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DIASPORA POLICIES
IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Abstract: The main aim of this paper is to give a general overview of diaspora policies with an emphasis on kin-state activism in Central and Eastern Europe. The first section of the paper will summarize the main theoretical approaches to diaspora studies, which are marked by the emerging tendency toward typology construction. In this part I will explore the most relevant typologies within this field of study from a critical perspective. The second section of the paper will turn to existing diaspora policies, offering a structural collection of the most commonly adopted diaspora engagement practices in Central and Eastern Europe. I will examine why and under what conditions kin-states in this part of Europe seek to engage co-national communities living beyond their borders, with special regard to the similarities.

Theoretical approaches to diaspora studies

Diaspora studies – as a relatively new and increasingly widespread interdisciplinary field of social sciences – seeks the construction of several typologies. This analytical approach consists of modelling diaspora communities and kin-state policies targeted toward them. It generalizes specific cases, with the final aim of understanding structurally the variations of diaspora constellations and comparing them to each other. This emerging tendency toward typology construction – so common in the social sciences – is useful to provide general overviews on research topics and comparative analysis. However, sometime it can be misleading. Too much generalization ignores the key features of the observed social, political and cultural phenomena. Typologies within diaspora studies tend to ignore the dynamic and often controversial feature of everyday diasporic life, diaspora institutions and diaspora policies.

In the following, with the aim to explore this theoretical task, I will collect and present some of the most relevant typologies within this field. My intention is to highlight the main methods, criteria and patterns on the basis of which these typologies have been elaborated, rather than to offer a complete catalogue of them. As a starting point, I will

return to the explicit definition of the diaspora concept, which I stated and explained in an earlier paper of mine.¹ According to this definition, diaspora denotes: 1) geographically dispersed macro communities of migratory origin 2) which have integrated into the society surrounding them, but have not fully assimilated, and 3) which have symbolic or objective relations with kin communities living in other areas, but believed to be of identical origin, and with their real or imagined ancestral homeland or kin-state.

Before examining actual typologies within diaspora studies, it is important to stress here that the use of the term diaspora for communities which meet all the criteria of the above definition may not automatically apply without further explication. From a cultural anthropological point of view, the categorization as well as the membership of any human collectivity should be self-ascribed. Indeed, neither politicians, nor researchers should decide if a person is part of a community or not. However, there are many communities dispersed all over the world which are defined as diaspora by the kin-state, even if the people who belong to them use other terms of definition and identification. The Hungarian diaspora is a good case in this regard. Its members used to consider their own community from perspective of the place where they lived (Hungarians in Buenos Aires, Hungarians in Germany, etc.) or the date of the first generation's emigration (the '45, '47 or '56 emigrés, etc.). Nevertheless, in Hungary recently it has become very common to call them all diaspora (see e.g. the name of the Hungarian Diaspora Council). This kind of external categorization is useful, because it allows to speak about the general phenomenon of dispersed Hungarian communities of migratory origin, however, in the study of particular communities, the diversity in self-determination needs to be considered and explained.

Getting back to the main definition, the first and perhaps most commonly accepted criterion regarding communities called diaspora is their migratory origin. Broadly, this criterion is what sets most diaspora communities apart from national minorities regarded as autochthonous. This latter category refers, on the one hand, to communities whose national identity has been consolidated within the context of other already existing nation-states (more frequent in Western Europe, such as the Basque and Catalan communities in Spain). On the other hand, the term autochthonous minority also refers to collectivities which, due to the modification of state borders, have found themselves outside of the country in which they once were part of the majority, and become citizens of other states (more common in Central and Eastern Europe, such as the Bulgarian minority in Macedonia, the Romanian minority in Moldova or the Hungarian minority in Romania). As Pogonyi et al. revealed: "*One important difference between Western and East Central Europe is that there are many more minorities in the West that are 'stateless' in this sense* [that there

1 Dániel Gazsó, "An Endnote Definition for Diaspora Studies," *Minority Studies* 18 (2015): 161–182.

is no state where their language and cultural identity is established as a national one], including large and territorially autonomous minority nations, such as the Catalans, Basques and Scots.”²

The origin-based distinction between diaspora communities of migratory origin and autochthonous national minorities constitutes the main distinction within this field. While in the case of a diaspora, it is the cohesive force of the migration from the place of origin that is present in the collective conscience which matters the most, for the latter ethnic and national communities, it is the naturalness of staying in the same location, preserving their contact with the native land and the historic past linked to one's habitat. In other words, the group-forming force of indigenesness and autochthonous existence is crucial. This distinction is found both in the academic as well as in the political arena. On the one hand, from the academic level, a classic example of this is Will Kymlicka's distinction between 'ethnic groups' and 'national minorities': "*What matters is not the terminology we use, but that we keep certain distinctions in mind. I believe [...] that it is important to distinguish national minorities (distinct and potentially self-governing societies incorporated into a larger state) from ethnic groups (immigrants who have left their national community to enter another society).*"³ On the other hand, from a political point of view, many countries with large co-national populations abroad have developed different kinds of kin-state policies toward diaspora communities of migratory origin than toward transborder national minorities regarded as autochthonous. Examples of that in Central and Eastern Europe are the distinction between 'Polonia' (or Polish Diaspora) and 'Poles abroad'; 'Serbian diaspora' and 'Serbs in the region'; 'Hungarian diaspora' versus 'transborder Hungarian minorities' living in neighboring countries.

The importance of this distinction lies not only in external definitions and self-identification, but also in the evolution of institutional frameworks. These two main types of minority used to formulate different kinds of claims and demands toward the host state. Whereas diaspora organizations fight mostly for the conditions enabling integration into the mainstream society, i.e. against negative discrimination, the organizations and political parties of minorities perceived as autochthonous often go beyond these objectives. They frequently advance claims of self-determination or autonomy (e.g. the autonomy demands of Hungarians in Transylvania), or they put forward separatist demands and may even strive to establish a new nation-state (e.g. Catalan separatism).

2 Szabolcs Pogonyi, Mária M. Kovács and Zsolt Körtvélyesi, "The Politics of External Kin-State Citizenship in East Central Europe," *EUDO Citizenship Observatory* (2010): 8. <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/docs/ECE-compreport.pdf>, accessed 21 August, 2017.

3 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): 19.

In addition to this main two-component typology presented above, the migratory origin is also an important criterion to identify other subtypes of diaspora. It has become common practice to categorize diaspora communities by the date and the feature of the mass migration which gave the opportunity for their development. Thus, there is a distinction between “old” and “new” diasporas formed by emigration waves occurring at different times (for example before and after the Second World War, respectively). Additionally, there is a distinction between diasporas formed by voluntary or economic migration on the one hand, and by forced or political migration on the other. The problem with this kind of typology is the failure to take into account that the formation of diaspora communities is a continuous rather than a finished process. Almost every diaspora of the present has developed through migration waves which occurred in different times and for different reasons.

Apart from migratory origin, another pattern of diaspora typologies reflects the manner of its social integration, i.e. the quality of the relation of diaspora communities with the society surrounding them. A milestone in the scientific foundation of this topic is John A. Amstrong’s distinction between ‘proletarian diaspora’ (i.e. communities of migratory origin that live in a marginal and disadvantaged position on the periphery of their new home) and ‘mobilized diaspora’ (which have achieved a distinguished social status for themselves, thus they are able to mobilize the economy or even the foreign relations of the host state).⁴ In the past decades, several diaspora typologies of this kind have seen the light. Just to mention a few: Robin Cohen’s five-component typology (victim, labor, imperial, trade and deterritorialized diaspora types),⁵ Milton J. Esman’s three-component typology (settler, labor and entrepreneurial diaspora types),⁶ and Michael Bruneau’s four-component typology (religious, political, cultural and entrepreneurial diaspora types).⁷ These typologies also can be criticized from several aspects. First, because they assign too broad a meaning to the concept of diaspora. Second, because being guided by a comparative approach, they highlight the differences between ideal types of diaspora as much as they lose sight of the diversity within the same diaspora community. Nonetheless, they indicate the importance of social integration as another criterion of diaspora beside the migratory origin. This criterion referring to the process of fitting into

4 John A. Amstrong, “Mobilized and proletarian diasporas,” *American Political Science Review* 70, no. 2 (1976): 393–408.

5 Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London – New York: Routledge – Taylor and Francis Group, 1997).

6 Milton J. Esman, “Definition and classes of diaspora,” in *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*, ed. Milton J. Esman (Cambridge – Malden: Polity, 2009): 13–21.

7 Michel Bruneau, “Diasporas, transnational spaces and communities,” in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*, ed. Rainer Baubock and Thomas Faist (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010): 35–50.

the society of the host state is that sets diaspora communities apart from other migrant populations, such as transit travelers and temporary immigrants.

For a community of migratory origin to become a diaspora community, it needs to resist cultural assimilation while integrating socially; that is, it needs to preserve its “otherness” with respect to the majority of the host state. For maintaining ethnic boundaries and transmitting the desire to exist as a distinguished ethnicity from one generation to another, diaspora communities have founded several institutions. The different nature of these diaspora institutions offers another criterion for inventing typologies. There are a number of ways to classify diaspora institutions, such as the date of their creation, their goals or the areas of their activity. Furthermore, there are typologies that combine different principles for creating a more complex form of categorization. One of the most striking cases of this is the typology developed by Attila Papp Z. and his collaborators with the aim to classify the functions and characteristics of Hungarian-American institutions.⁸ Their typology – based on empirical research and thematic analysis of interview data – combines the principle of ethnically open vs. ethnically closed organizations with the principle of local vs. national organizations. The result of this combination is a matrix that encompasses four types of diaspora organizations: lobbying organizations (ethnically open at the national level); heritage organizations (ethnically closed at the national level); community showcase organizations (ethnically open at the local level); and community preservation organizations (ethnically closed at the local level). Even if this complex typology reaches a structural understanding of the fundamental features of diaspora organizations, its ideal types seldom if ever exist in their pure form in everyday life. As Papp Z. himself recognized it: *“In reality, actual organizations share characteristics of different types, although usually its most salient characteristic allows us to characterize it as a single type.”*

Up to now, we have seen typologies related to the two first decisive criteria of the category of diaspora (the migratory origin, on the one hand, and the social integration as well as the institutional resistance to cultural assimilation, on the other hand). In the following, to finish this analytical review, I will turn to the last criterion according to the definition presented above, and point out some relevant typologies formed on the basis of the relations between a diaspora community and a kin-state. To clear up any confusion, what I mean by the term kin-state – following Rogers Brubaker – is a state whose political or cultural elites define co-national communities living abroad as members of one and the same nation, and claim that they ‘belong’, in some sense, to the state, and assert that their condition must be

8 Attila Papp Z., “Ways of Interpretation of Hungarian-American Ethnic-based Public Life and Identity,” in *Beszédből világ: Elemzések, adatok amerikai magyarokról* [World from Speech: Analysis, Data about Hungarian Americans], ed. Attila Papp Z. (Budapest: Magyar Külügyi Intézet, 2008): 426–456.

monitored and their interests protected and promoted by the state.⁹ The adoption of this stance is the first condition for any diaspora policies. Scholars on this topic tend to make typologies by identifying similarities and differences among these state policies designed to forge the relationship between diaspora communities and their homeland. The following are a few of the most relevant.

Peggy Levitt and Rafael de la Dehesa – drawing on material from several countries, but looking most closely at Brazil, Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic – categorize state outreach policies belonging to five main types. (1) The bureaucratic (ministerial or consular) reforms that states implement in response to emigrants' and their descendants' heightened importance to policymakers. (2) The investment policies which seek to attract or channel migrant remittances. (3) The extension of political rights to non-resident populations in the form of dual citizenship, the right to vote or the right to run for public office. (4) The introduction of state services or protections for diaspora communities. (5) The implementation of symbolic politics designed to maintain and reinforce the national identity, the sense of belonging and long-term membership of co-nationals living in diaspora.¹⁰

Alan Gamlen also presents an original typology in order to facilitate comparative research in this field. He systematically reviewed the diaspora policies of approximately seventy states. Then – on the basis of Michel Foucault's theory, according to which the capacity to exercise power consists in three types of relationships: relationships of communication, relations of power and finalized activities – Gamlen identifies three higher-level types of diaspora engagement policy. (1) The capacity building policies, aimed at discursively producing a state-centric 'transnational national society', and developing a set of corresponding state institutions. Within this type of policy Gamlen distinguishes two further types. On the one hand, the symbolic nation-building policies which refer to conferences and conventions, shaping media and PR, cultural promotion and induction, inclusive rhetoric and symbols. On the other hand, the institution building policies which denote consular and consultative bodies, building transnational networks, monitoring efforts, a bureaucracy and ministerial level agency concerned with their interests. (2) The extension of rights to the diaspora which plays a role that befits a legitimate sovereign. This second type of diaspora engagement policy refers, on the one hand, to the political incorporation

9 Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). It should be noted that regarding the basic concepts of diaspora policies I adopt the terminology commonly used in international law, while the aforementioned Rogers Brubaker – as one of the pioneers of developing analytical approach to diaspora policies – uses his own terminology, thereby, what I call kin-state in this paper corresponds to the term 'external national homeland' in Brubaker's terminology.

10 Peggy Levitt and Rafael de la Dehesa, "Transnational migration and the redefinition of the state: Variations and explanations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26, no. 4 (2003): 587–611.

of emigrants and their descendants, and, on the other hand, to the civil and social rights, such as welfare protection and tourism service. Finally, (3) extracting obligations from the diaspora, based on the premise that emigrants owe loyalty to the legitimate sovereign benefited by the extended rights to the diaspora. Investment policies and lobby promotion belong to this type of diaspora engagement policy.¹¹

To give one last example, there is another recognized typology, proposed by Francesco Ragazzi on the basis of an original dataset of thirty-five states characterized in terms of their symbolic policies, social and economic policies, religious and cultural policies, citizenship policies and government and bureaucratic control, coded by nineteen categorical variables. From the quantitative comparative analysis of this dataset Ragazzi derives five ideal-types of sending states. (1) The expatriate state, which is formed around the focus on cultural and educational policies as the most distinguishing factor. This ideal-type regroups countries that deploy these bureaucracies, typical of states providing state services to a high-income category of expats. Ragazzi gives as examples of this: the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain and Italy. (2) The closed state, which refers to those states that strongly regulate or seek to restrict the mobility of their population and police it abroad and do not allow for external voting, such as Cuba, North Korea, Iran and the Democratic Republic of Congo. (3) The global-nation state regroups states that represent the widest range of diaspora policy features and provide populations abroad with the broadest number of civil, political and social rights. This type includes Mexico, Ireland, Greece, Russia, India, Morocco and Ethiopia. (4) The managed labor state is characterized by the provision of investment schemes for returnees. States under this category, on the one hand, have a large emigrant population, but have not really developed policies toward them such as Colombia, Jordan, Bangladesh, and on the other hand, they tend to focus on labor and circulation migration like the Philippines and Brazil. Finally, (5) the indifferent state is characterized by a generalized lack of interest in its population abroad. No wonder that states of this kind, such as Lebanon and Nigeria, are often overlooked in the literature of diaspora studies.¹²

11 Alan Gamlen, "Diaspora Engagement Policies: What are they, and what kinds of states use them?," *Working Paper 32* (University of Oxford, 2006), https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2006/wp-2006-032-gamlen_diaspora_engagement_policies/

12 Francesco Ragazzi, "A Comparative Analysis of Diaspora Policies," *Political Geography* 41 (2014): 74–89: 81.

TYOPOLOGY OF	CRITERIA	TYPES	AUTHORS
Co-national Communities Abroad	Origin	diaspora communities of migratory origin autochthonous national minorities	Will Kymlicka (1995) and others
Diaspora Communities	Emigration feature Social integration Community shaping force	proletarian mobilized	John A. Amstrong (1979)
		victim labour imperial trade deterritorialized	Robin Cohen (1997)
		settler labour entrepreneurial	Milton J. Esman (2009)
		religious political cultural entrepreneurial	Michael Bruneau (2010)
Diaspora Organizations	Open vs. Closed Local vs. National	lobbying heritage community preservation community showcase	Attila Papp Z. (2008)
Diaspora Policies	Feature of measures	bureaucratic reforms investment policies extension of political rights state services abroad symbolic politics	Peggy Levitt and Rafael de la Dehesa (2003)
	Level of engagement	capacity building extending rights extracting obligations	Alan Gamel (2006)
Kin-States	Level of transnational inclusion	expatriate closed global-nation managed labour indifferent	Francesco Ragazzi (2014)

Table 1: Typologies within diaspora studies

The tendency to create a typology of diaspora policies and kin-states leads to generalizations. As the diaspora communities should not be seen as bounded entities, or a static ethno-demographic condition, but rather as a dynamic and multi-dimensional phenomenon, the kin-state should be conceived not as a given, analytically irreducible, fixed entity, but rather in terms of differentiated and competitive positions adopted by different actors, organizations, parties or individual political entrepreneurs competing for power. Myra A. Waterbury's settings on motives and triggers for diaspora engagement also support the plasticity of this kind of policies: "*Clearly, homeland state elites are not passive actors stirred only by feelings of national affiliation or by demands made on them by those abroad. Instead, shifts towards increased diaspora engagement are driven in large part by the interests and perceptions of homeland state political elites.*"¹³

Thus, diversity applies both within diasporas and kin-states. On the one hand, all diaspora policies – as it was noted above – are based on the axiom that beyond the boundaries of state and citizenship, there is a common national existence that makes the state responsible not only for its own citizens, but also for co-national communities and individuals living abroad. On the other hand, what this responsibility entails exactly and how it should be executed can be interpreted in a number of ways. Therefore, diaspora policies are dialectic processes influenced by different aims and strategic interests of multiple actors. They are diverse and subject to change.

From all this it follows that a particular state can belong to more than one ideal-type of kin-state at the same time. Its strategic objectives in diaspora mobilization can change from one type to another in a relatively short period of time depending on multiple economic and socio-political factors as well as domestic and international variables. Furthermore, pragmatic and symbolic aspects of diaspora policies are often intertwined. The same diaspora-focused program or project can adjust to different types of diaspora policy: it could fit the symbolic nation-building policies as well as institution building policies, but it could also be interpreted as a project of extending rights or/and extracting obligations.

All in all, the tendency toward typology construction within diaspora studies is mainly based on quantitative analysis of official data and descriptive statistics. Although typologies are useful to provide general overviews and comparative studies, they should necessarily be complemented with qualitative researches.¹⁴ For a deeper understanding of diaspora issues it would be necessary to investigate under what conditions and interests certain diaspora

13 Myra A. Waterbury, "Bridging the divide: Towards a Comparative Framework for Understanding Kin State and Migrant-sending State Diaspora Politics," in *Diaspora and Transnationalism. Concepts, Theories and Methods*, ed. Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010): 136–137.

14 Eszter Herner-Kovács, "Elméleti keretek a diaszpóra-politikák vizsgálatához" [Theoretical Frameworks for the Examination of Diaspora Politics], *Kisebbségkutatás* 24, no. 2 (2015): 34–49.

policies have been developed as well as why and how they change. Moreover, besides studying diasporas and diaspora policies from 'above' (at the level of political engagement and nation building), it is necessary to adopt another research perspective from 'below' to see how the affected dispersed communities relate to the kin-state's assistance both at the symbolic and pragmatic levels. In order to achieve this goal, in the following section I turn to existing diaspora engagement practices and analyze how they work in practice.

Diaspora policies in practice: *Why, for whom and how?*

The growing scientific interest in diaspora policies is due to the rapid proliferation of kin-state activism. Governments seem to pay more and more attention to strengthening ties with co-national communities living abroad. To appreciate this, it is enough to take a look at the number of governmental institutions responsible for diaspora-related issues which have increased dramatically in the last three decades. While at the beginning of 1980 there were only a handful of such institutions, at present over half of all states in the United Nations have established at least one of these.¹⁵ The growing number of diaspora engagement practices and institutions shows that states still play a major role in creating and reinforcing transnational involvements, contradicting scholarly estimates, arguing that the process of globalization would reconfigure or even erode the sovereign nation state.

The following section of the present paper explores the most frequently encountered diaspora engagement practices, with special attention to the Central and Eastern European cases. I will examine why and under what circumstances diaspora policies have been developed in this part of Europe. The main question of this section is whether or not diaspora policies in this region show common characteristics, and if they do, how these commonalities among different kin-states can be explained.

The starting point of the analysis is that diaspora policies in Central and Eastern Europe, in one way or another, are related to the national question, i.e. the question of the proper relation between the territorial borders of the state and the imagined limits of the nation. This question has become a central feature of political life in the region, mainly because of the historical background of the current states. On the one hand, during the development process of modern nation-states in the 18th and 19th centuries, the national forms in Central and Eastern Europe had developed within the great and vast, ethnically heterogeneous Habsburg, Ottoman and Romanov empires. Thus, the political units radically

15 Alan Gamlen, Michael Cummings, Paul M. Vaaler and Laura Rossouw, "Explaining the Rise of Diaspora Institutions," *IMI Working Papers Series* 78 (2013).

diverged from the cultural units in this region. Nation-states in most cases were formed by the struggles of nations – often determined by a commonly shared ethnicity, culture and language – to establish their own political and territorial sovereignty.¹⁶ On the other hand, in addition to this cultural nation approach to national belonging, during the 20th century the political space of the region was reconfigured twice. Firstly, in the aftermath of World War I, through the disintegration of the above mentioned multinational empires and the creation of new states. Secondly, due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia following the end of the Cold War. Thereby, millions of people became minorities living in territories detached from their national homeland. As in a recently published book, Timothy Heleniak pointed out: “*When the Eurasia region went from eight to twenty-nine countries, there were an estimated 46 million people [11% of the total Eurasian population] from these countries who resided outside their country of birth and 48 million outside their ethnic homeland. The initial policies of many of these newly independent states were to protect their ethnic kin who suddenly found themselves stranded abroad [...] The diaspora populations from many countries of Eurasia are unique because they become members of a diaspora following the moving of borders and not through them crossing an international border.*”¹⁷ If we add to this finding the historical legacy of international tensions and conflicting relations between the states, it complicates even more the situation of the national minorities and kin-state activism. As Will Kymlicka claims: “*In most parts of the world [...] minority groups are often seen as a kind of «fifth column», likely to be working for a neighbouring enemy. [...] This, I think, is precisely the situation we find throughout most of the ECE [Eastern and Central Europe]. State-minority relations have been «securitized». Dominant groups throughout the region feel they have been victimized by their minorities acting in collaboration with foreign enemies. We see this in the Czech Republic regarding the German minority; in Slovakia re the Hungarian minority; in the Baltics re the Russian minority; in Croatia re the Serbian minority; in Bulgaria re the Turkish minority, to name a few. In all of these cases, minorities are seen (rightly or wrongly) as allies or collaborators with external powers that have historically oppressed the majority group.*”¹⁸

16 On the historical and theoretical foundations of the cultural nation approach, see Friedrich Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* [Cosmopolitanism and the National State] (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1908).; Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944).; and Jenő Szűcs, *Nemzet és történelem* [Nation and History] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1974).

17 Timothy Heleniak, “Diasporas, Development, and Homelands in Eurasia after 1991,” in *Post-Soviet Migration and Diasporas: From Global Perspectives to Everyday Practices*, ed. David Carment and V. Milana Nikolko (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 11–28: 12.

18 Will Kymlicka, “Multiculturalism and Minority Rights: West and East,” *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, no. 4 (2002): 1–25: 19–20.

All these historical and political circumstances explain why kin-state policies in Central and Eastern Europe are so tightly tied to the national question. Moreover, it suggests that national minorities formed as a result of 20th century border changes and state dissolutions play a decisive role in these matters, even in those cases where the kin-state does not differentiate between co-national communities of migratory origin, dispersed all over the world, and autochthonous kin-minorities, living mostly in the neighboring countries. Therefore, although there are some seemingly similar kin-state practices adopted both in Western as well as in Eastern Europe – such as the preferential paths to citizenship acquisition – they cannot be considered under the same category without taking into account the differences in the socio-political context and historical background. Indeed, dual citizenship does not mean the same in Eastern Europe as it does in the West, where the term citizenship is often used interchangeably with the term nationality.

Rogers Brubaker, in his already mentioned book entitled *Nationalism Reframed*, provides a useful model to study the national question and its consequences in Central and Eastern Europe. This model consists of a dynamic triadic nexus relationship, which involves three distinct and often mutually antagonistic elements: the ‘external national homeland’ (in international law called kin-state); the ‘nationalizing state’ (also called host-state) and the ‘national minority’. Brubaker – following Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of social fields – conceives of each of these three constitutive elements as parts of an interdependent relational nexus, not as fixed entities or static conditions, but rather in terms of dynamic political fields of competitive actors.¹⁹ Brubaker’s triadic nexus model offers a useful methodological approach to study specific cases of the national question in Central and Eastern Europe. It is applicable to research issues related to both types of co-national communities, the autochthonous transborder national minorities as well as the diaspora communities of migratory origin, and it helps to capture these issues in their complexity.

After this brief review of historical background and methodological approaches on the matter, I will now turn to existing diaspora policies, examining the most commonly adopted diaspora engagement practices in Central and Eastern Europe, focusing on the similarities.

It is not surprising that prior to the democratic transition, during the 40 years of state socialism, the national question and, therefore, all issues related to co-nationals abroad were taboo questions in the Eastern Bloc. However, after the political changeovers of 1989–91 nationalism reframed and resurrected the national question as central to political relations in and among the newly independent states of the region. The principle that

19 Brubaker, “Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe.” For Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory, see Pierre Bourdieu and Wacquant Loic, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1992).

national limits and state territorial borders should coincide played a decisive role in the new reconfiguration of political space, which in some cases have been excessively violent (such as in the wars of the Yugoslav succession). Furthermore, apart from the violent redrawing of borders, another consequence of the reframed nationalism in the region was the reaffirmation of the kin-state position, which became one of the main features of the democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in cases of post-socialist countries with large external kin-populations abroad. As a first step, most of these countries – including Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Macedonia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Poland and Slovakia – have adopted amendments to their constitutions assuming special responsibility for the protection of co-nationals living beyond their state borders.²⁰ The paths to fulfill the kin-state's responsibility are diverse and have generated large and complex disputes both at domestic and international levels: between the political elites within the same state as well as between relational kin-states and host-states. However, examining the evolution of kin-state policies in the region a quarter century after the end of the Cold War, we can identify some general practices adopted by most of the states in question.

One of the first and most common diaspora engagement practices in Central and Eastern Europe is the introduction of benefit laws for co-nationals abroad. This legislative practice consists basically of giving a special status to the co-nationals, which comes with certain benefits in the fields of culture, education, healthcare, and labor within the territory of the kin-state.²¹ In most cases these benefits are guaranteed by law equally for all co-nationals living abroad. However, in some other cases, such as in Hungarian and Polish legislation, benefits are concerned with territorial restrictions: they are available only to autochthonous kin-minorities formed by border changes, but not to the diaspora of migratory origin.²²

20 See Article 6 of the Hungarian Constitution of 1989; Article 7 of the Romanian Constitution of 1991; Article 5 of the Slovenian Constitution of 1991; Article 49 of the Constitution of the 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' of 1991; Article 10 of the Croatian Constitution of 1991; Article 12 of the Ukrainian Constitution of 1996; Article 6 of the Polish Constitution of 1997; Article 7a of the Slovakian Constitution amended in 2001. See also Iván Halász and Balázs Majtényi, "Constitutional Regulation in Europe on the Status of Minorities Living Abroad," *Minorities Research* 4 (2002): 135–144.

21 See the Romanian Act 150 of 1998; the Bulgarian Act 30 of 2000; the Hungarian Act 62 of 2001; the Slovakian Act 474 of 2005; the Slovenian Act 43 of 2006; the Polish Act 180/1280 of 2007; the Serbian Act 88 of 2009; the Croatian Act 124 of 2011. See also Pogonyi, Kovács and Körtvélyesi, "The Politics of External Kin-State Citizenship in East Central Europe."

22 For a comparative study based on benefit laws for co-nationals abroad adopted by certain member states of the Council of Europe see the *Report on the Preferential Treatment of National Minorities by their Kin-State*, adopted by the European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission) at its 48th Plenary Meeting, (Venice, 19–20 October, 2001), [http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-INF\(2001\)019-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-INF(2001)019-e)

Another common practice that almost all kin-states in Central and Eastern Europe have adopted within a two-decade span following the political changeover is the ethnic preferential citizenship law, which allows fast-track naturalization for co-nationals who do not now reside and may have never resided in the kin-state. Although this diaspora engagement practice is the most visible one, particular cases of its adoption differ significantly in terms of the requirements of the application and the scope of the granted rights. While some kin-states apply ethnic preferential naturalization only under the condition of residing within the state's borders (such as Poland, Slovenia, Latvia and Moldova), other states have adopted non-residential ethnic citizenship allowing preferential naturalization for co-nationals regardless of their place of residence (for example Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, and Serbia). Likewise, there are kin-states which adopted differentiated citizenship providing restricted civil, political and social rights for co-nationals living abroad, while other kin-states even grant them voting rights in addition to fast-track naturalization (like Bulgaria, Croatia, and Hungary). With regard to the latter, the extension of voting rights to non-resident citizens and its possible consequences points out another feature of Central and Eastern European kin-state policies. As various scholars argue, external voters may have stronger influences on domestic electoral outcomes in this region than in Western Europe, because of the numerical size of the kin-minorities and their closer relationship with their kin-state. As Pogonyi et al. highlighted: *"Given the history of border creation in the region, even the size of ethnic communities eligible for external citizenship is so significant that – unlike in most of Western Europe – external citizens who are considered ethnic kin and, in certain cases, external kin voters may represent an unusually large voice in influencing relevant policies of the kin state."*²³

These diaspora engagement practices – the adoption of benefit laws for co-nationals abroad, the institutionalization of ethnic preferential paths to naturalization and the extension of voting rights – are based on the idea of deterritorialized nationhood through transborder membership. They are popular because they constitute an easy solution to the national question incorporating co-nationals into the nation's political community without directly questioning the current borders of the state. Nonetheless, even these seemingly non-conflicting resolutions have triggered several political contingencies within the countries which have applied them (between different and often controversial political elites) as well as within the region (between kin-states and host-states), and even within a broader framework on the continental level. It is not surprising that all these contingencies in question are much more related to the autochthonous kin-minorities living in the region than to the diaspora communities mostly residing in the West.

23 Pogonyi, Kovács and Körtvélyesi, "The Politics of External Kin-State Citizenship in East Central Europe," 17.

On the one hand, due to the historical background of interstate relationships in Central and Eastern European, host-states' governments usually see in these kin-states policies more than a simple project of kin-minority protection. They tend to suspect that behind the restoration of citizenship there is a dangerous nation-building project supported by the neighboring kin-states' governments, which use the tools of political membership rather than irredentist violence to challenge the postwar settlement. This fear was generated in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Croatia's ethnic preferential citizenship policy; in Moldova by Romania's citizenship policy; in Macedonia by Bulgaria's citizenship policy; and in Slovakia by Hungary's citizenship policy – just to mention a few.²⁴ The latter example deserves special attention due to the fact that its consequences have created an extremely peculiar situation. The Slovakian government, as a clear reaction to Hungary's citizenship law of 2010, accepted an amendment that outlawed dual citizenship. The new Slovakian legislation excluded the possibility of acquiring external citizenship and preserving the Slovak citizenship at the same time. These consecutive and conflicting legislations have created a precarious status for ethnic Hungarians – among other dual citizens – in Slovakia who, upon taking up external Hungarian citizenship, would lose their Slovakian citizenship, but would not at the same time become full citizens of Hungary, because the new Hungarian legislation granted only restricted rights for non-resident citizens.²⁵ In this sense the Hungarian and the Slovakian amendment of citizenship legislation together would prevent tens of thousands of European citizens to exercise basic social and political rights, such as the right to vote either in national or European elections. Despite this, both states have complied with the requirements of the European Convention on Nationality, which brought into focus the absence of a sufficient international regulatory framework for citizenship matters in particular, and for Central and Eastern European kin-state policies in general.

On the other hand, the controversies related to this kind of diaspora policies are even more complicated and widespread when the kin-state is a member of the European Union and offers non-residents fast-track naturalization for co-nationals who live in and are citizens of a non-member host-state. In this case ethnic preferential citizenship policy implies the extension of European Union citizenship to inhabitants of non-member states, creating immigration rights into all other member states, which could provoke outrage at the international level. The nature of this controversy is clearly expressed in the article entitled "EU's backdoor thrown open" published in the French daily *Le Figaro* after the Hungarian National Assembly approved the new citizenship law in 2010, which allowed ethnic preferential naturalization for all Hungarians living abroad. "*Hungary, Romania*

24 Myra A. Waterbury, "Making Citizens Beyond the Borders: Nonresident Ethnic Citizenship in Post-Communist Europe," *Problems of Post-Communism* 61, no. 4 (2014): 36–49.

25 Pogonyi, Kovács and Körtvélyesi, "The Politics of External Kin-State Citizenship in East Central Europe."

and Bulgaria have to some extent infringed the terms of their mission to secure the EU's eastern borders by allowing up to five million Moldovans, Macedonians, Serbs, Ukrainians and Turks to avail of procedures to obtain European passports. History and the perceived injustices of the past have provided them with a means to circumvent immigration barriers. While Hungarian, Romanian and Bulgarian political leaders are hoping to reap the benefits of being perceived as the bearers of this unexpected gift, officials in the capitals of Old Europe are none too happy."²⁶

Although the examination of the validity of these fears at the international level would require a separate paper, from the controversies presented above we can draw the conclusion that diaspora engagement practices adopted by Central and Eastern European post-socialist kin-states have received increasing attention, not only at the political, but also at public and scientific levels.

Apart from these practices it is also worth mentioning that kin-states from this part of Europe have undertaken some less visible policies to promote national identity and to foster homeland affiliation of those living in diaspora. There are several programs, provided by kin-states, which support the cultural, linguistic and religious heritage of co-national communities dispersed all over the world. Furthermore, there are also some symbolic policies which serve exclusively to reaffirm the assumption of kin-state responsibility and the commitment to national unity. Good examples of these symbolic diaspora-related policies are the national days dedicated to remember the division of the nation as well as its symbolic unity beyond the borders, such as the Day of Foreign Slovaks on 5th July (celebrated since 1993); the Day of Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad on 2nd May since 2002); and the Day of National Unity in Hungary on 4th June (since 2010). The pragmatic and symbolic kin-state practices are usually managed by special government institutions, which function at different levels.²⁷

26 Arielle Thedrel, "Enlargement: EU's backdoor thrown open," *Le Figaro*, 16 August, 2010, <http://www.voxeurop.eu/en/content/article/316361-eu-s-backdoor-thrown-open>, accessed 14 September, 2017.

27 For further information on diaspora-engaging institutions see Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias and Kathleen Newland, "Building Diaspora Institutions: Carving a Niche in the Inner Workings of Government," in *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development. A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries*, ed. Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias and Kathleen Newland (International Organization for Migration – Migration Policy Institute, 2011): 71–94, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/developing-road-map-engaging-diasporas-development-handbook-policymakers-and-practitioners>

COUNTRIES	LEGISLATION				GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS		
	Benefit laws for co-nationals abroad	Ethnic preferential citizenship laws		External voting possible	Ministry level	Subministry level	Other diaspora oriented government institutions
		only for residents	also for non-residents				
Bulgaria	Act 30 of 2000 on Bulgarians Living Outside the Republic of Bulgaria		Yes since 2001	Yes			State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad
Croatia	Act 124 of 2011 on Relations of the Republic of Croatia with Croats Abroad		Yes since 1991	Yes	State Office for Croats Abroad		
Hungary	Act 62 of 2001 on Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries		Yes since 2010	Yes		Prime Minister's Office, State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad	
Poland	Act 180/1280 of 2007 of the Polish Charter	Yes since 2000		Yes		Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Cooperation with Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad	Polish Senate, Emigration Affairs and Contacts with Poles Abroad Committee
Romania	Act 150 of 1998 on Regarding Support Granted to the Romanian Communities from all over the World		Yes since 1991	Yes		Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department for Relations with the Romanians Abroad	
Serbia	Act 88 of 2009 on Diaspora and Serbs in the Region		Yes since 2004	No	Ministry of Religion and Diaspora		
Slovakia	Act 70 of 1997 on Expatriate Slovaks Act 474 of 2005 on the Slovaks Living Abroad	No	No	No		Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office for the Slovaks Living Abroad	
Slovenia	Act 43 of 2006 on Regulating the Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians Abroad	Yes since 1991		No	Government Office for Slovenians Abroad		

Table 2: Diaspora policies in practice illustrated with some relevant cases from Central and Eastern Europe

Although it is possible to identify commonalities in diaspora policies adopted by Central and Eastern European kin-states, there are significant variations in timing, context, and content among all cases. Nevertheless, focusing on the similarities, we can deduce certain general features, which allow us to understand why and under what conditions kin-states in this part of Europe seek to engage co-national communities living beyond their borders.

Through a comparative study of ethnic preferential citizenship in post-socialist Europe, Waterbury concludes that different cases of this kin-state practice in the region share at least three commonalities. The first is that they are deployed primarily as a tool to support three interconnected projects that have a transborder national identity at their core. *“These three projects include (1) internal ethnic homogenization and demographic rebalancing; (2) external influence on the political environment in a neighboring state; and (3) symbolic recognition or augmentation of an existing transborder relationship with ethnic kin communities.”*²⁸ All these projects are closely linked to the national question as they seek to resolve the non-coincidence of state borders with national settlement patterns.

The first project is based on the same perception as the nationalizing state project in Brubaker’s analyses, which regards the ethnically heterogeneous state as an unrealized nation-state, a state of and for a particular nation. One way to remedy this perceived defect is to promote the language, culture, demographic position, economic wellbeing, and political hegemony of the titular, “state-bearing” nation. Brubaker focuses especially on this strategy.²⁹ However, there is another way to rebalance the ethnic demography in a state: by repatriation. Governments can motivate co-nationals living in diaspora to “return” to the homeland by granting them ethnic preferential citizenship that are not granted for other non-residents. Poland, Kazakhstan, Greece, and Russia are good examples of Eastern European kin-states which support this project.³⁰

The second project identified by Waterbury refers to the use of non-resident ethnic preferential citizenship as a tool of what Zsuzsa Csergő and James M. Goldgeier have termed “trans-sovereign nationalism”, which *“applies to nations that reach beyond current state boundaries but forgo the idea of border changes, primarily because it is too costly to pursue border changes in contemporary Europe. [...] Thus, transsovereign nationalism shares the traditional emphasis that political organization should occur along national lines; but instead of forming a nation-state either through territorial changes or the repatriation of co-nationals within its political borders, the national center creates institutions that maintain and reproduce*

28 Waterbury, “Making Citizens Beyond the Borders,” 37.

29 Brubaker, “Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe.”

30 Waterbury, “Making Citizens Beyond the Borders.”

the nation across existing state borders."³¹ Obviously, this stance focuses on autochthonous kin-minorities. As I stated previously, in Central and Eastern Europe kin-state policies – even those which also target the diaspora, for example by the adoption of ethnic preferential citizenship – usually are based on state responsibility for this type of co-national communities which came into existence through border changes. Although in cases when lawmakers make no distinction between autochthonous kin-minority and diaspora of migratory origin on the legislative level, the preoccupation for the former type of co-national communities abroad usually still constitutes the starting point for this matter, as the Eastern European national question has been strengthened by the repeated alterations of state borders.

The third project behind diaspora policies in Waterbury's explanation is to engage in symbolic politics, which is mostly oriented toward the domestic audience. A good example of this is the process through which the topic of dual citizenship became a highly politicized divisive issue in Hungary in the mid-2000s. The internal debate related to kin-state policies in Hungary culminated in the referendum held on December 5, 2004, which was initiated by a civic organization, the World Federation of Hungarians (Magyarok Világszövetsége – MVSZ). Voters were asked about the adoption of non-resident ethnic preferential citizenship law, which in this context meant the extension of the already existing Hungarian Benefit Law (Act 62 of 2001 on Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries). Beyond this question, the referendum became a tool for political battle between the two main parties in Hungary, both of which played heavily on voters' emotions. The left-wing Hungarian Socialist Party (Magyar Szocialista Párt – MSZP), then in power, called for "no", building its campaign on fears of the extra burden on state-financed social benefits that would result from possible immigration into Hungary. Meanwhile, the center-right Alliance of Young Democrats (Fiatalkorú Demokraták Szövetsége – Fidesz), in opposition, campaigned for "yes", claiming that citizenship is in the national interest and for national unity, thus voter participation was a moral duty. In the end, the referendum failed due to a low turnout, but it placed the national question at the center of domestic debates. As a scholar-expert in this field, Nándor Bárdi, in his recently published critical essay related to Hungarian kin-state policies stated: "*The concerns for issues of Hungarian transborder minorities have been subordinated to the interests of party politics in Hungary. The problems of*

31 Zsuzsa Csergő and James M. Goldgeier, "Nationalist Strategies and European Integration," in *The Hungarian Status Law: Nation Building and/or Minority Protection*, ed. Zoltán Kántor, Balázs Majtényi, Osamu Ieda, Balázs Vizi and Iván Halász (Sapporo: Hokkaido University, Slavic Research Center, 2004): 270–302: 281–282.

*Hungarians across the borders have been re-focused on relations with them.*³² As the Hungarian case shows, political elites within the kin-state actually can use diaspora issues as a tool for winning popularity. Therefore, it follows the presumption that the initiation of diaspora engagement practices is linked to certain political assumption.

This hypothesis brings us to the second main argument of Waterbury: *“The second argument is that these policies are more likely to emerge under dominant right-wing governments with a clear commitment to one or more of these projects, and when the regional environment provides a favorable cost–benefit analysis for these kin-state elites.”*³³ In order to support her argument, Waterbury cites other studies that reached the same conclusion. Among others she mentions Marko Zilovic, who finds that nearly every case of ethnic preferential citizenship regime in post-socialist Eastern and Southeastern Europe between 1991 and 2010 – those with high degrees of ethnic selectivity and low to zero levels of residency expectations – were instituted by right-wing party blocs.³⁴ Another scholar mentioned by Waterbury is Christian Joppke, who argues that the degree of ethnicization in citizenship policy often depends on the ideological orientation of the government: *“liberal-leftists favoring de-ethnicization, conservatives favoring re-ethnicization.”*³⁵

Finally, Waterbury’s last and at the same time most open-minded argument is about the flexibility of this kind of diaspora engagement practices. In her words: *“the content and nature of external ethnic citizenship, and the rights associated with this form of citizenship, are fluid and variable. External ethnic citizens can be – and often are – treated differently from resident citizens. The terms of membership and the rights associated with that membership change over time, and not always in the direction of expanded access and rights.”*³⁶

Before concluding the paper it is important to note that the relationship and supports between kin-state and diaspora are not unidirectional. Besides the symbolic attachment to homeland – as the main community shaping force of the diaspora – dispersed co-national communities often provide pragmatic assistance to their kin-state. A diaspora can provide support toward its kin-state by political lobbying. A classic example of this is the support policy of the Jewish diaspora to Israel during the six-day war between the latter state and four Arab states in June 1967. As a matter of fact, the successful assistance of the Jews

32 Nándor Bárdi, “Álságos Állítások a Magyar Etnopolitikában” [Hypocritical Statements in the Hungarian Ethnopolitics], in *Hegymenet: Társadalmi és Politikai Kihívások Magyarországon* [Uphill: Social and Political Challenges in Hungary], ed. András Jakab and László Urbán (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2017): 130–155: 145. (Author’s translation)

33 Waterbury, “Making Citizens Beyond the Borders,” 47.

34 Marko Zilovic, “Citizenship, Ethnicity, and Territory: The Politics of Selecting by Origin in Post-Communist Southeast Europe,” *CITSEE Working Paper Series*, no. 20 (2012), www.citsee.ed.ac.uk/working_papers

35 Christian Joppke, “Transformation of Citizenship: Status, Rights, Identity,” *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 1 (2007): 37–48: 41.

36 Waterbury, “Making Citizens Beyond the Borders,” 47.

living in the United States in this conflict started a process that Khachig Tölölyan calls ‘re-diasporization of ethnicity’.³⁷ Following the six-day war (ending with Israel’s victory) and upon seeing the achievements of the Jewish movement, the leaders of the different ethnic communities living in the United States (Greeks, Armenians, Irish, Cubans, etc.) formulated more and more commitments urging for mutual assistance between ethnically related communities living all over the world (now called diasporas) and their kin-states.

Co-nationals living abroad also can influence electoral outcomes by supporting one or another political candidate of the kin-state. This kind of support requires non-residential ethnic preferential citizenship and external voting rights allowed by kin-states. A prime example of this is the support for the center-right Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica – HDZ) led by Franjo Tuđman, whose victory in the elections of 1995 was due in large part to non-resident votes.³⁸ It is important to note here that the vast majority of these votes came from Croats in Bosnia, which confirms that in this part of Europe the autochthonous kin-minorities formed as a result of border changes and state dissolutions play a decisive role in diaspora policies.³⁹

Furthermore, apart from political supports, diasporas can also provide economic assistance at the family, local, regional or even national levels. According to World Bank projections, international migrants and those living in diaspora are expected to remit more than \$582 billion in earnings in 2015. In 27 countries, remittances were equal to more than 10% of GDP in 2014; in 10 countries they were equal to more than 20% of GDP.⁴⁰

As a conclusion, all the above show that relations between diasporas and kin-states are complex, variable and multidirectional, therefore, these relations cannot be generalized. However, at least at the regional level, we can identify some common patterns, which provide a deeper understanding of diaspora issues.

37 Khachig Tölölyan, “Diaspora Studies: Past, Present and Promise,” *IMI Working Paper Series* 55 (2012), <https://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/publications/wp-55-12>

38 Francesco Ragazzi and Balalovska Kristina, “Diaspora Politics and Post-Territorial Citizenship in Croatia, Serbia, and Macedonia,” *CITSEE Working Paper Series*, no. 18 (2011), http://www.citsee.ed.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/108909/338_diasporapoliticsandpostterritorialcitizenshipincroatiaserbiaandmacedonia.pdf.

39 Francesco Ragazzi, Igor Štikš and Viktor Koska, “Country Report: Croatia,” *EUDO Citizenship Observatory* (2013), <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/country-profiles/?country=Croatia>, accessed 21 August, 2017.

40 *Global Remittances Guide*. Migration Policy Institute: www.migrationpolicy.org

Conclusions

In the first section of this paper some of the main typologies within diaspora studies were identified. It focused on the criteria through which scholars in this discipline tend to categorize observed social and political phenomena related to dispersed, transborder co-national communities. The final argument of this section was that this tendency toward typology construction was useful to provide general overviews for comparative studies. Nevertheless, these typologies tend to ignore the dynamic and often controversial features of everyday diasporic life, diaspora institutions and diaspora policies. Therefore, for a deeper understanding of diaspora issues it would be necessary to complement typological, quantitative approaches with qualitative researches paying more attention to particularities, and investigating under what circumstances and interests certain diaspora policies have been developed, why they have changed, and how they have affected the lives of those co-nationals living beyond state border.

Having reviewed theoretical approaches to diaspora studies, in the second section of the paper I turned to actual diaspora engagement practices and examined why and under what conditions diaspora policies have been developed in Central and Eastern Europe. Focusing on the similarities, it has been demonstrated that in this part of Europe diaspora policies addressing co-national communities of migratory origin are inseparable from the kin-state policies which target autochthonous kin-minorities formed as a result of 20th century border changes and state dissolutions. Furthermore, this latter type of co-national transborder population plays a decisive role in these matters, because of the fact that the kin-state position is tightly tied to the national question, i.e. the question of the proper relation between the territorial borders of the state and the imagined limits of the nation, which radically diverge in this region. Following the political changes and democratic transitions of 1989–91, the most commonly adopted diaspora engagement practices in the region have been: (1) the constitutional assumption of the kin-state's responsibility for the protection of co-nationals living beyond state borders; (2) the adoption of benefit laws for these transborder kin populations; (3) the provision of ethnic preferential naturalization with full or restricted citizenship rights; (4) the launching of programs to promote the national identity and to foster homeland affiliation of those living in diaspora. Although there are significant variations across kin-states, these diaspora engagement practices (different in timing, context, and content) in Central and Eastern Europe are more likely to emerge under dominant right-wing governments, committed to resolve the national question by reinforcing national unity.

Finally, to conclude the paper, it is important to note that all national minorities dispersed throughout the world live in unique circumstances. For development orientation of kin-state policies it is necessary to obtain deeper and more comprehensive knowledge about the affected communities in terms of their everyday diaspora or minority existence, including local requirements and needs. Furthermore, it is also important to know how these communities in question relate to the kin-state's assistance both at the symbolic and the pragmatic levels. The collection and structural description of this information is the researchers' responsibility in the field of diaspora and minority studies. To fulfill this responsibility we must separate analytically the current political interests from the effects of actual diaspora engagement practices. The researchers' duty is not to adopt political resolutions, deciding which policies are honest or good and which ones are bad or false, but rather to offer interpretative frameworks in order to capture the observed social, political and cultural phenomena in their complexity, taking into account their dynamic and often controversial nature.