, one can reasonably assume that it does not facilitate the survival and development of transborder minority communities. This is in stark contrast with the aims of the Hungarian government, which hopes that by offering non-resident citizenship to ethnic Hungarians, assimilation of the transborder Hungarian communities can be reversed or slowed down. Interestingly, according to a recent survey (Kiss and Barna, n.d.), transborder Hungarians considering migration no longer consider Hungary as their primary destination. In the case of Hungarians in Serbia and Ukraine, the availability of Hungarian passports makes access to EU job markets much simpler.

2.2 *Diaspora engagement: non-resident citizenship and beyond*

Non-resident citizenship including voting rights was the most important diaspora policy invention of the Orbán government. However, besides the legal inclusion of individuals with

Hungarian ancestry, the Orbán government set up different state offices and diaspora institutions to strengthen national ties across borders. The main declared objective of transnational nation-building was to help Hungarians outside the country to maintain their cultural heritage. As in the case of non-resident citizenship, the main target of these policies were transborder kin-populations.

The normative ideas behind transnational nation-building are set out in the government's key diaspora strategy document, the *Policy for Hungarian Communities Abroad: Strategic Framework for Hungarian Communities Abroad* drafted by Hungarian governmental offices in cooperation with different diaspora and transborder consultative bodies in 2011. This policy framework defines the strategic objectives and main institutions of Hungarian diaspora and kin-politics that "serve the prosperity of Hungarian communities abroad" ("Policy for Hungarian Communities Abroad: Strategic Framework for Hungarian Communities Abroad," 2013). According to the document, the outreach to Hungarians abroad (defined consequently as communities rather than individuals of Hungarian belonging or ancestry) is intended to secure the "survival of the nation". Transnational engagement is thus defined as the Hungarian state's effort to help Hungarians abroad to reproduce and maintain Hungarian cultural heritage. This promised help entails financial as well as political and symbolic support for the preservation of Hungarian culture abroad: "Hungary's kin-state policies reflect that Hungary provides political, moral and financial support for Hungarian institutions and organizations beyond its borders." The document identifies the main threats as assimilation, intermarriages and the decline of Hungarian populations in the neighboring states. The declared objective of Hungarian transborder politics is the reversal of assimilatory tendencies and cultivation of Hungarian national identification through education programs in the Hungarian language and the strengthening of a "network of institutions reproducing Hungarian national identity". It is claimed here that Hungarian minorities in the neighboring states are weak and even after EU accession are subjects to discrimination, and therefore they cannot effectively practice "the right to cultural reproduction" without the Hungarian state's active involvement. "The basic principle of the relationship between Hungary and Hungarian communities abroad, as well as the survival of Hungarian communities abroad, is that Hungary has to successfully increase its political, economic and cultural role in the region. Only under this condition can assimilation be hindered, and vigorous, developing communities be maintained, and supported" ("Policy for Hungarian Communities Abroad: Strategic Framework for Hungarian Communities Abroad," 2013).

Maintaining Hungarian nationhood abroad is defined by the policy framework as a non-instrumental identity project. The reproduction of Hungarian traditions and heritage is intended to boost national pride. "Hungary has every right to be proud of its traditions and its heritage of one thousand years. Our national identity has to be established upon a profound and extensive knowledge of our history and awareness of our achievements. Hungary, however, has to become the most modern and creative country in the region, in order to make belonging to the Hungarian nation more attractive" (ibid. 12). The value of nationhood is explained according to the classical romantic national narrative: "Hungary believes that every nation has unique values, which also applies to the Hungarian nation." National belonging is defined as a "value in itself". Consequently, external kin-populations are important for the homeland because their contribution "to the universal Hungarian culture is invaluable". It is added that "the borders of the nation stretch as far as the influence of the national institutions, which help maintaining the national identity". It is also suggested that the legal and social integration of Hungarians abroad is in-line with the governments "vision of a Europe of nations" (ibid. 12). It is not detailed if this vision of a Europe of Nations entails that the Hungarian government would prefer to replace state sovereignty with national sovereignty defined in identitarian and culturalist terms.

Interestingly, pragmatic and material considerations are mentioned only twice in the whole policy framework. The document declares that "linguistic and cultural diversity also have economic benefits", but it is left undiscussed what these economic benefits entail. It is also added that Hungary has an economic interest in the prosperity of Hungarians in the neighboring countries. It is hinted that the welfare of transborder Hungarians is important in maintaining ethnic balances in the external historical Hungarian territories. The document suggests that economic well-being and the right to maintain identity will slow down assimilation as well as outmigration of ethnic Hungarians in the neighboring countries. There is, however, no mention of any direct economic or material benefits that the Hungarian state could expect from diaspora engagement. This approach is in line with another important policy document outlining the main policy vision of the Orbán government. *The Programme of National Cooperation* calls for the restoration of the "Carpathian Basin Economic Space" ("The Programme of National Cooperation," 2010) and facilitates transborder economic cooperation, but it does not mention if the government would expect any particular material contribution of transborder Hungarians.

The institutional framework follows the diaspora engagement vision outlined in the policy framework. First, the Orbán government set up a new institutional framework and strengthened formal ties with transborder and diaspora organizations. In 2010 the main consultation forum of the emigrant diaspora, the Hungarian Standing Conference, was reconvened after six years (Herner-Kovács, 2004). This platform serves as a consultative coordination body that includes representatives of the Hungarian government, parties in parliament and Hungarian organizations in the neighboring states. The government set up the Hungarian Diaspora Council as a separate body to formalize the representation of migrant and overseas diasporas that have very different needs to transborder kin-populations (Kántor, 2014).

To coordinate and implement the funding of external cultural and educational programs, the government established the Bethlen Gábor Fund and a separate Bethlen Gábor Fund Management Private Limited Non-Profit Company (Kántor, 2014). Among others, the Bethlen Gábor Fund coordinated the Szülőföld (Homeland) educational aid program which secured financial support to Hungarian children studying in Hungarian language schools in the neighboring states. In addition to this, the Bethlen Gábor Fund announced several grants to local governments and civil organizations abroad in order to help the maintenance of Hungarian language and culture. It also helped to establish the House of Hungarians educational institution.

In line with the objectives mentioned in the strategic diaspora policy framework, new government offices were created to ensure better representation of diaspora and transborder interests. The State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad within the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice and a separate Interministerial Committee for Hungarian Communities Abroad were launched to harmonize transborder policies. As an important symbolic gesture, in 2010 the Orbán government set up the Committee on National Cohesion, the first independent committee focusing exclusively on Hungarians living outside the borders (Kántor, 2014, p. 27). To inform these offices, the government set up the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad which focuses on research and policy implementation (Herner-Kovács, 2004). As part of the committee, the Autonomy Subcommittee was established to help Hungarian autonomy movements in the neighboring states.

Next to the new offices, the government initiated new cultural and educational projects to strengthen and disseminate the idea of a transborder Hungarian nationness. It established the Határtalanul (Without Borders) high school exchange program. In this project, high

schools (both in Hungary and in the neighboring states) could apply for funding of transborder study trips where students were expected to familiarize themselves with Hungarian history and culture. This project serves to inculcate solidarity with a Hungarian nation beyond the borders (Pap, n.d.). To help the maintenance of Hungarian identification, language, and culture in the overseas diaspora, the government set up the so-called National Register website and newsletter. To familiarize distant emigrant diasporas (members of which often do not speak Hungarian) with Hungarian culture, the government started the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program. In the framework of this program, young Hungarians (teachers, folklorists, etc.) visit Hungarian overseas diasporas for a couple of months, and teach Hungarian language and culture. A similar project announced in 2015 March is aimed at "strengthening Hungarian identity and national cooperation" through reinvigorating Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin and strengthening their ties with Hungary (Nemzeti Regiszter, 2015).

Other initiatives including the Mikes Kelemen program and the Ithaka and Julianus projects intend to catalogue, preserve and collect Hungarian memorials and material heritage in the diaspora (Kántor, 2014). The new ReConnect Hungary is a classical birthright program that offers young Hungarians in the US with little knowledge of Hungary or Hungarian culture to familiarize themselves with national heritage and the country through an organized thematic package tour in Hungary and Hungarian territories in the neighboring countries (Herner-Kovács, 2014).

Conclusion

The overview of Hungarian diaspora engagement politics suggests a unique dynamic between homeland and transborder actors. As the overview of symbolic disputes over Hungarians outside the borders show, the development of Hungarian diaspora engagement is a path dependent process. Hungarians living outside the country, and more specifically, Hungarian minorities in the neighboring countries have had a central role in Hungarian political debates since the late 1980s. Before the 1989/1990 democratic turn, the democratic opposition used the plight of Hungarians discriminated against in the neighboring countries to contest Communist rule. Later, the nationalist conservative right-wing parties used transborder kin-politics to strengthen their nationalist image and label left-wing and liberal parties as anti-national. Nonetheless, even the nationalist right was reluctant to offer full citizenship for non-resident Hungarians despite explicit demands from transborder organizations. The center-right

Fidesz changed its course concerning non-resident citizenship only when its nationalist image was contested from the emerging far-right nationalist Jobbik party.

Contrary to diaspora engagement frameworks established in a migration context, the Hungarian government's new diaspora policies are not intended to serve the economic interests of the homeland. The flow of resources in this scheme is unidirectional. While the Hungarian government allocates financial support for the maintenance of Hungarian language and culture abroad, it expects no economic return from the institutionalization of diaspora and transborder networks. The institutionalization of the diaspora is not intended to help Hungary in its geostrategic interests either. Although it has been argued that the Orbán government nurtures imperialist hopes (Nagy, 2015) akin to inter-war imperial irredentism (Feischmidt, 2014), there has been no sign that external citizenship would increase Hungary's geopolitical influence in the region. On the contrary, the Hungarian government's more pro-active approach towards external minority protection resulted in the deterioration of interstate relations both with Romania and Slovakia. The only institution which can be considered as a diaspora lobby is the Friends of Hungary organization which was set up to strengthen Hungary's image in the US ("3,2 milliárdból lehetünk szebbek és jobbak az amerikaiak szemében," n.d.). At least in its rhetoric, the government dismisses the idea that non-resident citizenship would facilitate outmigration from transborder Hungarian territories. The government's declared aim is the opposite: to strengthen Hungarian presence in the external historical Hungarian territories. The inclusion of the diaspora cannot be seen as a repatriation measure intended to counterbalance unfavorable demographic developments within Hungary even if it will lead to the depopulation of Hungarian territories.

Taking all this into account, the Orbán government's attention to transborder and diaspora communities is motivated by purely symbolic reasons that are integral to Hungarian party politics. Transborder nationalism accompanying diaspora politics, however, does not mark a return to the classical ideas of nationalism, according to which political and national borders should be congruent. Although its rhetoric is indeed often reminiscent of the irredentist slogans of the interwar period, the center-right Orbán government does not have revisionist inclinations. It presents national reunification beyond the borders in the rhetoric framework of a borderless Europe in which individuals may cultivate transnational ties and minority rights (including cultural and territorial autonomy) are safeguarded by international treaties. One could argue that the Orbán government's romantic transnational nationalism or, more precisely, "trans-state nationalism" (Gal et al., 2010) promotes a rather innocent

deterritorialized conception (Basch et al., 1994) of symbolic and cultural nationness without irredentist claims. The Hungarian government and its ally pro-autonomy Hungarian minority parties in the neighboring countries, similarly to separatist groups in Scotland, Catalonia and the Basque Country, claim that their aspirations are fully in line with the EU principles of regionalization, decentralization, devolution, subsidiarity, regionalization and the protection of minority cultures. By doing so, they reframe nationalism in transnational and postnational terms (Pogonyi, forthcoming), which is fully in line with the shifting of sovereignty to the supra- and sub-state levels in the EU (Csergo and Goldgeier, 2004). Transnational nationalism relies on the norms recognized and promoted by the EU. Although Viktor Orbán has at several occasions sent strong anti-EU messages since 2010, the government has so far complied with EU expectorations. PM Viktor Orbán has compared Brussels to Moscow and suggested that Hungary was fighting a freedom war against the EU and the IMF, which, according to Orbán, have tried to curtail the country's sovereignty by effectively colonizing it ("'Opposing Views on the Rival March 15 Celebrations,'" 2012). The harsh rhetoric, however, has so far not been followed by anti-EU policy measures. This strategy, however, creates an opportunity for radical irredentist parties, which try to mobilize their supporters by linking anti-EU messages with territorial revisionism (E. Fox and Vermeersch, 2010). The Hungarian far-right party Jobbik has been openly pursuing irredentist rhetoric in addition to strongly opposing EU integration since its establishment and Hungary's EU membership. By pursuing national reunifications within the institutional framework of the EU, Fidesz is trying to save its nationalist image without overstraining diplomatic reactions with the EU, and simultaneously taking the wind out of the sails of the radical irredentist Jobbik.

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